

Flood, M. (2009). Advancing the field: best practice in schools-based violence prevention. Partners in Prevention Forum (Domestic Violence Resource Centre), Melbourne, May 27.

Note that both the full text of this presentation and the Powerpoint are available below.

Primary prevention

Over the last two decades, primary prevention has become a central focus of community and government efforts to address violence in relationships and families. Primary prevention refers to efforts to prevent violence from occurring in the first place. The growing emphasis on prevention reflects the recognition that we must not only respond to the victims and perpetrators of violence, but also work to prevent violence from occurring at all. We must address the underlying causes of violence, in order to reduce rates of violence and ultimately to eliminate it altogether. Primary prevention efforts complement work with victims and survivors, but do not replace or take priority over this.

Primary prevention activities are complemented by two further forms of prevention. *Secondary* prevention focuses on early identification and intervention, targeting those individuals at high risk for either perpetration or victimisation and working to reduce the likelihood of their further or subsequent engagement in or subjection to violence. Secondary prevention is intended to reverse progress towards violence and to reduce its impact. *Tertiary* prevention is centered on longer-term responses after violence has occurred. Activities focus on minimising the impact of violence, restoring health and safety, and preventing further victimisation and perpetration.

Violence prevention in schools

One of the most important populations among whom violence prevention efforts have been implemented is children and young people, and this often takes place in schools.

There is growing momentum in schools-based violence prevention in Australia. Violence prevention and respectful relationships education is an important focus of state and national plans. And particular violence prevention programs both in Victoria and elsewhere in Australia show increased sophistication and comprehensiveness.

What then is the rationale for directing violence prevention efforts at children and young people? I will run through this only briefly, in order to leave more time for the discussion of best practice in this field.

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The rationale for violence prevention among children and young people and in schools

Among children and young people

In order to prevent violence against women and girls, there are five powerful reasons to focus efforts on children and young people:

- Starting young can have a lasting effect on children's and young people's later relationships.
- Young people already are being exposed to, and influenced by, domestic violence.
- Young people already are being subjected to, and perpetrating, violence themselves.
- Violence-supportive attitudes, norms, and relations already are visible among young people.
- Violence prevention among children and young people has been shown to work.

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In schools

Summary:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the <i>positive</i> side: • Schools have distinct advantages as sites of violence prevention education, as they provide a captive audience, in the charge of professionals, in groups and scheduled sessions, in institutions focused on education. • Experience and resources in, and knowledge of, schools-based violence prevention is relatively well developed. • Schools can facilitate partnerships between young people, parents, teachers, and others, increasing investment and effectiveness. • School peers can play vital, positive roles in discouraging young people's involvements in violence. • Schools-based prevention education has been shown to work. • On the <i>negative</i> side: • School climates and cultures themselves can be conducive to violence by and among children and young people. • School peers also can play negative roles in sustaining young people's involvements in violence. • Schools are sites of violence perpetration and victimisation. |
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Part Two: Violence prevention in schools: The elements of good practice

Can learning and teaching strategies among children and young people help to prevent their exposure to and involvements in violence?

First, there has been little evaluation of primary prevention strategies. Most efforts have not been evaluated, and when they have, often the evaluations are limited in how and what they assess.

Second, on a more encouraging note, the greatest body of information about effectiveness can be found in relation to schools-based prevention programs.

Schools-based strategies have a large body of evaluation evidence in part because they are one of the most common forms of violence prevention, and in part because they are genuinely effective. However, this does not necessarily mean that schools-based strategies represent the most important or most effective means of primary prevention. A wide range of other strategies also have evidence of effectiveness or are at least promising.

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The effectiveness of prevention education among young people

Third, and even more encouragingly, evaluations of such programs show that, if done well, initiatives targeted at young people can produce lasting change in attitudes and behaviours.

For example, male and female secondary school and university students who have attended rape education sessions show less adherence to rape myths, express less rape-supportive attitudes, and/or report greater victim empathy than those in control groups.

