

## EVALUATION OF THE OLWEUS BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM: HOW THE PROGRAM CAN WORK FOR INNER CITY YOUTH <sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (BPP) is an internationally recognized program to prevent bullying in schools. In this project, 13 inner city schools implemented the BPP through a community partnership. Nine schools participated over four years. One school participated for two years and three schools participated for three years. Fidelity of implementation, bullying incident density (BID), student surveys, and serious incident reports were used to evaluate the project. Results supported a dose response relationship where schools with high fidelity to the program showed better outcomes than schools with low fidelity. Results provide insight into what works to reduce school violence. Barriers to implementation were high staff turnover and competing priorities. Facilitators to implementation were strong administrator and staff support, coordinating school rules and procedures with bullying prevention and a socialized recess program. Future efforts should identify and promote best practices to reduce bullying.

### Introduction

Despite the wide spread publicity and fears of school attack, schools are relatively free of major crime. Of all incidents reported from 2000 to 2004 in the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), only 3.3 percent occurred in schools (FBI, 2006). Lesser forms of violence, such as bullying, are more common. An estimated 1.6 million children in sixth to tenth grade are bullied at least once a week (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001).

Bullying has numerous detrimental health and learning outcomes for victims, bullies, and bystanders. Bullying victims experience traumatic symptoms of loneliness, humiliation, insecurity, difficulty with relationships, or decreased self-assurance (A. G. Carney & Merrell, 2001; J. V. Carney, 2000; Crozier & Skliopidou, 2002); (Fekkes, Pijpers, Fredriks, Vogels, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2006; Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, & Hamby, 2005); (Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpela, Rantanen, & Rimpela, 2000; Kumpulainen et al., 1998); (Rivers, 2004). Victims are reluctant to attend school, resulting in poor academic performance (DeVoe & Kaffenberger, 2005); (Lumsden, 2002). Psychological disorders, such as depression, schizophrenia or suicide, are more common or exacerbated in chronic victims (Burgess, Garbarino, & Carlson, 2006); (J. V. Carney, 2000); (Young Shin, Yun-Joo, & Leventhal, 2005). Bullying victimization is a common precursor to school attacks (Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum, & Modzeleski, 2002). Bystanders suffer from distress by observing the victimization of others (Janson, 2004). The majority of bystanders want to stop the victimization but do not know how to handle the situation (Olweus, 1993). Bullies also experience problems, possibly because they fail to learn normal social boundaries. Bullies are at higher risk for vandalism, shoplifting, fighting,

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substance abuse or school dropout (Nansel, Overpeck, Haynie, Ruan, & Scheidt, 2003); (Olweus, 1995); (Sourander et al., 2006). As adults, male bullies were more likely to have at least one crime conviction and a greater number of convictions (Olweus & Limber, 2000). Bullying impacts the whole school environment. Without appropriate intervention, bullying can have devastating results (Hazler & Carney, 2000).

There is much we can do to prevent bullying. A Google search of school-based violence prevention programs returned 2.2 million hits. Unfortunately, some of the most widely used programs are based on popular philosophy, not theory and research. Youth violence prevention programs, such as peer mediation, scared straight, boot camps, and D.A.R.E. do not actually work (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). Ineffective programs are dangerous because they displace effective programs. Parents and community falsely believe that their children are getting information or treatment when, in fact, they are not. Furthermore, programs that ignore basic youth development, education, or violence prevention theories have the potential to do more harm than good (Mendel, 2000). For example, social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) suggests that certain conditions of situation, environment, and expectation foster observational learning. When D.A.R.E. officers wear service weapons into the classroom, they may unintentionally role model gun carrying. Impressionable students, such as bully victims (situation) with access to a gun (environment) and beliefs that guns bestow attention and respect (expectations) could, theoretically, learn that taking a gun to school provides esteem (observational learning). Practical application of theory is critical to avoid causing more harm than good. If we want to improve the school environment and children's health issues, we must fund programs that work over programs based on politics and popularity (Jarlais et al., 2006; Petrosino & Lavenberg, 2007).

