

U T L O O K



Keep youth constructively busy. That's one central strategy of the Community Youth Intervention Program (CYIP) of Milwaukee's Social Development Commission. Young people referred to the program by courts, schools and families work with case managers to set academic and school attendance goals and then seek the homework help they need to achieve those goals.

They are encouraged to join sports leagues and other recreational programs, and some of the teens are appointed to serve on CYIP's youth advisory council. In addition, the Social Development Commission connects its young clients with potential employers.

"We want to fill up their hours with positive activities," says Todd Beadle, manager of youth development programs for the Social Development Commission.

That strategy for preventing youth violence echoes and reinforces programs designed to head off alcohol and other drug abuse. It also supports

Promoting Peace

Programs emphasize empathy, impulse control, anger management and alternatives to head off youth violence

other prevention efforts as programs for youth increasingly underscore the importance of accentuating a variety of positive behaviors.

They also acknowledge the value of working together for both young people and their families. For example, CYIP staff work to connect their clients with other youth programs and their families with energy assistance, Head Start for young siblings, elderly care for grandparents and other relatives, transition and victim assistance, a food pantry, and a program to provide clothing to families in need.

"Once we get a young person in our program, we see how we can help their family as well," Beadle says. "We know that if everything's going right with the household, nine times out of ten everything's going to go all right for the youth."

Looking for answers

Recent tragedies have riveted the nation's attention on the toll of youth violence. The school shootings in Paducah, Kentucky, and Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, were not singular events. Between July 1992 and June 1994, 105 violent deaths occurred on or near school grounds or at school-associated events. The majority (81 percent) were homicides and firearms were used in most (77 percent) of the deaths. The violent deaths

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 for Prevention Resources

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occurred in communities of all sizes in 25 states.

However, despite concerns about increasing homicidal violence among adolescents, current trends suggest a downward turn in this area of aggression among youth. Current research illustrates that although the overall number of deaths related to school shootings has declined, the number of youth victims per act of violence has risen. And while violent acts resulting in death are decreasing, other forms of youth violence continue to rise.

In the testimony of September 1999, before the U.S. Senate, the Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala provided information regarding the extent of youth violence in the United States. The homicide rates for young males began to decline in 1994 and dropped 25 percent between 1993 and 1996 (from 34.7 to 26.1 per 100,000).

In 1997, the latest year for which data is available from the Bureau of Justice, the rate of homicide among males 15 to 19 years old was 22.6 per 100,000, a continuing decline. While the trend points to lower levels of homicide among youth, homicide remains the second leading cause of death for persons ages 15 to 24, and it is the leading cause of death for African-American youths in this age

group. In each year since 1988, more than 80 percent of homicide victims ages 15 to 19 were killed with a firearm.

In response to those tragedies, myriad curricula and programs, including peace tables and peer mediation have been initiated. In the Madison Metropolitan School District, staff at each school choose the program they think will work best with their students, says Joan Lerman, Safe and Drug-Free Schools coordinator for the district. Madison schools have a districtwide anti-harassment policy. Some schools have chosen to make that policy the centerpiece of their violence prevention program.

"There's more staff buy-in when they have input into selection of a curriculum or program. That process allows the school to own whatever program they choose," Lerman explains. "Also, different schools have differing needs."

The district's annual climate survey of parents, staff and students is one key indicator of the effectiveness of programs in promoting empathy, impulse control and anger management. Violence prevention efforts often dovetail with AODA and other health promotion efforts, she adds.

"We go where the energy is and where there's an interest and a need," Lerman notes.

Where the wrong path leads
Milwaukee's CYIP program seeks to head off gang and crime involvement by showing young people already in the court system what it's like to be incarcerated. Young men

referred to CYIP by the juvenile justice system travel to the adult correctional facilities in Racine and Green Bay. Young women visit the Taycheedah women's prison to meet with inmates.

"There's a big difference between the bus ride there and the bus ride home," Beadle notes. "On the way back, everyone's quiet. You can tell they're sitting there thinking, 'How can I turn my life around?' They don't want to have any part of that."

Bernie Stevens's message to students at schools on reservations in central and northern Wisconsin is more immediate. As a social worker at Lincoln Hills School, a correctional facility for boys ages 10 to 21, he participates in individual and group counseling for those young people and their families. When he speaks to young people at other schools, he focuses on prevention of AODA and criminal behavior, and on how to stay out of Lincoln Hills.

Stevens paints a picture for his audience of the path into the juvenile justice system, of the group homes and treatment centers where young people are often given opportunities to head off more serious consequences of life inside Lincoln Hills, and of "what's expected of them in the system" before they can return home. Stevens speaks of lost freedom and privileges, how residents at Lincoln Hills School aren't allowed to wear their own clothes and where drinking soda is a rare treat. Those may seem like minor inconveniences, but those examples capture his listeners' attention.

Fights, often alcohol-related, and

domestic violence at home are frequent topics when students talk about violence in their lives, Stevens says. His advice to them is to seek out positive programs in their communities, even when peer pressure makes it seem "uncool" to participate in those programs, and to find an adult to whom they can talk.

"A lot of kids don't think it's OK to ask for help," he notes. "The message I hear from them is that they want someone who's willing just to listen to them, not to have all the answers."

Stevens applauds the trend he sees in tribal schools to expand anger management programs to help young people identify strategies they can use in their everyday lives. "They've gone beyond just calming down kids related to a specific incident to involving the students in developing their own anger management strategies," he notes.

