

The Leadership Program's Violence Prevention Project (VPP)

The Leadership Program's Violence Prevention Project (VPP) is a school-based intervention for early and middle adolescents. VPP is designed to prevent conflict and violence by improving conflict resolution skills, altering norms about using aggression and violence (including lowering tolerance for violence), and improving behavior in the school and community.

VPP lessons, taught in the classroom, are based on the experiential learning cycle, an interactive, learner-centered approach that encourages participation, communication, and group work. A trained facilitator guides students through options for conflict resolution and aids them in broadening their adoption of conflict resolution strategies through the use of improved communication skills (e.g., active listening, I-messages). The aim is to reduce students' use of verbally aggressive, physically aggressive, and antisocial conflict resolution strategies and to increase their use of prosocial verbal and other nonaggressive conflict resolution strategies. VPP also targets elements of the classroom environment in which conflict occurs, such as peer relationships and normative beliefs about aggressive behavior. The intervention includes core components for both middle and high school students, including introduction to leadership, vision and imagination, and conflict management. In addition, middle school students receive self-affirmation and cooperation components, and high school students receive self-concept, group dynamics, and social responsibility components. The program concludes with an arts-based final project cooperatively created by all members of each class.

The facilitator implements 12 weekly lessons following the written curriculum, with lessons in the core components adapted to meet participant and school needs. Each 45-minute lesson includes an icebreaker or other team-building exercise; the main activity, which involves the whole group or small groups participating in role-plays, trust games, cooperative work, or a group discussion; and a closing to reflect on the day's activities.

Descriptive Information

Areas of Interest	Mental health promotion
Outcomes	Review Date: August 2010 1: Use of conflict resolution strategies 2: Normative beliefs about aggression 3: Peer support behaviors 4: Academic self-concept
Outcome Categories	Education Family/relationships Social functioning Physical aggression and violence-related behavior
Ages	6-12 (Childhood) 13-17 (Adolescent)
Genders	Male Female
Races/Ethnicities	Asian Black or African American Hispanic or Latino White Race/ethnicity unspecified
Settings	School
Geographic Locations	Urban
Implementation	Since its development in 2000, VPP has been delivered to nearly 150,000 students in New York City public schools.

Implementation History	Since its development in 2000, VPP has been delivered to nearly 150,000 students in New York City public schools. Approximately 125 New York City public schools implement VPP each year, about one-third of which evaluate the outcomes of their programming.
NIH Funding/CER Studies	Partially/fully funded by National Institutes of Health: No Evaluated in comparative effectiveness research studies: No
Adaptations	No population- or culture-specific adaptations of the intervention were identified by the developer.
Adverse Effects	No adverse effects, concerns, or unintended consequences were identified by the developer.
IOM Prevention Categories	Universal

Quality of Research

Review Date: August 2010

Documents Reviewed

The documents below were reviewed for Quality of Research. The research point of contact can provide information regarding the studies reviewed and the availability of additional materials, including those from more recent studies that may have been conducted.

Study 1

Thompkins, A., & Chauveron, L. (2010). The Leadership Program's Violence Prevention Project: Examining program effectiveness among early and middle adolescents. Unpublished manuscript.

Study 2

Thompkins, A., & Chauveron, L. (2010). The Leadership Program's Violence Prevention Project: Examining program effectiveness among early and middle adolescents. Unpublished manuscript.

Supplementary Materials

Chauveron, L., & Thompkins, A. (2010). The Leadership Program's Violence Prevention Project: A supplementary review of implementation fidelity from 2005-2006 through 2008-2009. Unpublished manuscript.

Thompkins, A., & Chauveron, L. (2010). The Leadership Program's Violence Prevention Project: A supplementary report on measurement reliability and validity. Unpublished manuscript.

Outcomes

Outcome 1: Use of conflict resolution strategies

Description of Measures

Use of various conflict resolution strategies was assessed using a scale derived from an existing conflict resolution measure. Students read short vignettes involving conflicts (7 for middle school students and 12 for high school students). Each vignette was accompanied by a list of possible actions to resolve the conflict, each of which corresponded to a conflict resolution strategy. The student was asked to select all the actions he or she might take to resolve the conflict. The number of times a student selected each type of strategy was recorded. Strategies and examples include:

- Verbal aggression: The student is having a hard time getting a schedule from the school office; a verbally aggressive response is "Get angry and tell somebody off."
- Physical aggression: Someone cuts in line; a physically aggressive response is "Push the other person out of line, or hit them."
- Walk away: Someone the student's age is trying to intimidate the student; an example of this response is "Nothing, just walk away."
- Prosocial verbal: Someone the student's age is trying to intimidate the student; a prosocial verbal response is "Calmly tell the person to cut it out."
- Parent help: Someone steals the student's backpack; an example of this response is "Tell your parents about it and ask them for help."
- Antisocial behavior: The student is confronted with a test for which the student is unprepared; an antisocial response is "Try to look at the answers of another student."
- Immature avoidance: The student is confronted with another student who has brought a gun to school; an immature avoidance response is "Nothing, just forget about it."