Achieving programs that work in schools starts by identifying evidence-based programs. Several reputable agencies have performed the initial task of comparing programs with respect to previous evaluations, sustainability, replicability, and cost-benefit. The end result is several user-friendly lists of best practice programs. The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence Prevention at University of Colorado at Boulder reviewed over 600 youth violence prevention programs to identify 12 model and 19 promising programs (CSPV, 2002-04). Model programs have demonstrated positive outcomes. Promising programs are based on development or prevention theory and show the potential for success. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) identified 10 universal, four selected, two indicated, and three tiered school-based programs for drug prevention (NIDA, 2003). Universal programs prevent the problem in the general population. Selected programs meet the needs of high-risk students and indicated programs treat students suffering from the disorder. The U.S. Department of Education identified nine exemplary programs and thirty-three promising programs for school safety (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Next steps are to disseminate best practices at the practice level.

## **Program Summary**

The Bullying Prevention Program (BPP) is a model program for school-based bullying prevention (CSPV, 2002-04). The goal of the BPP is to change social norms that promote passive acceptance of bullying behavior (Olweus, 1993). The model is flexible and can be tailored to different cultures. Bullying is defined as the repeated exposure of one child to intentionally harmful actions of one or more youth (Olweus, 1993). The model uses a school planning committee to develop school, classroom, and individual level interventions (Olweus & Limber, 2000). The greatest advantages of the program are that interventions are pro-social and theory-based and may be tailored for target audience development level and culture (DHHS, 2001). Early evaluations of the BPP in Bergen, Norway, showed reductions in student reported bullying up to 50 percent (Olweus, 1997). Later evaluation studies showed reductions of only 21-38 percent (Olweus, 2003). Decreased effectiveness in later studies was believed to be due to moderating variables, such as major curricular changes. Implementation in the United States has also not demonstrated the same degree of effectiveness (Olweus, 2003). Possible reasons for lowered effectiveness may be less intensive implementation, lack of

resources and/ or the role of bullying in American culture. Much of the program's development occurred in Norway, a country that values taking care of fellow citizens. Social responsibility, an important core value of the program, may not translate as easily into the American culture of strength and independence. The balance between cultural effectiveness and fidelity to the program design is difficult to achieve in practice (MacDonald & Green, 2001; US DHHS, 2002). Therefore, it is important to critically and rigorously evaluate programs in the community to strive for continuous quality improvement.

## Methodology

The purpose of this project was to determine if the BPP was appropriate and effective for school students in one urban school district. The original project design was to implement the BPP in 12 inner city schools through two cohorts over four-year implementation periods. Seven schools were to start in 2001/02 Academic Year (AY) with an additional five schools starting the following year, 2002/03. The project was a partnership between the local chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), the Office of School Climate and Safety, Office of Research and Evaluation<sup>1</sup>, the schools, and an independent program evaluator. PSR provided a certified Olweus trainer for program training and support. School staff and community members from each school served on coordinating committees to plan and implement interventions. During the second year of the project, there was a state takeover of the educational system, causing major changes in staffing and educational administration. In the end, 13 schools participated. Nine schools participated over four years. One school participated for two years and three schools participated for three years. Implementation was developed with the intention that schools would sustain the program after the grant period. Three of the schools, from the initial 2001/02 AY start cohort, provided data on sustainability of the program after the partnership was completed. The evaluation used one group, quasi-experimental pretest, post-test design to investigate process, impact, and outcomes of the BPP. Four types of data were used: fidelity of implementation, bullying incident density (BID), student surveys, and violence-related serious incident reports.

### Fidelity of Implementation

Fidelity of implementation was measured by an instrument developed from core components identified by the program author (Olweus & Limber, 2000). Implementation of each component was dichotomous, either positive or negative. In order for schools to achieve a positive score, they must have implemented the component effectively. Checklists were completed by program coordinators at monthly staff meetings with end of year results tallied in June of each academic year. Data were validated through site observations and feedback from coordinating committee members in their end of the year meeting. Discrepancies were corrected through mutual consensus. Fidelity scores were calculated as the total number of core program components implemented divided by the total number of core components (14). For example, if a school implemented nine of the 14 components (9/14), fidelity of implementation was 64 percent. Data were entered into a spreadsheet. Average fidelity was calculated for each participating school over the length of the project.

### Bullying Incident Density

Lunches and recesses were observed for bullying-related behavior. Lunches and recesses were selected because student surveys typically identified these areas as high risk, and public areas provided some degree of anonymity. Permission was obtained from the school administrator prior to observations. Start and stop times, number of students, and gender or grade groups were noted on the observation form. Each incident of observed bullying related behavior was tallied. Data were entered into a spreadsheet and standardized to

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<sup>1</sup> Participant confidentiality is maintained per Office for Human Research Protections guidelines.