Education programs which are intensive, lengthy, and use a variety of pedagogical approaches have been shown to produce positive and lasting change in attitudes and behaviours.

There is some evidence too that education programs focused on primary prevention among college women can reduce women's risk of victimisation.

However, effectiveness is not guaranteed. Some programs showing no or negative effects.

Where evaluations have been carried out, they show that not all educational interventions are effective. Changes in attitudes often 'rebound' to pre-intervention levels one or two months after the intervention, and some even become worse.

In evaluation terms, Australian violence prevention programs in schools suffer from the same if not more severe limitations than their North American equivalents. Few Australian programs have been evaluated in any substantial or systematic way, and this is the case even with regard to many of the most widely-used and well-known programs under way in Australia.

Despite these problems, there is still cause for cautious optimism regarding the potential for efforts among children and young people to contribute to primary prevention. Indications of good practice can be drawn from the common factors of interventions that *are* shown to be effective. These are examined in the following section.

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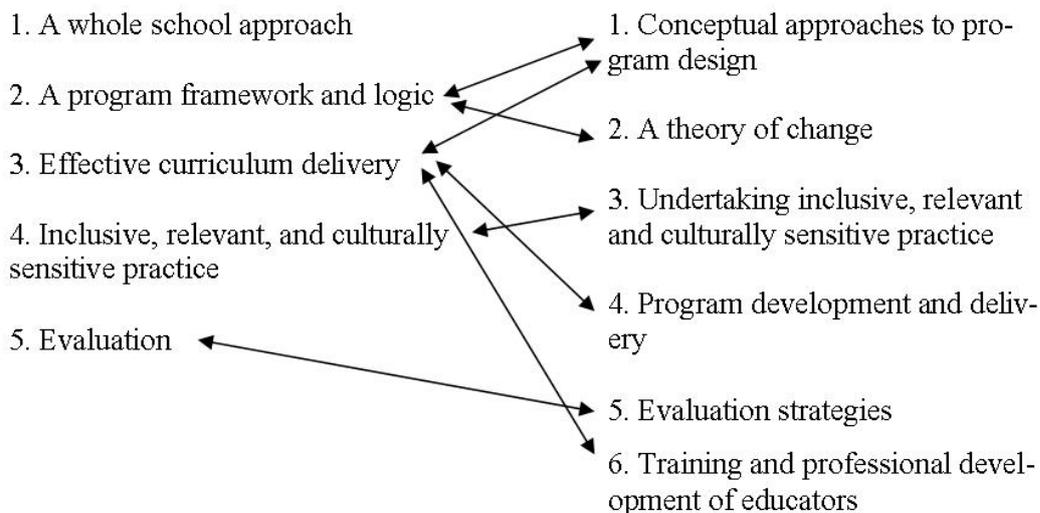
What works? Good practice in schools-based violence prevention programs

A broad consensus regarding the elements of good practice in violence prevention in schools is beginning to emerge. This consensus is apparent in recent reviews of violence prevention and healthy relationships education, in evaluations of particular programs or strategies, and in program materials themselves.

Drawing on these bodies of scholarship and experience, we can identify five criteria for good practice in schools-based violence prevention. Together, these criteria represent the minimum standard for effective violence prevention in schools. Programs which live up to only *some* of the criteria may be able to, or may already, have significant positive impacts among young people. But the most effective programs, and thus the most desirable ones, will be those that make strong claims against all five criteria. These criteria are as follows:

1. A whole school approach
2. A program framework and logic
3. Effective curriculum delivery
4. Inclusive, relevant, and culturally sensitive practice
5. Evaluation

[As background:

Respectful Relationships Education**NASASV**

The five criteria represent standards to which all violence prevention efforts in schools should aspire. At the same time, they are not intended to be absolute or final. Good practice is a ‘work in progress’. What constitutes good practice will change over time, as knowledge of effective strategies improves and as schools, education systems and violent behaviour itself change.

