

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

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Risk Factors | Interventions by Domain | Key Program Approaches | Outcomes | Evaluation Design
Delivery Specifications | Intended Setting | Fidelity | Barriers and Problems | Personnel | Education
Personnel Training | Cost | Intended Age Group | Intended Population | Gender Focus
Replication Information | Contact Information

Program developers or their agents provided the Model Program information below.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is a multilevel, multicomponent, school-based program designed to prevent or reduce bullying in elementary, middle, and junior high schools (students 6 to 15 years of age). The program seeks to restructure the existing school environment to reduce opportunities and rewards for bullying through the actions of school staff, who work to improve peer relations and make the school a safe and positive place for students to learn and develop. It addresses the victims' suffering and, at the same time, counteracts the bullying tendencies of aggressive students who have the potential to expand their antisocial behavior, a risk factor for substance abuse. (This program is not a conflict resolution approach, a peer mediation program, an anger management program, or a curriculum.)

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

In 1983, after three adolescent boys in northern Norway committed suicide, most likely as a consequence of severe bullying by peers, the country's Ministry of Education commissioned Professor Dan Olweus to conduct a large-scale research and intervention project on bully/victim problems. The resulting Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, developed at the University of Bergen in Norway, has been refined, expanded, and evaluated with positive results in two new large-scale projects in Norway. As part of the Norwegian Government's plans for the prevention of delinquency and violence among children and youth, the Olweus Program is now being implemented on a large-scale basis all over Norway. The program has also been successfully implemented in other countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany. During the 1990s, Professor Olweus worked closely with a number of colleagues in the United States, notably Dr. Sue Limber and Dr. Gary Melton at Clemson University in South Carolina, to implement and evaluate the program in the United States.



RECOGNITION

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Model Program

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice: Model Program

INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE CLASSIFICATION (IOM)

UNIVERSAL, INDICATIVE

This program was developed for universal and selective audiences.

This program includes all students but targets those who have been identified as bullying others or who are targets of bullying.

INTERVENTION TYPE

SCHOOL-BASED

CONTENT FOCUS

ANTISOCIAL/AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR, DOES NOT SPECIFICALLY ADDRESS ANY SUBSTANCES, VIOLENCE

This program addresses bullying, a risk factor for substance use and abuse, but it does not specifically address substance use or abuse.

Parent involvement as an adjunct strategy:

Parents attend schoolwide and classroom-level meetings where they are taught about bullying from the perspective of both the victim and the bully and how the school is organizing itself to combat the behavior.

RISK FACTORS

INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY, PEER, SCHOOL

INDIVIDUAL

- Impulsive, hot-headed, dominant personality
- Lack of empathy
- Difficulty conforming to rules
- Low tolerance for frustration
- Positive attitudes toward violence
- Physical strength (boys)
- Gradually decreasing interest in school

FAMILY

- Lack of parental warmth and involvement
- Overly permissive parenting
- Harsh discipline/physical punishment
- Lack of parental supervision

PEER

- Friends/peers with positive attitudes toward violence

SCHOOL

- Indifferent or accepting teacher attitudes toward bullying
 - Indifferent or accepting student attitudes toward bullying
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INTERVENTIONS BY DOMAIN

INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY, PEER, SCHOOL

INDIVIDUAL

- Life and social skills training

FAMILY

- Task-oriented family education sessions to improve family interactions (e.g., parent involvement in program homework assignments, etc.)

PEER

- Peer-resistance education

SCHOOL

- Classroom-based skills development
 - Comprehensive school change programs including components to improve parent involvement, change classroom management and/or instructional style, and improve student participation and school bonding
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KEY PROGRAM APPROACHES

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION, COUNSELING, INFORMATION SHARING, IN-SCHOOL CURRICULA, PARENT TRAINING, OTHER: SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION

The program focuses on changing bullying behavior.

COUNSELING

School counselors hold individual sessions with victims, children who bully, and their parents after a careful period of observation, information gathering, and evaluation.

INFORMATION SHARING

An information packet about bullying is provided to parents.

IN-SCHOOL CURRICULA

Students participate in a series of regular classroom meetings about bullying and peer relations. Both the video and classroom discussions are used to teach students how to identify bullying and how to mitigate its effects in the school.