Bullying Incident Density (BID) (number of incidents per 100 student hours) using the following calculation:

$$\{[\text{Raw number of incidents} \div \text{Raw number of students present}] \times 100 \times [60 \div \text{time period in minutes}]\}$$

where, "60" is the number of minutes in one hour,

and where, "time period in minutes" is the length of the observation period at lunch or recess.

### Olweus Bully Victim Questionnaire© (BVQ)

The BVQ instrument is the survey developed by Olweus to identify student reported rates of victimization, high risk areas, attitudes, and staff reactions to bullying. School staff administered the survey under anonymous conditions to all children in grades 3-8 who were present on the day of the survey. Surveys were administered at baseline and each year of the program. Data were entered into the BVQ Stat software program for analysis. The software program provided different methods of calculating frequency of bullying. We used Olweus' alternative method of calculation, which provides data on all students with a positive response to any form of bullying, at the level of two to three times a month or more often in the past couple of months. This calculation method minimized fluctuations due to increased awareness.

### Violence-related Serious Incident Reports

The district office of research and evaluation extracted pre-existing data on violence-related serious incident reports for each school throughout each year of the program. Unfortunately, reporting mechanisms changed after 2001/02. Therefore, data from 2001/02 AY were not comparable to later years. AY 2002/03 was used as the baseline year.

## Findings

Different data sources were selected to provide the best possible picture of process and outcomes. Data used to evaluate the program were fidelity of implementation, bullying incident density, student surveys, and serious incident reports. The evaluation reflects the limitations of working within the real world. As such, final outcome data could only be calculated on nine schools with the complete four years of data. Data from non-completing schools are provided for comparison.

### Fidelity of Implementation

In the first year of the program, fidelity of implementation ranged from 21-79 percent, with an average fidelity of 48 percent. Average implementation rates stayed stable (66-72 percent) over the second, third, and fourth years of the program. The typical pattern was an increase in fidelity during the second or third year of the program with a subsequent decrease. This trend may have been due to a false sense of security where school staff felt that they could relax their vigilance after seeing positive changes in school climate. Five schools had moderate to high implementation (> 75 percent of core components implemented) and eight schools had less than satisfactory implementation (<75 percent of core components). Schools with low fidelity tended to have multiple changes in principals and staff who did not feel empowered to implement the program. The school that withdrew, School Six in Cohort One, experienced major demographic changes, and staff felt they could not implement the program with fidelity. The principal later reported that the program was redundant with directives mandated by their Educational Management Organization. School Six was replaced with School Thirteen, a school that embraced the program and obtained 93 percent fidelity in the final year.

The most difficult parts of the program to implement were classroom meetings, parent involvement, and a functional coordinating committee. Classroom meetings were often perceived to compete with academic time. Some teachers felt uncomfortable relinquishing control of the class. To promote meetings, PSR coordinators developed a classroom meeting manual with recommended topics, role-modeled classroom meetings in classes, and provided suggestions for bringing meetings to a closure. Parent and community involvement was difficult in areas where parents had a long history of negative experiences with school both as a child and as an adult. The most effective mechanisms to improve parent involvement were to reach out to the community through pre-existing networks, such as parents who volunteered or worked part-time in the school. In later years, parents were included on coordinating committees and were responsible for facilitating the flow of information. Another technique was to capture parents when they were present, such as special events or back to school night. Parent and grandparent attendance to special events improved when children were actively involved in the event, i.e. a fashion or talent show and food was provided. Obstacles to maintaining a functional coordinating committee were schools with high staff turnover or schools where the committees were not empowered. The more stable committees were composed of diverse professional and nonprofessional staff. Larger committees (14-16 members) were intentionally utilized in schools with high turnover. In later years, it became evident that the school secretary was a core member. School secretaries had a pre-existing network and knew who to call for what. They also had access to resources to facilitate communication between committee members, staff, administration, and the community. When committees felt that they were not empowered to develop school policies, meetings between school administration and PSR coordinators helped to clarify roles and responsibilities. Principals or their representative were always invited to be an active member of the committee.