There is also much more to be established regarding what works or does not work. In other words, we need more information regarding the effectiveness of various aspects of the delivery of violence prevention programs in schools. In addition, there are some areas of disagreement over particular dimensions of practice.

What not to do

Just as experience and research in schools-based violence identify what works best, they also identify elements of ineffective practice – in other words, ‘what not to do’.

- ⊗ Take action only after violence has occurred.
- ⊗ Focus only on strategies of support and welfare.
- ⊗ Ignore the wider contexts in which violence occurs and is sustained, including formal and informal school cultures, policies, and processes.
- ⊗ Focus only on the production of a resource.
- ⊗ Make programs unsustainable: neglect policy and institutional support, ignore teacher capacity, and do not establish partnerships with stakeholders.
- ⊗ Use one-off sessions, isolated from other curricula.
- ⊗ Lecture students without interaction or participation.
- ⊗ Evaluate only students’ satisfaction with the program and not its impact.

While the adoption of such strategies is understandable, it is not effective.

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The five standards in detail

(1) A whole-of-school approach

The single most important criterion for effective violence prevention in schools is the adoption of a whole-of-school approach. A whole-of-school approach is critical to the effectiveness of such efforts, as it:

- fosters sustainable and comprehensive efforts among teachers, other staff, and schools and builds capacity to initiate and sustain program efforts and innovations;
- engages all relevant stakeholders;
- involves the concerted approach across entire schools which is necessary to effect cultural change; and
- addresses the practices, policies, and processes in classrooms, schools, and departments relevant to building health-promoting and non-violent schools.

A whole-of-school approach operates across four overlapping domains:

- 1) *Curriculum, teaching and learning*: Curriculum content, pedagogy, resources and outcomes;
- 2) *School policy and practices*: Formal school policies and practices;
- 3) *School culture, ethos and environment*: Informal school culture and ethos (attitudes, values, and practices), extracurricular activities, and the social and physical environment;
- 4) *Partnerships and services*: the relationships between school, home and the community.

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Systems and structures are therefore required to support schools to implement violence prevention / respectful relationships programs effectively. At a policy level, then, a sound education strategy is one that:

- is incorporated into the curriculum at all levels so that violence prevention education is compulsory and available in every school across the state;
- makes resource provisions to set up and evaluate programs systematically, to monitor the progress made and continuously improve;
- is supported by statewide standards, guidelines and performance indicators against which schools are required to report;
- includes comprehensive training for teachers

- ... And so on.

Assessment and reporting

Curriculum integration also requires assessment and reporting processes. School-based initiatives will be subject to two kinds of evaluation: one driven by school assessment and accountable to learning and teaching processes, parents, and government departments, and the other driven by research and policy questions regarding effectiveness.

So far I have argued that schools-based violence prevention must give as much emphasis to the structural and institutional supports for prevention – the ‘scaffolding’ of violence prevention programs – as to the form and content of program delivery. I turn now to criteria for good practice in violence prevention which are more focused on violence prevention programs themselves.

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(2) A program framework and logic

Violence prevention programs in schools must be based on a sound understanding of both the problem – of the workings and causes of violence itself – and of how it can be changed. In other words, violence prevention must incorporate both an appropriate theoretical framework for understanding violence and a theory of change. Without them, we have little sense of what it is we are attempting to change or how our efforts will lead to the desired change.

Programs in schools aimed at preventing violence in intimate and family relationships must draw on feminist theoretical understandings. They must address the fundamental links between gendered power relations or inequalities and violence against women. Programs must address constructions of gender and sexuality which sustain violence in relationships and families. And they must seek to foster gender-equitable and egalitarian relations between and among males and females.

A feminist approach in violence prevention does not require a single-minded or exclusive focus on gender. Contemporary feminist scholarship on physical and sexual violence in families and relationships recognises a wide variety of other factors which also shape violence. VicHealth’s recent violence prevention framework models this approach.

Programs also should have a theory of change, that is, an account of the ways in which project content and processes will be used to achieve the project’s intended outcomes.

