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## Abstract

- ❖ School violence is a subgroup of youth violence and is a significant public health issue that impacts thousands of young individuals every day, and in turn, their schools, families, and communities (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018).
- ❖ This poster summarizes research that illustrates the impact of preventative psychological programs on violence reduction for youth in schools.
- ❖ The empirical literature has demonstrated that various psychological programs have been effective to prevent and reduce violence in schools; however, research on whether government-required preventative courses significantly reduce youth violence is limited.
- ❖ Therefore, it is imperative to gain more knowledge on whether legislative policies requiring preventive psychological programs diminish violence in schools.

## Introduction

- ❖ Youth violence in school settings is a broad public health issue that affects thousands of children each day along with their families and communities (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018b).
- ❖ Youth violence occurs in various ways, such as fights, threats with weapons, bullying, and gang-related violence.
- ❖ Young individuals who are involved in youth violence can be a victim, perpetrator, or witness.
- ❖ Although there is a plethora of research that has studied the effectiveness of preventative violence programs, there is very little research on whether required preventative psychological courses for all students could prevent or decrease violence in schools.

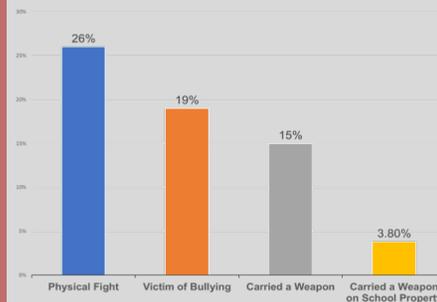
## Prior Relevant Research

- ❖ School violence among youth is defined as the intentional use of physical force or power against another person or group, which usually causes physical or psychological harm (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018b).

## Prior Relevant Research cont.

- ❖ Youth violence consists of physical and verbal aggression, intimidating, and threatening behaviors that can result in short- and long-term adverse psychological and academic outcomes for victims and perpetrators (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010).
- ❖ Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior among students that is often repetitive and occurs among students of unbalanced power (Cook et al., 2010).
- ❖ Studies have shown that the prevalence of bullying varies, with 10% to 33% of students reporting victimization by peers, and 5% to 13% admitting to being bullies themselves (e.g., Dulmus, Sowers, & Theriot, 2006; Kessel Schneider, O'Donnell, Stueve, & Coulter, 2012; Peskin, Tortolero, & Markham, 2006).

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- ❖ Bullying and violence among young students can be detrimental to all individuals involved and have a negative impact on the school's climate (Steffgen, Recchia, & Viechtbauer, 2013; Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013).
- ❖ Strøm, Thoresen, Wentzel-Larsen, and Dyb (2013) performed a study that investigated academic achievement among adolescents exposed to violence, bullying, and sexual abuse and found that students attending schools with higher levels of bullying show poorer school performance. These results were true for all students despite whether they were exposed to violence or sexual behavior.

## Prior Relevant Research cont.

- ❖ Therefore, it is imperative that preventative psychological programs are implemented and made a requirement for all students to reduce these negative outcomes.
- ❖ A study examining the feasibility and potential effectiveness of transformative life skills (TLS) on urban inner-city youth who attended an alternative school showed that there was a strong and significant reduction in youth report of revenge motivation and hostility (Frank, Bose, & Schrobrenhauser-Clonan, 2014).
- ❖ Flannery, Fenning, Kato, and McIntosh (2014) examined the effects of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SW-PBIS) on different levels of individual student problem behaviors during a 3-year span in 12 high schools and found a significant decrease in student referrals for the schools that implemented the intervention while there was an increase in comparison schools.
- ❖ A meta-review of 37 meta-analyses and 15 systematic reviews that evaluated the effectiveness of youth violence prevention programs (e.g., cognitive-behavioral therapy, behavioral parent strategies to peer mediation, and other school-based interventions) demonstrated moderate program effects (Matjasko et al., 2012).

## Discussion

- ❖ Youth violence is a phenomenon that has plagued schools for far too long.
- ❖ There has been significant progress in attempting to prevent and reduce the occurrences and impact of youth violence; however, there is not enough knowledge on whether required school programs for all schools would significantly reduce youth violence.
- ❖ To properly combat youth violence our legislators must enact policies that require all schools to incorporate preventative psychological programs as a course for all students to complete. More studies are needed to evaluate these interventions and determine their effectiveness in typical school settings.
- ❖ Once some of these preventative programs have proven to be effective in diminishing youth violence, they should be implemented nationally so that our youth have a greater opportunity for academic and overall success within society.

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