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A Framework for Action to Tackle Violence in Schools with Whole School Approach and the Evaluation of the Outcomes

1. Introduction to the table

The Framework for Action to Combat Violence in Schools looks at prevention across the school community. Each type of prevention is described at the levels of pupils, staffs, classrooms, schools, physical environments, families and community. Actions are divided into promotion or primary prevention, secondary prevention and tertiary prevention.

Prevention and intervention strategies¹

1. Primary prevention (pro active interventions) refers to approaches implemented on a universal scale that aim to prevent the onset of violence and related risk factors.
2. Secondary prevention (reactive interventions) refers to approaches implemented on a selected scale, for people at enhanced risk of violence, and are aimed at preventing the onset and reducing the risk of violence
3. Tertiary prevention (curative) refers to strategies implemented on an indicated scale, once the problem is already clearly evident and causing harm, e.g. for individuals or groups that have already demonstrated violent behaviour and / or been victimised by perpetrators of violence.

The Framework for Action presents the policymaker and the programme planner with a map of the different levels of intervention that should be considered when attempting to prevent violence in schools. At each level, interventions that have been shown to be promising or confirmed to be successful at preventing violence are presented. The framework can be used as a flexible guide to determine possibilities for intervention in specific contexts. Information on the specific strategies can be found in the resources cited in the end of this document.

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2001) Youth Violence: A Report of the Surgeon General – Executive Summary, Rockville, MD; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Centre for Mental Health Service and National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health

1.2. Before the Intervention

Before any intervention or action can be defined, it is necessary to define the school and the community's strengths, weaknesses, and target problems related to violence prevention. This involves an assessment of existing resources to invest in prevention programming (human and financial) and of the willingness of education staff to invest time, human and financial resources in the design of violence prevention programmes. The training needs of staff and their willingness to participate to the training should also be defined as well the whole schools willingness to invest in combating violence and creating an anti bullying policy.

Needs assessment also implies an analysis of the profile of violence in the local environment. Accurate information on the level and type of violence seen at the local level, will help ensure that efforts focus on the real needs, rather than on perceived ones. In addition, collection of data on the profile of violence before beginning the intervention will provide planners a baseline that can be later compared with post-intervention violence data, to evaluate the changes brought about by the programme.

Prior to intervention, it is also recommended to identify the environmental characteristics that ought to be addressed in a specific prevention programme. These might include “physical hotspots” for violence – playgrounds, toilets, bathrooms and other isolated areas. Once these areas are identified, actions can be taken to reduce the risk of violence: for example: student traffic flow in the corridors can be modified to avoid crowding and possible confrontations, the playground infrastructure can be improved to provide recreation alternatives to students, and lighting can be increased to discourage violent activity in highly visible areas.

The existing co-operation between school, family and community should also be defined. Their willingness to co-operate in violence prevention and finding the existing resources creates cost effectiveness and helps the school in its efforts.

The promotion and primary prevention actions are targeted universally to schools who have not yet become involved in severe violence and the aim is to prevent the onset of violence in school. This includes social skills training and co-operative learning, promotion of pupils active participation and exchange between pupils in different levels. Information should be given on school bullying and raising awareness on school violence.²

The school staff also has needs. If the teachers feel relaxed, content and valued they will be more likely to approach their students with respect, sympathy and understanding. Particular attention should be paid to the management of stress as teachers see it as key areas of need. Teachers also need training in group dynamics to find out in the early stages the problems in the classroom, and to create a positive learning environment.

Secondary and tertiary prevention includes actions aiming to prevent the initiation of violence in schools that exhibit a marked risk, or to reduce the likelihood of further violence in schools that already face this problem. Coping skills to respond to peer and partner pressure as well the coping skills to stand up for themselves are examples of secondary prevention.

² Turunen H, Tossavainen K, Jakonen S, Salomäki U, Vertio H (2000) Improving health in the European Network of Health Promoting Schools in Finland. Health Education Vol 1000, Number 6, 252-260, Ortega R., Del Ray R, Mora-Merchán Joaquin (2001) Save-model, an anti-bullying intervention proposal in Spain, Dpt pf Developmental and Educational Psychology, University of Seville.

Violent act in school should be dealt with immediately. To be successful in this task every school needs a plan of crisis and values clarification at classroom and at school level.. Also education for social skills and social competence give tools to mediate the conflict situations, methods to solve problems constructive ways in relationships and also helps to build mutually content relationships.³

The Whole School approach is essential to combat violence in school. This involves the inclusion of teachers, young people and parents in the development of the school environment and the appreciation's of the key role played by each group in the overall development of the child. Curriculum work must be relevant to their needs and their active participation must be encouraged. In developing positive links with the community a multi-disciplinary networking approach is important to be encouraged. Community institutions can work with the school to replicate non-violent messages beyond the school environment. They will also provide services to manage and protect children at risk or suffering harm from violence.