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(3) Effective curriculum delivery

To maximise the effectiveness of violence prevention in schools, we must also maximise the effectiveness of the form, content, and delivery of curricula. There are four dimensions of program delivery. They are not in any particular order:

- a) Curriculum content
- b) Curriculum delivery (teaching methods)
- c) Curriculum structure
 - a. Duration and intensity
 - b. Timing
 - c. Group composition
- d) Curriculum teachers and educators (re. trained staff...)

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Curriculum content

Above all, program content should be informed by contemporary feminist scholarship on violence against girls and women. There are three overlapping implications of this.

First, good practice programs ideally address both physical and sexual violence, including the behaviours and dynamics associated with each. Particularly among secondary school students, curricula should not be so general in its approach to violence that it fails to examine the specific dynamics and determinants of sexual violence and domestic violence.

Second, program curricula should directly address the factors known to be antecedents to violent behaviour. These factors include violence-supportive and sexist attitudes and norms, gendered power relations and inequalities, and a host of other social and cultural factors.

Program content should address not only attitudes, but behaviours, interpersonal relations, and collective and institutional contexts.

Rather than focusing on teaching potential victims how to ‘avoid rape’ or ‘keep safe’, program curricula should include work at a ‘systems level’, addressing systemic constraints to young women’s personal and sexual safety such as sexist social norms and inequitable power relations. And they should teach young men why and how to avoid perpetrating rape.

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Curriculum delivery (teaching methods)

What about curriculum delivery: teaching methods or pedagogy. Programs should adopt the general characteristics of effective teaching and learning practice: they should be respectful, relevant, practical, capacity-building, and so on.

Good practice education programs are characterised by five further features. First, they involve the use of quality teaching materials. Second, they are interactive and participatory. Delivery should include greater flexibility and variation in instruction;

use modelling as an influence; group youths into smaller ‘schools-within-schools’; and include more supportive interactions, such as group work, cooperative learning, discussions, role plays and behavioural rehearsal.

Third, good practice programs address cognitive, affective, and behavioural domains: what people know, how they feel, and how they behave. Fourth, and as part of this, they give specific attention to skills development. Fifth, they are matched to stages of change. Finally, they respond supportively and appropriately to participants’ disclosures of victimisation and perpetration.

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Curriculum structure

Duration and intensity

Good practice programs have sufficient duration and intensity to produce change. Although there is debate over this, I recommend that good practice programs using classroom-length or similar sessions comprise at least five sessions. To achieve behavioural and attitudinal change, programs ideally run over a lengthy period of time, with multiple sessions over successive years.

The rationale for greater dosage is obvious. Greater duration means greater exposure to the intended prevention messages and materials. It facilitates the acquisition of new skills and knowledge. Greater duration allows educators to move beyond lecture-style instruction to the use of various teaching strategies which have been shown to increase impact, including role plays, skills training and so on.

There are important caveats to the general principle of greater dosage. First, length alone is no guarantee of program effectiveness. Various other factors interact with program duration to influence impact. Second, at this stage we few means to judge exactly what level of dosage is sufficient to ensure a significant positive impact. Is five hours enough? Is ten hours twice as effective as five hours? Third, the relationship between dosage and response may be complex, with J-shaped, plateauing, or other patterns possible.

Timing and developmental appropriateness

Violence prevention among children and young people is most effective if it is timed and crafted to suit their developmental needs. There is a strong rationale for ‘starting young’. Children should be exposed to violence prevention education early enough to have an impact on the potential development of problem behaviours, ideally beginning in primary school, with this then built and reinforced progressively across year levels.

Effective curricula are moulded to children’s and young people’s emerging social and sexual identities and relations. For example, among older, adolescent populations, curricula should give greater and more explicit attention to sexual behaviours and sexual relationships. They should work to identify and undermine

dynamics of power, control and coercion in young people's intimate and sexual relations.

Multi-year violence prevention is ideal. It means that prevention efforts are sustained over time and that students have multiple points of contact with reinforcing messages.

