

Evidence-Based Practices in Youth Violence Prevention: Foundations and Illustrative Approaches

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Research documents a variety of programs focused on the prevention of youth violence, which vary in scope, approach, and underlying theory. Programs that balance risk reduction and health promotion are among the most promising and cost-effective. Examples of tested programs include community mobilization; organizational change in schools; classroom management and instruction; parent training; and early childhood education and skills training. Programs that combine prevention approaches have the potential to address multiple risk and protective influences simultaneously, some across two or more primary socializing contexts. The Seattle Social Development Project (SSDP) is an illustrative program that included parent training, classroom management, and skills development to reduce antisocial behavior and promote healthy development among children in elementary schools. SSDP has been shown to reduce a range of childhood and adolescent problem behaviors, including aggression and crime. Positive effects on adult mental health also have been documented. Comprehensive, theory-guided programs can produce measurable gains in youth conduct, lessen risks, and promote positive youth development at relatively low cost over the long-term. Practice implications and challenges in violence prevention and research will be discussed.