Like the CYIP program in Milwaukee, Stevens notes that tribal youth programs are also reaching out to families. For example, a ROPES course offered on the Menominee reservation is designed for family participation.

Developing a positive attitude, learning conflict resolution skills, dealing with peer pressure and adopting protective behaviors are major themes of the COPS (Classes on Personal Safety) program offered by safety education officers of the Madison Police Department to local fourth and fifth graders.

COPS stresses a central rule of safety, says Officer Jim Morovic: Trust your sense of fear. When you're in a

situation that seems dangerous, get away. Talk with someone you trust about things that make you feel uncomfortable.

Whenever possible, the police educators tie their message into school programs and encourage students to talk about the issues discussed during the 12-week curriculum with their parents. They also try to make the message as concrete as possible to 10- and 11-year-olds. For example, they contrast gang involvement to joining Girl Scouts to illustrate the negative consequences of the former.

"They remember those kinds of images, and it makes our discussions less abstract," Morovic says.

Rise in bullying

Bullying is one area in which school violence has risen tremendously over the past decade.

- In 1995, 14.5 percent of students ages 12 to 19 reported experiencing various forms of victimization at school.
- In 1996, students ages 12 to 18 were victims of about 255,000 incidents of nonfatal serious violent crime at school.

Records of "serious violent crime" don't include verbal abuse, physical abuse that doesn't produce injury, harassment, sexual abuse, stalking, coercion, exclusion, destructive rumors or other forms of youth violence. The extent of bullying behavior in schools is much greater, with many statistics relying on incidents reported to police. The percentage of high school seniors who reported being victimized at school during the previous 12

months in the years 1976 through 1997 is shown on the graph (page 4).

In addition, 13.1 percent of violent crimes and nearly 18 percent of simple assaults occurred inside school buildings or on school property in 1994. Violence isn't relegated to urban areas. In 1997, high school seniors from metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas were about equally likely to report being victimized at school in the previous 12 months.

Young people also suffer as witnesses to violent crimes. *The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health* found that more than one in ten middle- and high-school youths see a shooting or stabbing each year. Among African-American youth, nearly one in four young people have this experience.

The U.S. Department of Education ERIC publication "Student Victimization at School" (Statistics in Brief, October 1995) reports that unsafe conditions at school are a reality for most students in the United States. The report found that 56 percent of surveyed students had personally witnessed some type of crime or victimization at school, including bullying, physical attack or robbery; 71 percent reported that such incidents happened at their schools. Nearly 25 percent of students reported worrying about becoming victims of crime or threats at school, while 12 percent reported being victimized at school. More elementary, middle, and junior high school students reported being worried about becoming victims at school than did senior high school students.

Identifying factors related to youth violence

One of the first steps toward preventing violence, according to the public health approach advocated by the Centers for Disease Control, is to identify and understand the factors that place young people at risk for violent victimization and perpetration.

Research shows that a number of individual and social factors increase the probability of violence during adolescence and young adulthood. According to "Predictors of Youth Violence" in the U.S. Department of Juvenile Justice Bulletin, April 2000, some of these factors clustered in four areas include:

Individual	Family	Peer/School	Neighborhood
History of early aggression	Exposure to violence	Association with peers engaged in high-risk or problem behaviors	Poverty and diminished economic opportunity
Beliefs supportive of violence	Parental drug/alcohol abuse	Low commitment to school	High levels of transiency and family disruption
Social/cognitive deficits	Poor emotional attachment to parents or caregivers	Academic failure	Exposure to violence
Hyperactivity or attention deficits at age 10, 14 and 16 doubled the risk of violent behavior at age 18	Poor monitoring or supervision of children	Low academic performance at ages 10, 14 and 16 predicted an increased risk for involvement in violence at age 18	Community disorganization, availability of drugs, and knowing adults involved in criminal activities at ages 14 and 16 all were associated with an increased risk for later involvement in violence
Sensation seeking and involvement in drug selling at ages 14 and 16 more than tripled the risk of involvement in violence	Parental attitudes favorable to violence when subjects were age 10 more than doubled the risk that subjects would engage in violence at age 18	Behavior problems at school (as rated by teachers) when subjects were age 10 significantly predicted involvement in violence at age 18	Environmental health factors may also play a role: University of Pittsburgh researchers recently cited ties between juvenile delinquency and lead poisoning. Convicted male juveniles were nearly twice as likely to have high levels of lead in their bones as those with no convictions
	Poor family management practices when subjects were age 14 doubled the risk for later involvement in violence	Low commitment to schooling, low educational aspirations, and multiple school transitions at ages 14 and 16 predicted a significantly increased risk for involvement in violence at age 18	
	Parental criminality when subjects were age 14 (not assessed at age 10) more than doubled the risk for involvement in violence at age 18	Having delinquent friends at ages 10, 14 and 16 predicted an increased risk for later involvement in violence	
		Gang membership at age 14 more than tripled the risk for involvement in violence at age 18	
		Gang membership when subjects were age 16 more than quadrupled the risk for involvement in violence at age 18	

Considering all nonfatal crime (theft plus violent crime), 12- through 18-year-old students were victims of about 3.3 million crimes while they were at school in 1996,

and a similar number of crimes (about 3.1 million) away from school. These represent victimization rates of 128 crimes per 1,000 students at school and 117 crimes

per 1,000 students away from school.