Mixed-sex or single-sex classes?

What about single-sex or mixed-sex classes?

There are obvious advantages to single-sex groups in schools-based violence prevention, both for females and males alike and for men in particular:

- Above all, males and females are in different places in relation to violence.
- Both males and females may be more comfortable and expressive in single-sex groups.
 - Mixed gender discussions can become polarised.
 - Working in single-sex groups can minimise the harmful, gendered forms of interaction that are common in mixed-sex groups.
- Girls and women with prior histories of sexual assault may experience mixed-gender workshops as revictimising.

Scholarship on violence prevention education among men in particular tends to emphasise the need for male-only groups, for example because:

- Men are more comfortable, less defensive and more honest in all male groups;
- Men may be more to reveal, and thus reflect critically, on sexist and abusive histories in all-male settings;
- Men may feel safer disagreeing or putting pressure on each other in all male groups;
- There may be greater opportunity to discuss and craft roles for males in ending sexism and violence.

At the same time, there are clear benefits to mixed-sex groups. In particular, they:

- Create opportunities for dialogue between females and males regarding gender, sexuality, violence, and relationships, fostering cross-gender understanding and alliance;
- Create opportunities for males to listen to females regarding these issues;
- Can lessen the potential for male-male collusion regarding sexism and violence;

- Can give girls and young women useful exposure to problematic male understandings and behaviours and valuable experience in challenging these or seeing them challenged.

The most significant question in relation to group composition is this: What is most effective? Here, the evidence actually is mixed. Some evaluations find that separate-sex programs are more effective than mixed-sex programs, but others find that men in mixed-sex groups show more positive change than men in mixed-sex groups, while women's change is less affected by group composition.

The most effective sex composition of groups may depend on such factors as the age of the group, the focus and goals of the teaching sessions, and the nature of the teaching methods used. Mixed-sex groups may be more effective if the program or session is intended to encourage male empathy for females or for victims of violence, to create gender dialogue, or to create opportunities for males to listen to females. On the other hand, if the program or session is intended for example to encourage males' 'ownership' of the issue or to facilitate their move from bystander to ally, then single-sex groups may be more effective. Finally, there is some argument for using different sex compositions at different points in one's education program, such as working with males and females separately, and then bringing them together.

So... To meet the standards of good practice, violence prevention programs in schools should have clear rationales for their use of single-sex and/or mixed-sex groups.

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Curriculum teachers and educators

The final issue of effective curriculum delivery considered in this report is *who* should deliver it.

First, violence prevention education must be delivered by skilled and trained teachers and/or educators. Given this, they must be supported by resources, training, and ongoing support.

Teachers, community educators, and/or peer educators?

In schools, should curricula on violence prevention and respectful relationships be delivered by teachers, community educators, or peer educators, or some combination or sequence of these? There are clear advantages to using existing school staff to deliver programs. This facilitates a whole of school approach, enables more effective integration of program messages into other areas of the curriculum, and teaching staff are a permanent presence in the school and therefore a more 'available' resource for students.

There are also disadvantages. Teachers may be uncomfortable with violence prevention content. They often have heavy loads and not enough time for the professional development needed to acquire sufficient knowledge and skills.

Violence prevention activities compete with other subjects in an increasingly crowded school curriculum, and school administrators can be unable or unwilling to devote the time and resources needed to substantive violence prevention.

What about peer educators? Some reports identify the use of peer educators and/or the incorporation of peer support as an element of good practice. However, more recent investigations are more equivocal about the effectiveness of peer-based delivery. Peer-led delivery may fail because of under-investment in peer education as ‘cheap labour’, or for the same reasons as teacher-led delivery may fail: inadequate training, support, and supervision.

So, whomever delivers curricula in schools on violence prevention and healthy relationships, they must be supported by resources, training, and ongoing support, and programs must articulate rationales for their use. However, given that the first and perhaps most significant standard for good practice identified in this report is a whole-of-school approach, there is a strong argument for delivery by teachers, whether side by side with community and/or peer educators or not. Teacher-based delivery seems essential to the integration and sustainability of violence prevention curricula in schools.