### Bullying Incident Density (BID)

BID decreased 25.5 percent in all schools ( $n = 9$ ). Schools with high fidelity ( $n = 4$ ) demonstrated an average 21.5 percent reduction in BID while schools with low fidelity ( $n = 5$ ) demonstrated an average 35 percent reduction in BID (Table 1, next page). In assessing changes in BID, it should be noted that all schools implemented the BPP core component of effective supervision during high-risk areas. The component was applied by providing pro-social activities during unstructured activity times and empowering lunch and recess workers to intervene and stop behavior before escalation. Substituting play fighting with play equipment, such as balls and jump ropes reduced many of the incidents, as well as separating genders by play area and having staff actively involved in the activities. Incidents at lunch were reduced with clear procedures for moving students, games, and engaged staff.

### Olweus Bully Victim Questionnaire© (BVQ)

Student-reported bullying increased 10 percent from 39 percent ( $n = 4,499$ ) of students at baseline reporting victimization to 43 percent ( $n = 2,208$ ) of students in Year Four (at the level of twice a month or more often). Changes ranged from a 40 percent increase in bullying (Cohort 2, School 9) to a 12 percent decrease (Cohort 2, School 12) (Table 2, second page following). The use of Olweus' alternative method of calculation should have negated the possibility of increased reporting due to increased awareness. When schools were separated into high fidelity vs. low fidelity groups, schools with 75 percent or more fidelity of implementation demonstrated a 5 percent reduction in bullying. Schools with low fidelity ( $< 75$  percent fidelity) demonstrated a 14 percent increase in bullying. Schools with the highest reductions in student reported bullying characteristically had a strong administrator who engaged the students and empowered staff.

Table 1. Lunch and/ or recess bullying incident density (BID) at participating schools

Cohort and Participant Identifier	Bullying Incident Density (Average number of incidents/ 100 student hours)				
	Baseline	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Change from baseline (percent)
<b>High Fidelity Schools</b>					
C 1, S 1	55	19	30	19	- 66
C 1, S 3	23	19	29	23	- 4
C 2, S 12	41	25	45	41	0
C 1, S 5	73	80	54	61	- 16
<b>Low Fidelity Schools</b>					
C 2, S 11	46	26	23	33	- 28
C 1, S 4	68	57	74	24	- 65
C 1, S 2	86	66	68	67	- 22
C 1, S 7	43	40	58	20	- 53
C 2, S 9	43	51	46	40	- 7
<b>Schools with incomplete data</b>					
C 2, S 13	184	24	12	N.D.	- 93
C 2, S 8	31	26	35	33	+ 6
C 2, S 10	38	16	50	N.D.	+ 32
C 1, S 6	58	69	N.D.	N.D.	+ 19

N.D.= No Data

## Violence-related Serious Incident Reports

Violence-related serious incidents, reports of assaults, threats, and robberies, increased 73 percent from 2002/03 to end of program (2004/05 for Cohort One and 2005/06 for Cohort Two). Changes in serious incident reports varied from an increase of 433 percent in School Two (from nine incident reports per year to forty-eight incident reports per year) to decreases of 50 percent in Schools Nine and Twelve (Table 3, second page following). Changes varied by level of fidelity. Serious incidents increased 137 percent in low fidelity schools and decreased 7 percent in high fidelity schools.

## Sustainability

All Cohort One schools were surveyed for fidelity of implementation to determine sustainability of the program after the partnership with PSR was completed. Overall implementation was 58 percent. Schools One and Five exhibited fidelity rates of 100 percent and 93 percent, respectively and reported regular classroom meetings. School Two implemented only parts of the program (36 percent fidelity) due to the fact that the school had transitioned from a mixed-gender middle school to an all female high school. The school no longer had a functioning committee and the new disciplinarian used peer mediation for bullying intervention. Fidelity at School Four was low, 43 percent. The two main advocates of the program, the disciplinarian and school nurse were on extended absences due to medical problems. School Three had an implementation rate of 36 percent and School Seven's rate was 43 percent. Both schools had experienced major changes in key staff.