³ Comenius 3.1.project European teacher training module on Group Dynamics and Social Skills in the Classroom.Co-ordinated by the Finnish Centre for Health Promotion.71545-CP-2-2000-1-FI-COMENIUS-C 31

Table 1. Framework for Action to Tackle Violence in Schools

Tackling violence in schools	Assessment to be done before any intervention	Primary prevention (proactive)	Secondary prevention (reactive)	Tertiary prevention (curative)
Pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing of pupils • self image of pupils • social cognition of pupils • ability to understand feelings and emotions from others and themselves • attribution and perspectives • degree of belonging • risk behaviour levels and attitudes towards school • the magnitude of the problem • the degree of implementation of child-oriented approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training of emotional intelligence, self control and assertive behaviour • training of social skills, problem solving and social competence • promote pupil's active participation • relaxation exercises • promote hobbies • co-operative learning, promoting exchange between pupils with different skills levels • raise students political awareness • participation: increase opportunity for students to have a say in school life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • peer-mediation • counselling, career guidance to reduce likelihood of academic failure • mentoring, assertiveness training: for those at risk of being a victim • coping skills and ability to stand up for themselves • coping skills to respond to peer and partner pressure • attitudes towards weaker person • information on school bullying, different roles in bullying situation, raising awareness on school violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • psychologicaltherapeutical, social and medical treatments • access to immediate crisis help • active follow-up
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training needs, willingness for training • health guidance: how many pupils attend and staff available • the problem profile • promote team teaching • assessment of wellbeing of staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training: group dynamics and social skills, • psycho sexual knowledge on children's psychosocial development, aggressive behaviour • information on work place bullying, defining roles among staff, agreement • clinical supervision, coaching and counselling for teachers • promotion of team work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • crisis meeting immediately after severe bullying situation • counselling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • serious talks with bullies and victims • serious talks with parents of involved students • PIKAS / No blame approach: empathy with bullies • psychological, social and medical treatments • access to immediate crisis help • active follow-up

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mental health promotion at workplace 		
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the degree of implementation of child oriented approach • assessment of class -climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • behavioural techniques for class • positive reinforcement, • clear rules, non-violent discipline management • anti-violence policy for classroom level, created in dialogue with pupils. 		
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessment of school climate • how ready the school is to invest in combating violence, bullying policy • determine administrative / principal support: staff and time resources. • Conduct analysis of relevant policies on punishment / disciplinary methods, student participation, staff support • Study resources / data recorded by health clinic: injury risk behaviours and problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school-wide anti violence policy, created in dialogue with pupils • non stigmatising policy for perpetrators or victims • general policy on student and teacher conduct and safety precautions • promotion of democratic structures in school and classroom • behaviour monitoring and reinforcement • information on all levels about the school rules and anti violence policy • European Non Violent Week at School-awareness raising campaign • Parent-Teacher Association meetings • building school capacity to implement positive changes in the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • open discussion, informing the situations but also confidence when needed • determine incentives for positive behaviour and consequences for inappropriate behaviour. • Clear rules • punishment defined in the school anti bullying policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whole school meetings • open sharing • positive disciplinary measures.
Physical Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • study environmental characteristics, such as physical hot spots for violence • physical characteristics of playground • conditions of building and classrooms, number and type of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embellishing school and classrooms • cleanness • small class size • respect for pupils creativity • improve sustainable development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modification of student flows through school grounds in order to prevent the proliferation of “hot spots” of violence. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exits, design and location of bathrooms, lighting and isolated areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve playground supervision and make environment of playground more interesting safety at playground furnishing classroom nicely. 		
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the existing co-operation between school and family willingness for co-operation and involvement in school based violence prevention programme socio-economic characteristics of student families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect parents expertise, positive co-operation give positive feedback to the parents information for families about the same as pupils and staff training parents to use appropriate child management techniques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> open discussion with all the families involved supporting family-family discussions enhanced communication with parents and students through class meetings and reports to parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychological social and medical treatments access to immediate crisis help active follow-up
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> willingness of the community to join the project co-operation with health and education, police and justice, youth and social sectors existing resources the programme can link up with. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> co-operative projects and programmes with the community, common activities shared responsibility information in Media and local services about the school anti - violence policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> after-school and summer activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> locally tailored programmes. access to local services for early detection and treatment

2. Indicators to measure outcomes of interventions

School-based violence prevention programmes need to be evaluated in order to determine whether they have been effective in reducing violent behaviours. The design of an evaluation component within a programme is essential in order to measure a change, and to determine whether the change was due to the intervention or to other factors in the environment. By using outcome evaluation, for example, practitioners can determine whether the programme achieved its objectives, and whether it should be continued, modified and / or replicated in other sites.