Sex of teaching staff?

Recently, there has been some emphasis on the need for work with boys and young men to be conducted by male facilitators in particular. Arguments for using male facilitators and peer educators when working with all-male audiences include the following;

- Male educators and participants can act as role models for other men. They possess an insider’s knowledge of the workings of masculinity and can use this to critical advantage.
- Male educators tend to be perceived as more credible and more persuasive by male participants.
- This embodies the recognition that men must take responsibility for helping to end men’s violence against women.

However, female facilitators can work very effectively with men, and there are benefits to women and men working together.

However, simplistic assumptions about ‘matching’ educators and participants for example by sex may not address the complex interactions and negotiations which take place regarding a range of forms of social difference, from age and ethnicity to class and sexuality.

Again, I urge only that programs have clear rationales for, or at least a critical understanding of, their use of female or male staff.

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(4) Relevant, inclusive, and culturally sensitive practice

Good practice programs are informed in all cases by knowledge of their target group or population and their local contexts. Attention to ‘relevance’ and ‘cultural appropriateness’ is *not* necessary only when working with groups or populations who are marked culturally as ‘other’ or ‘different’ or ‘diverse’. Instead, such attention is necessary in working with *any* group or population in *any* context, including those seen to be ‘mainstream’ or ‘normal’. For example, a group of 16-year-old, white, middle-class, heterosexual boys from inner-city Melbourne have ‘culture’ – specific formations of identity, norms, and interaction – just as much as do boys who are older, indigenous, poor, or gay.

Beyond this general principle of relevance, however, there is a powerful rationale for violence prevention and respectful relationships curricula to pay attention in particular to forms of difference or diversity associated with gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and disability. There are several components to this:

- Violence – its practice, meanings, causes, and impacts – is tied to various forms of difference or diversity:
- Given this, violence prevention education is more effective if culturally relevant.
- Given that some forms of difference or diversity are tied to inequalities of power and patterns of disadvantage, an ethical practice in violence prevention requires an inclusive approach.

There is very little empirical evidence of what constitutes most effective practice in violence prevention education with particular populations. However, there certainly is evidence that culturally relevant interventions among racially diverse populations are more effective than ‘colourblind’ ones.

‘Cultural appropriateness’ should refer also to a sensitivity to *gender* cultures. Among males for example, there is significant diversity in the constructions of masculinity which are dominant in particular social contexts and communities. This diversity certainly is shaped by ethnic differences, but also by many other forms of social differentiation. There are social groups, workplaces and social networks of boys and men in which violence against women is frequent and viewed as legitimate and other contexts in which this violence is rare and seen as unacceptable. One of the first steps in working with a particular group or community of boys or men should be to map their gendered and sexual culture, in order to see what aspects of this culture contribute to relationship and family violence and what aspects can be mobilised in support of non-violence.

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(5) Impact evaluation

Good practice programs involve a comprehensive process of evaluation which is integrated into program design and implementation.

Without substantive evaluation, we have little idea of whether we are making a difference, and if we are, *how* we're doing so. In violence prevention and healthy relationships education, it is not good enough to measure 'customer satisfaction' with the session. Nor is it good enough to simply ask participants after the program what impact they think it had.

In order to assess and improve its effectiveness, violence prevention curricula must use pre- and post-intervention evaluations, based on standardised measures of both attitudes and behaviour, with both short- and long-term assessments. Furthermore, evaluation should include a process for dissemination of program findings.

There are further aspects of evaluation which are desirable, but not mandatory, in violence prevention and respectful relationships programs. Ideally, impact evaluations incorporate the use of standard measures or portions of them, lengthy and longitudinal assessments, and measures of not only attitudes but also behaviours. There is an argument too for education programs to use more sophisticated understandings of the intended, and actual, processes of change among participants. Rather than assuming that there will be one common pattern of change among participants or that individuals will vary quantitatively in terms of a common growth pattern, evaluators should look for diversity and contradiction. They should investigate why some individuals 'rebound' to pre-intervention attitudes or behaviours and others do not, and the extent to which different strategies are required for low-risk and high-risk males. They should also explore the mediators of change, those factors which influence whether and how change occurs.