Table 2. Levels of student-reported bullying victimization in participating schools over the length of the program

Cohort and Participant Identifier	Victims of bullying 2-3 times a month or more (percent)				
	Baseline (n)	Year 2 (n)	Year 3 (n)	Year 4 (n)	Change from baseline (percent)
<b>High fidelity Schools</b>					
C 1, S 1	31.7 (496)	26.5 (465)	31.3 (439)	33.8 (409)	+ 7
C 1, S 3	38.6 (912)	36.7 (809)	39.1 (772)	39.3 (245)	+ 2
C 2, S 12	44.3 (305)	34.3 (324)	36.4 (240)	39.2 (232)	- 12
C 1, S 5	56.0 (366)	41.4 (379)	55.0 (311)	50.7 (275)	- 10
<b>Low fidelity Schools</b>					
C 2, S 11	42.9 (295)	48.1 (214)	52.1 (167)	55 (258)	+ 28
C 1, S 4	46.6 (436)	42.9 (397)	34.8 (454)	44.1 (423)	- 5
C 1, S 2	35.7 (790)	32.6 (427)	27.7 (493)	34.8 (392)	- 3
C 1, S 7	28.9 (738)	28 (491)	33.5 (561)	29.9 (252)	+ 4
C 2, S 9	45.9 (158)	45.0 (172)	45.6 (177)	64.2 (120)	+ 40
Overall	38.9 (4,499)	36.6 (3,295)	36.1 (3,196)	42.8 (2,208)	+ 10
<b>Schools with incomplete data</b>					
C 2, S 13	37.2 (483)	32.2 (430)	32.2 (344)	N.D.	- 14
C 2, S 8	39.6 (660)	41.5 (758)	N.D.	N.D.	+ 5
C 2, S 10	46.3 (227)	42.1 (244)	51.3 (116)	N.D.	+ 11
C 1, S 6	42.0 (654)	49.5 (274)	N.D.	N.D.	+ 18
N.D.= No Data					

Table 3. Violence related serious incident reports in participating schools

Cohort and Participant Identifier	Violence-related Serious Incident Reports				
	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	Change from baseline (percent)
High fidelity schools					
C 1, S 1	6	3	9	-	+ 50
C 1, S 3	36	39	19	-	- 47
C 2, S 12	4	8	6	2	- 50
C 1, S 5	16	19	19	-	- 19
Low fidelity schools					
C 2, S 11	4	10	8	7	+ 75
C 1, S 4	8	6	20	-	+ 150
C 1, S 2	9	37	48	-	+ 433
C 1, S 7	14	39	37	-	+ 79
C 2, S 9	6	3	1	3	- 50
Schools with incomplete data					
C 2, S 13	66	39	74	45	- 32
C 2, S 8	24	27	19	29	+ 21
C 2, S 10	7	3	8	8	+ 14
C 1, S 6	87	17	27	-	- 69

## Discussion

Evaluation results suggest that the BPP can be implemented in urban schools despite multiple social challenges, such as poor resources, high staff and student turnover, and community norms of violence. The fundamental principles of the BPP, building a system of social support do translate into inner city culture and can reduce bullying. When implemented with fidelity, the BPP reduced BID 22 percent, student-reported bullying 5 percent, and violence-related serious incident reports 7 percent. One of the most valuable findings of the study was a consistent dose response relationship where schools who implemented the program with fidelity had better outcomes than schools that did not. The dose response relationship suggests that outcomes are due to the program and not external factors. The dose response relationship was identified through a simple dichotomous checklist of program components. This technique can easily be applied to other programs.

Fidelity of implementation assisted in keeping coordinating committees on track because the checklist served as a continual reminder of the program components. Fidelity also helped understand evaluation results by providing information on which program components were qualitatively associated with reduced bullying. Schools with the greatest reductions used the core components of posting rules, consistent enforcement for rules, positive incentive programs, and effective supervision.

The ideal lunch became one where students were escorted into the lunch room by their teachers, entered in an orderly fashion, sat at their assigned tables, and spent very little time standing in line. Since most children eat lunch in less than 10 minutes and lunch periods tend to be 30-45 minutes, board games kept children positively entertained until the next scheduled activity. Adults who monitored lunches provided a strong

influence. Students responded positively to staff who showed respect such as knowing the student's name or stopping to join in the conversation or activity.

Socialized recess and engaged staff reduced many of the incidents at recess. Providing adequate recess equipment reduced play fighting, which would commonly escalate to violence. Teachers reported that classroom meetings improved respect within the classroom. Successful strategies were consistent with the BPP model. Suggestions are to integrate these techniques into school policy and practice.