Youth suicide is an inseparable component of the problem of youth violence. Suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people,



ages 15-24, in the United States. The rates have nearly tripled since 1950 but over the past decade have declined by about 10 percent. In 1997, according to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, about 21 percent of students in grades 9 through 12, more than one in five reported that they seriously considered taking their own lives during the previous year. And almost 8 percent reported actually attempting suicide. Suicide among American Indian/Alaskan Native youth is especially high, with rates three to four times those of the general population.

Building on assets

Shalala reiterates the research on building community assets for youth, stating that youth development is a significant prevention strategy, and that starting early in our approach to healthy child and adolescent development is crucial. This means that as a society we must ensure that every child has a healthy start and enact policies supportive of parents as they strive to nurture and protect their children from infancy through adolescence. One strategy is to commit to investing in quality child care and early childhood education services that can help to lay the foundation for positive child development.

The WI Council on Children and Families has produced a series of educational videos outlining the newest research. Brain development from birth to age three shows the importance of children's earliest experiences in shaping their future development. Continuing research consistently shows that the connec-

tions in the brain that are formed during this time provide the foundation for intellectual development and the capacity to form social bonds and empathize with others, which are key factors in promoting healthy, nonviolent development. Structural changes in the brain occur when children experience violence within the home, and children suffer developmental lags and voids when they are focused on staying safe rather than learning about themselves and the world around them.

In addition, research shows that the quality of child care and other early childhood programs is integrally linked to the healthy development of children, preparing them for success in school and helping them to establish positive social relationships with adults and peers. Furthermore, quality early childhood programs can help parents to strengthen their relationships with their children, improve their parenting skills and become more actively involved in their children's ongoing education and development.

Shalala cites statistics that indicate there are early warning signs of potentially lethal violence, including the overall national incidence of bullying behavior, threats, and weapon carrying. Responding effectively to these early warning signs is crucial. One of the most effective forms of response is increased prevention efforts in schools and

communities to reduce these early behaviors.

Studies of initial violence prevention surveyed by the Centers for Disease Control programs show that there was a general concern about exposure to violence in schools and neighborhoods and that the full involvement of the community is critical to developing a sense of ownership for the problem of violence and its solutions. Effective strategies include school-based curricula that emphasize the development of problem-solving skills, anger management, and other strategies that help kids develop social skills. In addition, parenting programs that promote strong bonding between parents and children and that teach parents skills in managing conflict in the family, are also very promising. Mentoring programs for young people have demonstrated positive results also. ◀

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THE WAY I SEE IT



Examining the connections of health, behavior and emotions

Dr. Ned Kalin, MD, Hedberg Professor and Chair of the University of Wisconsin–Madison Medical School
Department of Psychiatry and Director of the Department of Psychiatry's HealthEmotions Research Institute

Recent scientific evidence suggests that individuals who are generally negative may be at greater risk to suffer from stress-related physical problems such as heart disease. Other evidence shows that individuals with positive dispositions have an enhanced immune response. The recently developed HealthEmotions Research Institute located at the University of Wisconsin is dedicated to using state-of-the-art scientific techniques to understand how these phenomena take place. More broadly, the HealthEmotions Research Institute studies how emotions influence health and disease and what makes some individuals more vulnerable and others resilient in the face of stress or disease. Dr. Ned Kalin, Director of the Institute, talks about the impact of current brain research in prevention.

Q: Many prevention programs serve adolescents. Does any brain research target this population?

A: Brain research is going on at all ages, from infancy through childhood and adolescence into adulthood and older age. Adolescence is an area that's been relatively understudied. That's sort of a general theme throughout science and medicine. They're harder studies to do, and to some extent, there's been less attention paid to children and adolescents.

That is changing. We have the equipment now where we can image the living brain and ask questions about what brain regions are important in certain types of behavior, personality types and emotional responses. And there are some ongoing studies beginning to examine in adolescents and in children different areas of the brain and how they function in relation to different feeling states or emotions.

Q: So you can get a picture of how the brain looks when a person feels a certain way?

A: We can put somebody in a MRI brain scanner, which is a very safe procedure. Using the scanner, we can ask, "Is this structure getting activated when the person feels sad?" or "Is a different structure activated when somebody feels cheerful or very angry?"

If we can identify an area of the brain that gets active when someone gets angry, the next thing we want to know is the relationship between how angry that person gets and how active that particular brain region gets.

Q: How can science apply that type of information?

A: That's why we developed the HealthEmotions Research Institute about four and a half years ago. We are working to understand how emotions occur and where in the

brain they occur and how they affect the body. The next step is trying to figure out how you can think of changing certain responses for people who are out of control with their emotional responses and reactions.

The first step is to understand the science of where it's occurring and what areas of the brain are important in relation to a specific emotion. Once this is accomplished, we can begin to study interventions and see if the interventions actually affect that brain region. This type of research gives us some clues about how certain interventions work and also how to think through some new and creative interventions that we hadn't thought of previously. If we see that one intervention is effective in altering brain function in a key area, we may be able to come up with other interventions that may also work.

Q: Is it too early to think about how prevention can put this research to work?

A: As we use these scientific techniques to understand the regions of the brain that are important, we can begin to think of ways to identify adolescents who are at risk but who have not yet expressed a certain illness or problem.

It is our hope that in individuals who are at risk, that we can uncover a vulnerability in brain function

before the person starts to experience the behaviors or major symptoms associated with the problem. That's our hope. It hasn't been demonstrated yet, but if we know where in the brain to look and start looking before the onset of an illness, we might be able to uncover those early signs long before the behavioral manifestations occur. Then we would have an effective biological marker of someone who has a problem-before, in brain function, that person becomes overtly symptomatic.