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The state of the field in Victoria

Few of the programs currently being delivered in Australian schools meet all the standards for good practice. Most do not involve a whole-of-school engagement, have short durations, focus on awareness-raising and not also skills-building, and lack substantive evaluation. Only a handful of programs meet most good practice criteria. They aim for a whole of school approach, are sustained, focused on skills-building and developing student self-awareness, include a structural examination of gender and power, and undertake formal evaluation.

Few if any existing programs cover the range of content and use the range of teaching and learning methods that represent good practice in violence prevention education. Few address both domestic violence and sexual violence or do so with insufficient detail. Many focus on attitudes but neglect behaviours, and some use time-pressured or overly didactic teaching methods with insufficient room for interaction and discussion. Few explicitly develop young people's skills in healthy and non-violent sex, relationships and intimacy. At the same time, there are strong examples of good practice.

Most if not all violence prevention educators are well aware when their efforts do not meet emerging standards of best practice. They are aware of, and indeed aspire to, these standards. At the same time, they face serious institutional and structural barriers to the realisation of those ambitions. The same often is true of school staff involved in violence prevention and healthy relationships curricula. Indeed, one of the authors of *Respectful Relationships Education* himself has been involved in violence prevention education which was a long way from the standards of good practice here, in centering on one-off sessions delivered without substantive evaluation, and both authors are well aware of the constraints on violence prevention practice.

Furthermore, many violence prevention educators make sustained efforts to achieve standards of good practice with little support or resourcing.

At the same time, we must be realistic about what constitutes effective prevention practice and determined to reach it. We must do more than 'deliver and hope'. We must be prepared to apply emerging standards of good practice to existing efforts in order to assess, compare, and improve them. And of course, we must be open to debate and revision of the standards themselves. In short, we must strive to make our work to end violence as effective as it can be.

Advancing the Field: Best practice in schools-based violence prevention

Dr Michael Flood
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Violence prevention

- Forms of prevention:
 - Before the problem starts: *Primary* prevention
 - Once the problem has begun: *Secondary* prevention
 - Responding afterwards: *Tertiary* prevention
- All contribute to each other.

The rationale for violence prevention among children and young people

- Starting young can have a lasting effect on children's and young people's later relationships.
- Young people already are being exposed to, and influenced by, domestic violence.
- Young people already are being subjected to, and perpetrating, violence themselves.
- Violence-supportive attitudes, norms, and relations already are visible among young people.
- Violence prevention among children and young people has been shown to work.

The rationale for violence prevention in schools

- Schools have distinct advantages as sites of violence prevention education.
- Experience and resources in, and knowledge of, schools-based violence prevention is relatively well developed.
- Schools can facilitate partnerships, increasing investment and effectiveness.
- School climates and cultures themselves can be conducive to violence.
- School peers play critical roles in young people's involvements in violence, both negative and positive.
- Schools are sites of violence perpetration and victimisation.
- Schools-based prevention education has been shown to work.

Evaluating prevention

- There has been little evaluation of primary prevention strategies.
- The greatest body of information about effectiveness is in relation to schools-based prevention programs.
- Evaluations of such programs show that, if done well, initiatives can produce lasting change.

The effectiveness of prevention education among young people

- Prevention education among young people can produce lasting change in attitudes and behaviours.
- Few programs have been evaluated, and existing evaluations often are limited.
- Effectiveness is not guaranteed: some programs showing no or negative effects.
- Australian evaluations are rare, and limited, but some do show positive results.

What works?

- There is an emerging consensus on the elements of good practice.
 - From both international and local reviews.
- And there is also debate.
- And we need to know much more.

