Evidence Based Practices in School Mental Health: 
Anger Management and Violence Prevention

There are many programs that are published and marketed to schools as curriculums for anger management training. Still more programs are advertised as aggression reduction or violence prevention program, that often contain anger management components. Given all of the possible combinations of intervention programs, how does a school practitioner decide which would be best for his/her school?

Background Information
Anger is expressed in many different ways, and children express anger differently than adults. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) identifies the following signs of anger in children (2001):

- Behavioral outbursts, many times without an obvious cause.
- Sleep problems.
- Fights at school or at home.
- Physical attacks on others or animals, even among pre-schoolers.
- Disobedience from an otherwise well behaved child.
- Child states s/he is really sad and does not know why.
- Complaints of stomachaches and headaches; or vague aches and pains.

Oftentimes symptoms of anger can relate to internalizing disorders especially in young children; therefore, rule out all other potential causes before invoking an anger management intervention. When considering an anger management intervention, a practitioner should begin with a group intervention because “Clients best learn to express their angry feelings when others are available to support, empathize, provide feedback, and role-play problematic conflicts in encounters” (Thomas, 2001).

Early intervention in relation to anger management and violence prevention is important in impeding the escalation of violence and has a positive impact on the child’s future adjustment. “Successful intervention with aggressive preadolescent children can have two important kinds of results on (a) the children’s immediate behavior and environment; and, (b) their future adjustment” (Lochman & Dunn, 1993).

Disclaimer
The information gathered for this evidence-based practice sheet is a summary of common practices and/or programs with a strong research base and definitions found in recent literature. This summary is by no means a comprehensive representation of all information, definitions, programs, and standards to be found. The listing of a specific program within this sheet does not constitute as an endorsement from CDE for the program.

Resources

Promising Practices Network: http://www.promisingpractices.net/

What Works Clearinghouse: http://www.w-w-c.org/

References


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Level of Intervention</th>
<th>Target Population</th>
<th>Type of research conducted (Stringent research design, random assignment; Research – mixed method, random sampling; Applied with Fidelity – outcome measures) *</th>
<th>Research Sample</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anger Replacement Training (ART)</td>
<td>International Center for Aggression Replacement Training:</td>
<td>Intensive</td>
<td>Ages 11-19 years old</td>
<td>Stringent Research</td>
<td>Students from diverse backgrounds including urban and rural, ethnic, cultural, and SES.</td>
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<td>Summary: ART is designed to increase pro-social behaviors through modeling, role playing, and performance training. This program has three components: Skillstreaming, Anger Control Training, and Moral Reasoning.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aggressionreplacementtraining.org">www.aggressionreplacementtraining.org</a></td>
<td>Targeted Intensive</td>
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<td>Peacemakers Program</td>
<td>Applewood Centers:</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>Grades 4-8</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Cleveland Public Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary: This program is designed to teach interpersonal and skillful responses to conflict through a variety of activities designed to appeal to a variety of learning styles. The information is presented in a Teacher’s Manual, Counselor’s Manual and student workbooks. The program can be used school wide and also with individual students.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.applewoodcenters.org">www.applewoodcenters.org</a></td>
<td>Intensive</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Positive Adolescent Choices Training (PACT)</td>
<td>Research Press:</td>
<td>Universal Intensive</td>
<td>Middle and High School</td>
<td>Applied with Fidelity</td>
<td>Dayton, Ohio Public Schools</td>
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<td>Summary: A culturally sensitive training program designed specifically for African American adolescents. PACT provides training in the areas of violence-risk education, anger management, and social skills.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.researchpress.com">www.researchpress.com</a></td>
<td>Targeted</td>
<td>African American students</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies</td>
<td>Channing-Bete Company:</td>
<td>Universal Intensive</td>
<td>Grades K-6</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Regular education, special needs, deaf children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(PATHS)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.channing-bete.com">http://www.channing-bete.com</a></td>
<td>Targeted</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Summary: This program has lessons focused on self control, emotional awareness, social problem-solving, critical thinking, positive values and attitudes, and respect. The lessons are designed to be taught by the classroom teacher three or more times a week for 20 minutes.</td>
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<td>Targeted</td>
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<td>Second Step: A Violence Prevention Program</td>
<td>Committee for Children:</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>Preschool – Grade 9</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Urban and suburban schools in the Pacific Northwest United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary: This program is designed to teach social and emotional skills (empathy, impulse control, anger management, and problem solving) for violence prevention in 30 minute lessons once or twice a week.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cfchildren.org">www.cfchildren.org</a></td>
<td>Universal</td>
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* See Fast Facts: Introduction to Evidence Based Practice
Program References