At our institute, we are in the process of designing an experiment in relation to schizophrenia, which is an illness that comes on in late adolescence. It's a devastating psychiatric illness. It has a very long-term course where people are unable to think properly. They have all sorts of alterations in the way they perceive reality and the way they behave. It can interfere extensively with their psychosocial functioning and relationships.

We're thinking about ways to do brain scans in children or adolescents who would be at risk and try to refine or better predict who's likely to develop the illness. If we can accomplish this, then we can begin thinking about interventions long before the illness expresses itself. If we can ultimately identify ways to prevent illness and protect people from the devastating impact of these conditions, we may be able to develop an approach to use for all sorts of problems.

About the Author and HealthEmotions Institute

Dr. Kalin is Hedberg Professor of Psychiatry and Psychology and Chair of the Psychiatry Department at UW-Madison. The HealthEmotions Research Institute was established in 1996 to focus a broad array of university resources on the scientific investigation of how emotions influence health.

"Understanding how positive states of mind influence the body is part of the next great frontier in the

brain sciences," notes an institute brochure. "It is the life science equivalent of discovering the fundamental particles that constitute the building blocks of matter in physics."

Institute research is cross-disciplinary, including human and nonhuman primate and biomolecular studies, and employs state-of-the-art brain imaging technologies to develop basic knowledge of brain systems regulating positive emotions and their relationship to key physiological systems affecting health. Ultimately, the intent is to apply the knowledge gained to the development of biological and psychosocial intervention strategies.

Next issue!

The next Prevention Outlook will highlight Dr. Seth Pollock and his specific brain research with youth.

Q & A *By Kathi Kocs*

Isn't bullying a normal part of childhood?

Researchers estimate that approximately 9 percent of students in grades one through nine, or about 3 million U.S. students, encounter regular bullying by peers. Some research suggests that one child is bullied every seven seconds in the United States and other research suggests a 31 percent rise in the

number of children being permanently shunned by classmates between 1990 and 1992. According to the U.S. Department of Education the rates of bullying have escalated 1,000 percent since 1994. The Dec. 6, 1995, Journal of the American Medical Association reported on genital assaults, in which another youth harms, or attempts to hurt, a child's genitals by kicking or other physical assault. The journal reports the results of a national survey, which revealed that about 2 percent of girls and 10 percent of boys

suffered a genital assault in the previous year. What's normal about that?

How is bullying different from other forms of aggression?

Bullying is the intentional harming or hurting of one person, or their belongings, by another person or persons. Bullying behavior results when a person or group takes advantage of a perceived

Q & A *continued on page 13*



Working THE WEB

By Nancy Kendall, Prevention Resource Center Librarian

Many valuable resources addressing violence prevention and the safety of our children are available on the web. Some focus specifically on school violence, gun violence or family violence issues. Others provide a broad range of topics and information. Many offer excellent full-text documents, articles, reports and statistics for your use.

Here we list a few of the excellent sites available online. In addition, on our web site you will find a printable and reproducible sheet listing these and other violence prevention resources currently available online. We encourage you to copy and distribute this list to your friends, colleagues and constituents. As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions for web sites to be included in future columns.

Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV)

[<http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/>]
The CSPV uses a multidisciplinary approach to violence and works to build connections between the research community and practitioners and policymakers. This site includes information about Colorado's "Safe Communities-Safe Schools" initiative.

Children's Safety Network-National Injury and Violence Prevention Resource Center

[<http://www.edc.org/HHD/csn/>]
The Children's Safety Network provides

resources and technical assistance to maternal and child health agencies and other organizations seeking to reduce unintentional injuries and violence to children and adolescents.

Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse Electronic Clearinghouse

[<http://www.mincava.umn.edu/>]
As the name suggests, this electronic clearinghouse attempts to provide a "quick and user friendly access point to the extensive electronic resources on the topic of violence and abuse available through the Internet."

National Resource Center for Safe Schools (The SafetyZone)

[<http://www.safetyzone.org/>]
Operated by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, the NRCSS is intended to work with "schools, communities, state and local education agencies, and other concerned individuals and agencies to create safe learning environments and prevent school violence." Of particular interest is the NRCSS SafetyZone Newsletter available online or by subscription. Full-text documents, databases (including the "Promising and Effective Practices Database"), funding information, fact sheets and more are available on this web site.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)

[<http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/>]
Part of the U.S. Department of Justice, the OJJDP provides grants and funding information, programs, resources, calendar of events, statistics, and access to publications online. You can view and download/print their full-text documents using various formats (HTML, ASCII Text or Adobe Acrobat PDF). We encourage you to check out the Publications section where you will find a wide variety of materials that may be of interest. These include fact sheets, publications dealing with delinquency prevention, gangs, violence and victimization, and substance abuse, plus the Youth in Action Bulletin published regularly by the National Youth Network and the OJJDP.

Other sites to check out: Join Together Online-Gun Violence

[<http://www.jointogether.org/gv/>]

Pavnet Online (Partnerships Against Violence Network)

[<http://www.pavnet.org/>]

Preventing Violence in our Schools


[<http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/youthdevelopment/DA7414.html/>]

Safe & Drug Free Schools Program, U.S. Dept. of Education

[<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/>]

New outreach project

In July, 2000, the WCH will be starting a new project with the Alliance for WI Youth (AWY). This project will provide technical assistance to Alliance

members in the area of coalition building. It will also provide specific outreach to Native American groups throughout the state. Eileen Houle is leading this effort with AWY. 