Evaluation results can be critical element to advocate for the continuation or expansion of the programme, and to involve other players in its implementation. It also serves that limited resources are invested in activities that actually lead to desired changes.

Reliable measures must be used to monitor changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. Using data items that are already available in existing records may facilitate the evaluation process.

An outcome evaluation involves several steps⁴:

- 1) Definition of problem
 - Target population
 - Risk factors to address
- 2) Define indicators to evaluate
 - matched to programme objectives
 - based on the literature and country experiences
- 3) Selection of evaluation design
- 4) Selection of appropriate measurement instruments
 - appropriate to culture and education level of target
 - reliable and valid
- 5) Collection of data
 - baseline (before programme)
 - process (during implementation –about activities implemented)
 - summative (after programme)
- 6) Analyse of data
- 7) Dissemination of findings

Risk indicators⁵

- Types and magnitude of risk behaviours practised by students (drinking, fighting, carrying weapons, threats, bullying, etc) This can include

⁴ Dahlberg, L., Toal, S.B., and Behrens, C.B. "Measuring Violence-Related Attitudes, Beliefs and Behaviours Among Youths: A Compendium of Assessment Tools." National Centre for Injury Prevention and Control, United States Centre for Disease Control, Atlanta, Georgia, 1998, Nutbeam Don (1998) Evaluating health promotion progress, problems and solutions in Health Promotion International Vol.13. No 1. Oxford University Press.

⁵ Based on indicators listed in: Birdthistle I. et al. "Violence Prevention: An Important Element of a Health-Promoting School." World Health Organization. Geneva, 1999; Janosz M. et al. "L'environnement socioéducatif à l'école secondaire: un modèle théorique pour guider l'évaluation du milieu." Revue Canadienne de Psycho-éducation, Vol. 27, num ro 2, 1998, 285-306; and Dwyer, K. and Osher, D. (2000). Safeguarding Our Children: An Action Guide. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, American Institutes for Research; St Leger Lawrence (2000) Developing Indicators to enhance school health, Health Education Research, Theory and Practice. Oxford University Press 2000, Vol.15.no.6.719-728

- level of violence between students
- level of violence towards students
- level of violence towards adults, threats and attacks
- ethnic conflict; fights between students of different ethnic groups
- gang violence: gang members making trouble, conflict between students who are gang members
- Rate of possession of illegal substances
- Rates of violent injury, suicide and suicide attempts
- Arrest for crime on school grounds
- Level on vandalism in school property
- Absenteeism
- Number and type of disciplinary measures enacted
- Number of out-of-school suspensions in a month
- Drop-out rates
- Number and type of weapons confiscated
- Perceptions of risk of victimisation

Social Climate indicators:

- Adoption of peaceful and constructive methods of resolving conflict
- Type of disciplinary and violence-related policies; participation in their formulation, acceptance by staff and students, rejection of corporal punishment and harassment by staff and students
- School investment in staff training for violence prevention and social climate promotion and response
- School practises that encourage and give opportunities for staff and families to establish close, caring and supportive relationships with children and youth
- Policies, practices and procedures that foster collaboration between the school and the students' families
- Number and type of people involved in community violence prevention activities
- Students and teachers presence at school
- Student and teacher attitude toward school
- Active participation to the school life (both pupils and staff)
- Communication and openness at school and with the community
- Effective communication skills
- School recreational facilities; quality, level of safety, isolated areas, appropriate lighting, public spaces for movement and interaction, level of cleanliness, adequacy of classrooms
- Perceptions of safety in school, and trust in other persons
- Pride in belonging to the institution
- Acceptance of school values and adhesion to them

Educational practice indicators:

- Learning ability, attendance and learning achievement, e.g. literacy and numeric skills, basic learning competencies
- Co-operation in different levels (teaching methods, team working etc)
- Emphasis on educational success of students
- System of positive material and social recognition and selective, reduced punishment
- Quality and time spent in teaching

- Parental participation in education
- Appropriate educational structure: clarity of norms, consistency in application, student participation and adherence to norm
- Opportunities to develop personal, social or technical skills in the school environment
- Supportive administrative leadership for personnel

Evaluation should be made "attractive" and it should be considered as a needed tool to measure changes in the individual, its social and physical environment, and the interaction between the two⁶. Through such construction of knowledge, practitioners will be able effective ways to reduce the obstacles to learning and development

⁶ Janosz M. et al. Idem