Key Findings

In one study, New York City middle school students in grades 6-8 received VPP or regular classroom

instruction. From pre- to posttest:

- The use of verbal aggression remained relatively constant for VPP participants and increased for nonparticipants ($p = .012$).
- The use of physical aggression decreased for VPP participants and remained constant for nonparticipants ($p = .001$).
- The use of antisocial behavior remained constant for VPP participants and increased for nonparticipants ($p = .001$).

In another study, New York City high school students in grades 9 and 10 received VPP or regular classroom instruction. From pre- to posttest:

- The use of verbal aggression decreased for VPP participants and remained constant for nonparticipants ($p = .03$).
- The use of antisocial behavior increased for both groups but increased more slowly for VPP participants than for nonparticipants ($p = .047$).
- The use of immature avoidance decreased for VPP participants and increased for nonparticipants ($p = .006$).

Studies Measuring Outcome	Study 1, Study 2
Study Designs	Quasi-experimental
Quality of Research Rating	3.4 (0.0-4.0 scale)

Outcome 2: Normative beliefs about aggression

Description of Measures	Normative beliefs about aggression were assessed using a 15-item scale closely derived from the Normative Beliefs About Aggression Scale. The scale assessed student perceptions of acceptable aggressive behavior under a variety of conditions. Students responded to questions about specified aggressive actions (e.g., "How wrong is it for Michael to hit Renee?") using a 4-point scale ranging from "it's really wrong" to "it's really okay."
Key Findings	New York City middle school students in grades 6-8 received VPP or regular classroom instruction. Although tolerance for aggressive behavior increased for both groups from pre- to posttest, VPP participants had a slower increase in tolerance for aggressive behavior compared with nonparticipants ($p = .011$).
Studies Measuring Outcome	Study 1
Study Designs	Quasi-experimental
Quality of Research Rating	3.4 (0.0-4.0 scale)

Outcome 3: Peer support behaviors

Description of Measures	Peer support was assessed using a 9-item scale developed by researchers for use in the study. Students were asked to report how often they participated in peer support activities (e.g., helping peers with homework, standing up for peers when they are treated badly) on a scale from 1 (never) to 4 (often).
Key Findings	New York City middle school students in grades 6-8 received VPP or regular classroom instruction. From pre- to posttest, peer support behaviors increased slightly for VPP participants and decreased for nonparticipants ($p < .0001$).
Studies Measuring Outcome	Study 1
Study Designs	Quasi-experimental
Quality of Research Rating	3.4 (0.0-4.0 scale)

Outcome 4: Academic self-concept

Description of Measures	Academic self-concept was measured with a 4-item scale developed by researchers for use in the study. Using a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), students rated their level of agreement with statements such as "I expect that I will go to college" and "I am the kind of person who gets good grades."
Key Findings	New York City high school students in grades 9 and 10 received VPP or regular classroom instruction. From pre- to posttest, academic self-concept increased for VPP participants and remained stable for nonparticipants ($p = .033$).
Studies Measuring Outcome	Study 2
Study Designs	Quasi-experimental
Quality of Research Rating	3.4 (0.0-4.0 scale)

Study Populations

The following populations were identified in the studies reviewed for Quality of Research.

Study	Age	Gender	Race/Ethnicity
Study 1	6-12 (Childhood) 13-17 (Adolescent)	50.4% Male 49.6% Female	47% Hispanic or Latino 35.6% Black or African American 23.5% Race/ethnicity unspecified 6.8% White 6.1% Asian
Study 2	13-17 (Adolescent)	53.9% Female 46.1% Male	42.3% Hispanic or Latino 40.9% Black or African American 14.1% Race/ethnicity unspecified 9.2% White 4.4% Asian

Quality of Research Ratings by Criteria (0.0-4.0 scale)

External reviewers independently evaluate the Quality of Research for an intervention’s reported results using six criteria:

1. Reliability of measures
2. Validity of measures
3. Intervention fidelity
4. Missing data and attrition
5. Potential confounding variables
6. Appropriateness of analysis

For more information about these criteria and the meaning of the ratings, see [Quality of Research](#).