Clearinghouse Offers Youth Violence Prevention Resources

These publications from the Wisconsin Clearinghouse for Prevention Resources are great resources for parents, schools and communities in preventing or countering the effects of youth violence.

Sticks and Stones...

Changing the Dynamic of Bullying and Youth Violence
by Katherine J. Kocs, M.S.W.

Sticks and Stones... provides information on one of the most common and underrated problems of childhood - bullying. Bullying behaviors often underlie problems with drug and alcohol abuse, gang membership, mental health problems, domestic violence, school failure and dropout. This publication provides recent research, discussing who bullies, why, and who they target. It also provides action steps that caring communities, schools, parents, and even other students or siblings can take to reduce bullying and build a caring culture. Age-appropriate reproducible information is provided for youth and concerned adults. The research and activities contained in *Sticks and Stones...* formed the foundation of our very popular outreach presentations throughout Wisconsin.

56 pp./softcover with reproducibles.

Copyright 1999. Order item 780,
\$19.95 each. (call for volume pricing).

The FACTS Toolkit:

Event Planning for Your Family and Community Town Supper
The Family and Community Town Supper (FACTS) model is an innovative tool for facilitating youth, family and community development. FACTS offers an effective structure in which a community can mobilize its resources to create actions related to a community concern, such as youth violence. People from all age groups and walks of life meet together in a nonthreatening forum of a shared meal and group discussion. Generally, a brief topical presentation, often by several speakers representing differing points of view, begins the evening. Small group discussions related to the topic then occur during the meal, with a larger group discussion orchestrated by a facilitator wrapping up the evening.

Family and Community Town Suppers have been so successful that many localities have incorporated them as ongoing community events. Outcomes have included everything from increased voter registration to the development of a community youth center. FACTS has been described as "an innovative and cutting-edge approach to facilitating an intergenerational dialogue and diverse citizen involvement in important community decision-

making." This toolkit covers all facets of planning FACTS in your community—from inception to implementation.

52-pp workbook plus reproducibles with binder, tabs and waterbased markers

Order item 746, \$39.95

Also available from The Wisconsin Clearinghouse:

Item 673 *The Bullying Prevention Handbook: A Guide for Teachers, Principals & Counselors*, by John Hoover and Ronald Oliver

(154 pp./softcover), \$21.95.

Item 729 *Playing with Fire: Creative Conflict Resolution for Young Adults*, by Fiona Macbeth and Nic Fine

(176 pp./softcover), \$19.95.

Item 752 *Ready-to-Use Conflict Resolution Activities for Secondary Students* by Ruth Perlstein and Gloria Thrall

(280 pp./spiralbound), \$37.95.

Reconnecting Youth: A Peer Group Approach to Building Life Skills by Leona Eggert, Liela Nicholas and Linda Owen

(584 pp/3-ring binder with tabs) \$139.00

Resiliency in Schools: Making It Happen for Students and Educators by Nan Henderson and Mike Milstein

(135 pp./softcover) \$19.95.

To order your copy, call us at 800-322-1468 or visit the WCH Online Storefront at:
www.wiclearinghouse.com

PROMISING PRACTICES

By Katherine J. Kocs, MSW

Wisconsin Clearinghouse Research/Communications Specialist

VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS THAT WORK



Recent research strongly suggests that programs that place a strong emphasis on the health, development, educational attainment and economic well-being of children reap great rewards by increasing human potential and lowering societal costs. *Costs and Benefits of Early Childhood Intervention*, by Peter W. Greenwood, Ph.D., OJJDP Fact Sheet #94, February 1999, states that in some situations, childhood interventions can yield measurable benefits, some of which endure for significant time after the program ends.

Nine programs were evaluated, assessing developmental indicators, educational achievement, economic well-being and health for program participants. A matched, randomly assigned control group was used for most of these evaluations. They were performed on programs with participant and control groups large enough at program implementation and follow-up to ensure unbiased results, although resource limitations did not always permit this. Measurable advantages of program participation included:

- Increased emotional or cognitive development for the child or improved parent-child relationships
- Improved educational processes and outcomes for the child
- Enhanced economic self-sufficiency, initially for the parent and later for the child, through increased participation in the labor force, decreased participation in welfare and higher incomes

- Decreased criminal activity
- Improved health-related indicators in areas of child abuse, maternal reproductive health, and substance abuse

The Early Training Project, Perry Preschool, and the Infant Health and Development Project even found IQ differences between program participants and control group members that approached or exceeded 10 points at the end of the program. The difference in rates of special education and grade retention at age 15 in the Abecedarian project participants exceeded 20 percent. Participants in the Elmira, N.Y., Prenatal/Early Infancy Project (PEIP) experienced 33 percent fewer emergency room visits through age 4 than children in the control group, and their mothers were on welfare 33 percent less of the time. In the Perry Preschool program, earnings at age 27 were 60 percent higher among program participants.

One question frequently raised by policymakers is: Are the benefits of targeted early intervention programs sufficient to justify their costs? For the Perry Preschool and the higher risk families of the Elmira PEIP, best estimates of the savings accrued to government exceed the costs—\$25,000 versus \$12,000 for each family participating in the Perry program; \$24,000 versus \$6,000 for each higher risk family participating in the Elmira program. On the basis of research to date, some targeted early intervention programs have substantial favorable effects

on child health and development, educational achievement, and economic well-being. When targeted to families who will benefit most, some of these programs have generated savings to the government that exceed program costs.