There was no correlation between outcomes in the different data sources. On preliminary perusal of the tables, findings raise more questions than they answer. One would expect results to be consistent, i.e. changes in serious incident reports would correlate with changes in BID in the same direction. This was not the case. There was no correlation between data types. The reason for lack of correlation may be explained by the fact that these were different data sources looking at small pieces of a larger system.

Different evaluation techniques provide different views. The same is true for evaluation measures. BID measured observable incidents at lunch and recess. BID did not include what was occurring in the classroom or more discrete forms of bullying. Student surveys provide a holistic picture of the school, albeit, results are easily influenced by knowledge, attitudes, and sampling differences. Four years of administering the same survey was problematic. It is an understatement to say that students voiced their dissatisfaction through write-in comments. Fewer and fewer classes participated each year, influencing validity of results. Serious incident reports measured incidents against students, staff, and visitors, not just students. Changes in record keeping or failure to report may have influenced results. Thus, while each measure provides a detailed picture, it is only one perspective. The different perspectives should be combined for a comprehensive picture. Future evaluations should include the use of triangulated data rather than relying on only one data source.

Evaluations in the real world of urban schools rarely provide textbook results. For example, School Six, the school that dropped out of the program had a 69 percent reduction in serious incidents at the end of the project period despite the fact that they no longer offered the BPP. The reason for the reduction was that the subsidized housing development adjacent to the school was demolished and the school's low income, minority population was displaced throughout other areas of the city. New, moderate-income houses were built on the site. The school population changed dramatically between baseline and 2005/06. Many inner city schools suffer from high student, staff, and administrator turnover, inexperienced teachers, and lack of resources. It is difficult to establish school norms of pro-social behavior in transient populations.

Schools need a basic infrastructure in order to implement rigorous evidence-based programs. Therefore, the first step to reducing violence is to build the infrastructure of inner city schools. Coordinated, effective efforts between principals and staff seemed to provide the best infrastructure for implementation.

Low literacy rates were also an ongoing challenge and a priority that often competed with program activity. For example, in an effort to focus on testing, all outside programs were placed on hold during standardized testing periods. The two systems should work in collaboration, not competition. Theoretically, it is during periods of high stress that children need anti-violence programs the most. Freezing programs to improve scores may be counterproductive. Fortunately, some principals did recognize the potential for program activities and increased positive reinforcement activities during testing periods to promote school climate. One principal raffled a bicycle at the end of the testing period for students who had perfect attendance and no reports of negative behavior. Staff reported positive results to such efforts. In terms of promoting evidence-based programs, we need to provide a system that respects and promotes positive youth development.

In terms of evaluation, the inclusion of a qualitative evaluation component contributed to the understanding of multiple moderating variables that influence outcomes.

Socially, inner city schools struggle with anti-violence policies that are vastly different from rules in the surrounding neighborhoods. Street rules and media promote fighting. Results from low fidelity schools suggest that aggression is increasing and anti-violence programs may be losing ground. Student-reported bullying increased 14 percent and violence-related incidents increased 137 percent in low fidelity schools. Children cannot learn when they are frightened. It is not enough that schools give priority to evidence-based programs. Society must support school efforts with consistent anti-violence messages. Society must critically evaluate our use of violence as a form of entertainment. Tobacco prevention and nutrition education, two areas that have progressed further than violence prevention, suggest ideas for benchmarking. Future directions are to consider administrative and policy recommendations to reduce violence in youth media, i.e. tighten restrictions on portrayals of violent acts in programs before 9:00 pm; restrict advertising of merchandise that allows children to practice violent behavior, i.e. video games; critical media awareness programs, i.e. help children de-construct media violence; and promote a national campaign to prevent violence, applying the foundations of other successful national media campaigns, such as the American Legacy Foundation “truth” campaign. Schools cannot stand alone in reducing violence-related behavior. Schools need social and political support.

## Conclusions

The BPP reduced bullying when implemented with fidelity. Advantages of the program were the model was flexible enough for tailoring to the needs of inner city students. The basic premises of establishing a pro-social environment are transferable to American culture. Bullying can be reduced through clear and consistent rules, improved student monitoring, positive incentives programs, and socialized recess or lunch. Obstacles to full implementation were high staff and student turnover causing a poor infrastructure to support common positive norms. We should promote the preferential use of evidence-based practices within schools while we continue to improve and refine best practices through on-going evaluation.

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