Outcome	Reliability of Measures	Validity of Measures	Fidelity	Missing Data/Attrition	Confounding Variables	Data Analysis	Overall Rating
1: Use of conflict resolution strategies	3.0	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.0	3.8	3.4
2: Normative beliefs about aggression	3.0	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.0	3.8	3.4
3: Peer support behaviors	3.0	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.0	3.8	3.4
4: Academic self-concept	3.0	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.0	3.8	3.4

Study Strengths

The measures used had good psychometric properties, including internal consistency, factor structure, item distribution and discriminability, and criterion validity. Validity was also verified through the use of a diverse panel of experts, focus groups, and pilot testing. There were strong intervention fidelity protocols and procedures in place to guide the structured use of the curriculum, including

formalized training on implementing the curriculum, a facilitator's program guide, supervision by a lead facilitator, lesson logs, and direct observations. The 20% attrition rate is realistic for a field-based project. The researchers accounted for missing data and attrition by using hierarchical linear modeling, which other research literature has shown to be an appropriate statistical technique in dealing with multilevel data.

Study Weaknesses

Assignment to treatment condition was not handled consistently; classrooms were randomly assigned to intervention and control conditions in some schools, whereas in other schools, principals chose classes and students to receive the intervention. Possible contamination across treatment conditions (from participants and nonparticipants attending the same schools) was not adequately addressed and may have resulted in confounds. The comparability of students in the treatment and control groups was not fully addressed and was limited to descriptors of age and race.

Readiness for Dissemination

Review Date: August 2010

Materials Reviewed

The materials below were reviewed for Readiness for Dissemination. The implementation point of contact can provide information regarding implementation of the intervention and the availability of additional, updated, or new materials.

Chauveron, L., & Thompkins, A. (2010). The Leadership Program's Violence Prevention Project: A supplementary review of implementation fidelity from 2005-2006 through 2008-2009. Unpublished manuscript.

Program Web site, <http://www.theleadershipprogram.com/>

Violence Prevention Project Box Set:

- Administrator's Guide
- Coaching and Training Options
- DataFish User Manual
- Facilitation Toolkit
- Facilitator's Program Guide
- High School Manual
- High School Student Handbook
- Middle School Manual
- Middle School Student Handbook
- Setting Expectations Poster
- Violence Prevention Project Lessons (DVD)

Readiness for Dissemination Ratings by Criteria (0.0-4.0 scale)

External reviewers independently evaluate the intervention's Readiness for Dissemination using three criteria:

1. Availability of implementation materials
2. Availability of training and support resources
3. Availability of quality assurance procedures

For more information about these criteria and the meaning of the ratings, see [Readiness for Dissemination](#).

Implementation Materials	Training and Support Resources	Quality Assurance Procedures	Overall Rating
4.0	3.8	3.8	3.8

Dissemination Strengths

High-quality, well-organized materials for program implementation are available for a variety of audiences; these materials include detailed implementation planning guides for administrators, supervisors, and facilitators. A variety of training opportunities and on-site technical assistance and consultation are available. The training manuals are well developed, and the training DVD includes clear examples of how to facilitate intervention activities. The user-friendly DataFish program is available to track student attendance, progress, and outcomes, and it is accompanied by a support manual.

Dissemination Weaknesses

Insufficient information is provided on the content of training courses and the methods used to ensure and monitor training outcomes. The outcomes to expect as a result of continued intervention success are not clearly described.

Costs

The cost information below was provided by the developer. Although this cost information may have been updated by the developer since the time of review, it may not reflect the current costs or availability of items (including newly developed or discontinued items). The implementation point of contact can provide current information and discuss implementation requirements.

Item Description	Cost	Required by Developer
Administrator's Guide (includes quality assurance tools)	\$176 each	Yes
Facilitator's Program Guide	\$132 each	Yes
Middle or High School Curriculum Manual (includes quality assurance tools)	\$89 each	Yes
Student workbooks	\$22 per student	Yes
2- to 5-day, on-site training (includes biannual Webinars and up to 2 hours of technical assistance and coaching per site)	\$318-\$899 per participant, for a minimum of 15 participants, plus trainer travel expenses (training length varies depending on participant experience level)	Yes
Training handouts	\$40 per participant	Yes
On-site booster training	\$229 per participant per day, for a minimum of 15 participants, plus trainer travel expenses (training length varies depending on site needs)	No
Annual 2-day Summer Institute follow-up training in New York, NY	\$359 per participant	No
Additional technical assistance and coaching	\$150 per hour	No

Replications

No replications were identified by the developer.

Contact Information

To learn more about implementation or research, contact:

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Consider these [Questions to Ask](#) (PDF, 54KB) as you explore the possible use of this intervention.

Web Site(s):

- <http://www.theleadershipprogram.com/>