Five criteria for good practice

1. A whole school approach
2. A program framework and logic
3. Effective curriculum delivery
4. Inclusive, relevant, and culturally sensitive practice
5. Impact evaluation

(1) A whole-of-school approach

- Programs should:
 - Be based on a whole-of-school approach, operating across:
 - Curriculum, teaching and learning;
 - School policy and practices;
 - School culture, ethos and environment;
 - The relationships between school, home and the community.

- And involving:
 - Comprehensive curriculum integration;
 - Assessment and reporting;
 - Specialised training and resources for teaching and support staff;
 - Reinforcement of violence prevention programming through school policies, structures, and processes.

(2) A program framework and logic

- Programs should:
 - Incorporate an appropriate theoretical framework for understanding violence, which:
 - Draws on feminist scholarship, in particular in addressing the links between gender, power, and violence, examining violence-supportive constructions of gender and sexuality, and fostering gender-equitable and egalitarian relations.
 - Incorporate a theory of change – an account of the ways in which project content and processes will be used to achieve the project's intended outcomes.

(3) Effective curriculum delivery

- Dimensions:
 - a) Content
 - b) Delivery (teaching methods)
 - c) Structure
 - d) Staff (Teachers and educators)

a) Curriculum content

- Programs should:
 - Be informed by feminist scholarship on violence against girls and women;
 - Address various forms of violence;
 - Target the antecedents to or determinants of violent behaviour;
 - Address not only attitudes but also behaviours, interpersonal relations, and collective and institutional contexts.
 - Avoid focusing only on strategies for minimising one's own risks of victimisation, instead both addressing systemic constraints on safety and teaching commitments to and skills in non-violence.

b) Curriculum delivery (teaching methods)

- Programs should:
 - Adopt the general characteristics of effective teaching and learning practice.
 - Involve the use of quality teaching materials.
 - Be interactive and participatory.
 - Address cognitive, affective, and behavioural domains.
 - Be matched to stages of change.
 - Give specific attention to skills development.
 - Respond appropriately to participants' disclosures of victimisation and perpetration.

c) Curriculum structure

- Programs should:
 - Be of sufficient duration and intensity to produce change.
 - Be timed and crafted to suit children's and young people's developmental needs, including their developing identities and social and sexual relations.
 - Have clear rationales for their use of single-sex and/or mixed-sex groups, including an understanding of the merits and drawbacks of each.

d) Staff: teachers and educators

- Programs should:
 - Be delivered by skilled teachers and/or educators;
 - Supported by resources, training, and ongoing support.
 - Have clear rationales for their use of teachers, community educators, and/or peer educators;
 - Have clear rationales for, or a critical understanding of, their use of female and/or male staff.

(4) Relevant, inclusive, and culturally sensitive practice

- Programs should:
 - Be relevant, that is, informed in all cases by knowledge of their target group or population and their local contexts.
 - Be inclusive and culturally sensitive, embodying these principles in all stages of program design, implementation and evaluation.
 - Involve consultation with representatives or leaders from the population group(s) participating in the program where appropriate.

(5) Impact evaluation

- Programs should:
 - Involve a comprehensive process of evaluation, which at minimum:
 - Reflects the program framework and logic;
 - Includes evaluation of impact or outcomes, through:
 - Pre- and post-intervention assessment.
 - Long-term follow-up.
 - Includes a process for dissemination of program findings in the violence prevention field.

- And which ideally includes:
 - The use of standard measures or portions of them;
 - Longitudinal evaluation including lengthy follow-up at six-months or longer;
 - Measures of not only attitudes but also behaviours;
 - Examination of processes of change and their mediators;
 - Experimental or quasi-experimental design incorporating control or comparison schools, students, or groups.

The state of the field in Victoria

- Few programs meet all the standards for good practice.
 - Most educators know that their efforts do not meet emerging standards of best practice.
 - Most educators aspire to these standards.
 - Many educators make sustained efforts to achieve them.
- At the same time, we must do more than 'deliver and hope'.
- Our efforts must be well-organised, well evaluated, and well supported.