Other youth violence sources and resources:

About Juvenile Violence and Its Prevention: Booklet for parents, part of the Family Forum Library: Suggests ways for parents to help their children deal with anger, conflict, and aggression. Addresses the causes of violent behavior, danger signs parents should look for in children, and violence prevention techniques.

Order from: The Bureau for At-Risk Youth
135 Dupont Street, P.O. Box 760
Plainview, NY 11803-0760
Tel: 800-99-YOUTH, Fax: 800-262-1886
E-mail: info@at-risk.com
URL: <http://www.at-risk.com>

Building Violence Prevention Skills: Video series for grades K-12, promoting a safe school environment, meeting guidelines for Safe and Drug-Free Schools funding programs. In this comprehensive classroom program, violence is defined as words or actions that hurt other people or their possessions. Its lessons emphasize that using violence or nonviolence is a choice, and students can choose behaviors that help avoid violence. These videos focus on developing life skills in anger management, conflict resolution, and empathy. Each grade level of this series features a video



that models typical student situations, stimulates discussion, and enhances teaching.

Order from: AGS
4201 Woodland Road, P.O. Box 99
Circle Pines, MN 55014
Tel: 800-328-2560, Fax: 800-471-8457
E-mail: agsmail@agsnet.com
URL: <http://www.agsnet.com>

Helping Teens Stop Violence: Guidebook and curriculum for parents and service providers: Teaches young people to resist abuse and prevent violence in their relationships. Features practical activities for teachers, counselors, clergy, or parents who deal with teens. Includes antiviolence role-playing techniques and strategies for families and teens dealing with violence.

Order from: Hunter House, Inc., Publishers
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(for U.S. orders)
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**Look what they're doing!
Award-winning youth violence prevention programs**

Violence prevention programs can take on a myriad of forms. Some programs focus on youth development, others implement special curricula, and still others provide alternative activities or focus on communication skills. Many involve communities or schools. Most successful violence prevention programs are structured to make youth feel a part of the community in which they live and provide them with positive adult attention.

Violence Prevention Project, Health Promotion Program for Urban Youth
1010 Massachusetts Avenue
Boston, MA 02118

This Violence Prevention Project is a collaborative effort of schools (elementary, middle, high, community, and alternative), multi-service centers, boys and girls clubs, recreation programs, housing developments, juvenile detention facilities, churches, and neighborhood health centers. The project has four components: curriculum development, community-based prevention education to reinforce nonviolent behaviors learned in the classroom, clinical treatment services and media campaigns.

(<http://www.ihpnet.org/4model.html> -- select the "Search Database" link, then search for the "practice name")
Program objectives are:

- to train providers in diverse community settings in a violence-prevention curriculum targeted to adolescents
- to reduce the incidence of interpersonal violence among adolescents, along with the associated social and medical hazards.

This Violence Prevention Project is seen as a leader in violence prevention both in Boston and nationally. During the pilot phase two community educators implemented and coordinated the community-based program; 750 participants from schools (elementary, middle, high, community, and alternative), multi-service centers, boys and girls clubs, recreation programs, housing developments, juvenile detention facilities, churches, and neighborhood health centers have participated in prevention education training.

Phed-X Youth Service Corps
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The primary objective of the corps is to involve young males ages 10 to 18 in the redevelopment of their own community, through service and leadership opportunities. The goal is to develop this specific population so the young men become integral parts of the community's

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REACHING *out*

By Eileen Houle, Wisconsin Clearinghouse Senior Outreach Specialist

Communities across Wisconsin are moving forward. They are constantly engaging in important conversations and discussions about crucial issues that they face everyday. With each of these exchanges comes the opportunity to take action, and to seek new ways of addressing the problems we all face.

Some say talk is cheap, but it is a key mechanism to understanding what the needs are and where solutions can be found. It is a privilege here at the Wisconsin Clearinghouse for Prevention Resources to witness the dialogues that occur around the state. We are invited to participate in various ways: providing input on the scope of the problem; highlighting what others have done when faced with similar situations; keeping an account of what works and what does not; assisting in the creation of opportunities for more talking; and giving encouragement and connections to all of those who are working to improve the lives of families and children in Wisconsin.

Conversations highlighted here are just a snapshot of the issues we have seen raised as of late.

The communities of Fond du Lac, Milwaukee, Lac du Flambeau, Appleton and Beloit participated in the Robert M. La Follette Institute of Public Affairs - Teaming Up on Gangs: Skornicka Seminar for Communities. The event provided an opportunity to not only share strategies to address the issue of youth violence and gangs, but also to have the chance to reflect on a perspective of their community offered by La Follette graduate students. Young


people and adults from each of the communities engaged in key discussions about youth workers, funding priorities and coordinating efforts.

Family and Community Town Suppers (FACTS) continue to be used as an effective strategy for meaningful dialogue for youth and adults around Wisconsin. McFarland schools hosted a FACTS discussing issues around co-curricular and activity codes. A follow-up FACTS will be held in the fall. As part of its citizenship efforts, Spooner Elementary School hosted a FACTS event to support what parents are doing well to promote assets in their children and their community. And Wausau YWCA continues to host monthly FACTS; recent topics have included: "Underage Drinking," "Dangers of the Internet," "Genealogy," "Do We Appreciate Our Youth?" and "Got Brains? Brain Development." The next topic is entitled, "Target Audience: How youth are portrayed in the media."

In more informal conversations in several communities the topic of school violence policies has arisen. Community-based youth centers are struggling with school's zero tolerance violence policies and sending mixed messages if they allow these suspended students to participate in their programming. The Indian Community School of Milwaukee is taking the lead in increasing dialogue about successful efforts to address the unique needs of urban American Indian people and in generating more urban specific research data. The school recently hosted the nation's first Urban Indian Educa-

tion Summit. Representing 10 states, over one hundred influential and experienced educators of American Indian children came together to examine and discuss issues such as culture in the curriculum and affinity toward urban rather than traditional cultures, and to offer recommendations for American Indian education researchers. American Indian issues were also addressed at a multi-state program sharing conference attended by Wisconsin Clearinghouse staff and representatives of the St. Croix Tribe. The Center for the Application of Prevention Technology – Central Region (CAPT) sponsored event was the first ever American Indian specific prevention focused conference for this region. Northwest Wisconsin Public Health Departments have been participating in a regional effort entitled "Bridge to Health Collaborative." The alcohol task force sub-committee hosted a one-day conference in Cable to discuss strategies to change policies related to alcohol use in Wisconsin communities and beyond. Wisconsin Clearinghouse staff presented ideas and free materials.

The conversation topics and strategies to engage are varied. Communication and sharing of ideas and thoughts is ongoing. Working our way out of our circles and into others, taking time to listen and reflect will take us in directions beyond where we could ever go on our own.

For more information contact Eileen Briggs Houle at 608-262-9158 or dehoule@facstaff.wisc.edu 

PROMISING PRACTICES
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future as residents, employees, managers, and builders.

The Phed-X Youth Service Corps was created in 1996 by the Indianapolis Urban Enterprise Association in response to concerns voiced by community residents. Service projects and opportunity for community leadership are age-appropriate, and include serving elderly residents, local neighborhood associations, nonprofit organizations, and businesses that make up the Indianapolis Enterprise Zone. Some of these projects include window washing, wood splitting, snow shoveling, brush clearing, painting and newsletter

delivery. The young men earn points that can be exchanged for group social/recreational activities, such as movies, dinner, athletic competitions, cookouts, trips and concerts. However, this program is a form of service learning, providing opportunities for participants to gain practical experience in planning and implementing projects, in a comfortable atmosphere physically, intellectually and emotionally.

Notable project results have been:

- Reduced gang involvement and affiliation
- Reduction of drug trafficking as a source of income
- Reduced negative interaction with law enforcement

- Improved academic performance
- Improved attitudes toward individual potentials
- Increased positive involvement in the community

Participants have:

- Developed an interest in business
- Developed a sense of responsibility toward each other and their community
- Gained respect from and for the community
- Developed constructive peer relationships 

Q & A

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uneven balance of power to harass or harm another person. Even though bullying is very similar to other forms of aggression, there can be some distinctive features:

- The aggression is purposeful.
- The aggression is meant to control another person through physical, verbal or emotional means.
- The aggression typically results because the aggressors see their victims as an easy target.
- The aggression is without any real reason. It results from an imbalance of power, not because of the aggressor's anger or the victim's traits or actions.


- Aggressors often blame the victim for "making me do it" or claim that their actions were "no big deal."

Don't the victims bring it on themselves?

Research demonstrates that victims very seldom bring on the bullying behaviors of others. In fact, when victims are transferred from classrooms, those who bully simply find new victims.

Aren't those who bully low on self-esteem?

Research shows that most youth who bully are not low on self-esteem. These youth often lack the anxiety that is crucial for self-control. Bullies feel fine about themselves; they believe it's the rest of the world that is "wrong." A small percentage of those who bully may be low on self-esteem; however, self-

esteem classes have little effect. These are the "reactive" aggressors who have been abused at home. These youth swing back and forth between aggressive behavior and being the victim. They know how to be victims since they have always been victims. They also know how to be aggressors since they've been taught by example. Their victimization at early ages has led to an actual physical and neurological change in their brain structure. These youth lack the ability to correctly "read" the actions, intentions, body language and facial expressions, neuronal pathways that have not been developed in the brain while those focused on perceiving danger have been overdeveloped. These youth need to retrain the brain, building new pathways for socialization. 



Survey identifies teens' health habits

More than half of Wisconsin's high school students said they drank alcohol in the past month, 38 percent smoked cigarettes, and more than 25 percent seriously considered suicide in the past year, reports the *1999 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)*.

On the positive side, students expressed generally high levels of assets in social support, expectations, positive values, social competencies and grades. In general, positive values and grades demonstrated the most protective power.

YRBS is a national survey by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, conducted in 39 states, four territories and 16 cities over the past 10 years. The study surveys students on a variety of issues: assets, unintentional injuries, weapons and violence, suicide, tobacco and other drug use, sexual behavior, and diet and exercise. Among the results of the 1999 survey:

- 38 percent of students reported riding with a driver who had been drinking at least once in the past month.
- 28 percent of high school seniors drove after drinking alcohol in the past month.
- Both motorcycle and bicycle helmet use increased from 1993 to 1999.
- The proportion of students carrying weapons on school

grounds decreased significantly since 1993, from 9 percent to 6 percent.

- The percentage of students who reported being in a fight decreased from 39 percent to 31 percent from 1993 to 1999.
- Four percent of students reported that they had stayed home at least one day in the past school year because they felt unsafe going to school or at school.
- About one in 10 students reported being threatened because of their race in the past year. One in 20 reported threats from someone who thought they were lesbian, gay or bisexual.
- 10 percent of students reported having been verbally or physically forced to take part in sexual activity.
- About four in 10 students reported sexual harassment at school.
- More than a quarter of high school students reported having been depressed in the past year, and an equal number seriously considered suicide.
- Wisconsin students who are current smokers were more likely to report smoking on 20 or more of the past 30 days than the national average.
- The percent of smoking students who have tried to quit the habit increased substantially between 1993 and 1999.
- The proportion of students who

reported having five or more drinks at one time in the past month increased from 29 percent in 1993 to 34 percent in 1999.

- Two-thirds of the students who reported drinking in the past month consumed five or more drinks at one time.
- Slightly more than 20 percent of all students reported using marijuana in the past 30 days.
- Reports of cocaine use rose from 5 percent in 1993 to 9 percent in 1999.
- 29 percent of students in the 1999 survey said someone had offered, sold or given them illegal drugs at school, compared to 20 percent in 1993.
- 44 percent said it was important to delay having sexual intercourse until they are married, engaged or are adults in a long-term, committed relationship.
- Six out of 10 sexually active students reported using a condom the last time they had sex. Condom use decreases, however, as grade level increases.

The YRBS study found strong correlations among alcohol and other drug use, tobacco use, and vehicle safety. In addition, it noted, violence is correlated with alcohol and other drug use, sexual activity, suicide, tobacco use and vehicle safety.

An executive summary of the most recent Wisconsin YRBS results is available online at: <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/disea/sspw/yrsindx.html>.

PEOPLE & PROJECTS

'Family Week' planned

Prevention advocates throughout the state will observe a pre-Thanksgiving "Week of the Family" in Wisconsin Nov. 10 to 17. Special activities will be announced prior to the observation by the Alliance for Wisconsin Youth in collaboration with the state Family Preservation and Support office.

Fellows join Alliance

Two fellows of the Wisconsin Promise Americorps are working with the Alliance for Wisconsin

Youth to promote youth engagement and mentoring.

The Alliance was awarded a grant through the Wisconsin National and Community Service Board to fund four fellowships through a program of America's Promise and the Corporation for National Service.

The four fellows include: Julie Meyer, who works with the Northwoods Coalition; Tamara Grisham, who works with Milwaukee's Fighting Back Program; and Sadie Schnitzler and Gabriel Heck, who work directly with the Alliance.

Schnitzler focuses on youth engagement and works closely with the Statewide Youth Leadership Council, while Heck is involved in a statewide mentoring

initiative. For more information about their work, contact Schnitzler at 608-266-5547, Heck at 608-267-9328, or Gabrielle Ratte Smith at 608-266-9923 (SmithGR@dhfs.state.wi.us).

Prevention exams set

The written examination for the Certified Prevention Professional (CPP) credential will be given Sept. 15 and Dec. 16 at 8:30 a.m. in Milwaukee and Wisconsin Rapids.

For information on other prevention credentials or to request test registration information, contact Kim Casarez at the WCB office at 800-240-7729 or 414-774-7729.

Youth homicide project findings and recommendations

A study completed this year by researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee has identified some youth violence prevention strategies based on key findings. Some findings included the following:

1. Violent crime by juveniles tends to peak in the afternoon between 3:00-4:00, whereas juvenile homicides that are gang-related occur most frequently between the hours of 8:00-12:00 PM.
2. In 83% of the accident-related homicides, offenders were playing with handguns and/or rifles with a friend and/or relative.
3. Offenders were asked "if a gun had not been available would you have committed the murder in a different way"; of all offenders in the total sample, 66% said there would not have been a murder.
4. Individual and family problems occurred frequently and impacted significantly on both offenders and victims of homicide, especially when multiple problems occurred together. Such factors included: parental marital separation and divorce, parental abuse and neglect, family criminality (mother, father, brother, sister), family domestic violence, referral to juvenile court under age 15, truancy and suspension from school, fighting and serious to severe mental health problems.
5. Both offenders and their parents exhibited significant drug and alcohol problems, including almost 50% of parents of offenders involved in gang-related homicides had serious problems with alcohol and other drugs; in 75% of the cases, the offender was intoxicated or high on alcohol or other drugs at the time of the homicide.

PROJECT FINDINGS

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Some specific recommendations of the study include the following:

- implementation of effective strategies to reduce poverty;
- peer training and support programs; peer counseling programs;
- peer tutoring programs;
- after-school programs that integrate education with recreational activities;
- aggressive development of family-based services including family preservation programs;
- development of educational programs designed with and for at-risk youth;
- preschool programs with weekly home visits by teachers for parents and children;
- evaluation of successful drug treatment programs in correctional facilities—elements of which may be transferable to community-based programs

A full report outlining additional findings and recommendations may be requested from: Harold Rose, Ph.D., Principal Investigator, Milwaukee Homicide Project, Department of Geography, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

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Contact Wisconsin Clearinghouse at our Web Site:

<http://www.uhs.wisc.edu/wch/>

This site contains useful information and prevention resources, including a page on pending Wisconsin legislation on alcohol and other drug abuse.

Visit the Wisconsin Clearinghouse Storefront at:

<http://www.wiclearinghouse.com>

This storefront features late-breaking new releases from Wisconsin Clearinghouse on youth development, positive parenting, AODA and violence prevention, community capacity-building, and behavioral health. Place your order with credit card or purchase order 7 days a week.



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