PARENT TRAINING

The *Teacher's Handbook* provides instructions about holding schoolwide and classroom-level meetings with parents about bullying.

OTHER: SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

A schoolwide questionnaire about bullying is administered to the students, who answer it anonymously, and results are analyzed.

A Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee is formed and trained.

Schoolwide rules against bullying are developed, along with a coordinated system of supervision during break periods.

Parents are involved in school-time meetings.

Regular, ongoing staff discussions are held to keep staff motivated, to stimulate rapid implementation, and to learn from each other's experiences.

HOW IT WORKS

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program works with interventions at three levels:

School-wide Interventions

- Administration of the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire about bullying (completed by the students anonymously)
- Formation of a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee
- Staff training
- Development of school-wide rules against bullying
- Development of a coordinated system of supervision during break periods

Classroom-level Interventions

- Regular classroom meetings about bullying and peer relations
- Class parent meetings

Individual-level Interventions

- Individual meetings with children who bully
- Individual meetings with children who are targets of bullying
- Meetings with parents of children involved

Implementation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program requires significant and ongoing commitment from school administrators, teachers, and other staff. A first step is to establish a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee composed of administrators, teachers, students, parents, and the program's onsite coordinator.

Technical assistance is available for interested schools, including followup telephone consultation provided to the onsite coordinator every 3 to 4 weeks during the first year of implementation.

It is required that each teacher have a copy of the *Teacher's Handbook* and *Bullying at School*. Other required materials include the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire and accompanying PC software for processing and evaluating student responses. One videotape and accompanying guidebook, appropriate for grades 3 through 8, should be purchased for every six classrooms. Supplemental lesson plans may also be purchased.

OUTCOMES

REDUCTIONS IN BEHAVIORS RELATED TO RISK FACTORS, IMPROVEMENTS IN BEHAVIORS RELATED TO PROTECTIVE FACTORS, OTHER TYPES OF OUTCOMES

REDUCTIONS IN BEHAVIORS RELATED TO RISK FACTORS

- Significant reductions in student reports of general antisocial behaviors (e.g., vandalism, fighting, theft, and truancy)

IMPROVEMENTS IN BEHAVIORS RELATED TO PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- Significant improvements in classroom order and discipline
- More positive attitude toward schoolwork and school

OTHER TYPES OF OUTCOMES

- A 30% to 70% reduction in student reports of being bullied and bullying others; results are largely parallel with peer ratings and teacher ratings
- Reduces existing bullying/victim problems
- Prevents development of new cases of bullying
- Improves peer relations at the school

Results from an evaluation of 10 schools in Oslo, Norway, document that reductions in bully/victim problems varied between 33% and 64% for the various subgroups (girls and boys 11 to 13 years of age in grades 5 through 7)

EVALUATION DESIGN

Two different types of evaluation designs have been used to assess the program. Several evaluations used what is often called an "age-cohort design" with time-lagged contrasts between adjacent but age-equivalent cohorts. One of the strengths of this quasi-experimental design is that several of the cohorts serve both as intervention and control/baseline groups (in different comparisons). Also, in one evaluation project, a traditional control group design was used.

DELIVERY SPECIFICATIONS

25–52 WEEKS

Amount of time required to deliver the program to obtain documented outcomes:

- Program continues throughout the school year
- Teachers hold weekly 20- to 40-minute classroom meetings
- Parents participate in schoolwide and classroom-level meetings
- Teachers and staff participate in regular, ongoing staff discussions in groups of 6 to 12 persons

The optimal approach to program implementation involves selecting the onsite coordinator and administering the questionnaire survey in the spring; training staff in August, before school opens; and holding a school-wide kickoff at the beginning of the fall semester.

INTENDED SETTING

RURAL, URBAN, SUBURBAN

FIDELITY

Components that must be included in order to achieve the same outcomes cited by the developer:

The entire school staff must participate in training.

Teachers must read all the texts, hold weekly 20- to 40-minute classroom meetings, and participate in regular teacher discussion groups during the first year of the program.

School personnel on the Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee must participate in the required training with a certified trainer and attend 1- to 2-hour monthly meetings.

PERSONNEL

FULL TIME, PART TIME, PAID

Depending on the size of the school, the program will require a part- or full-time onsite coordinator.

EDUCATION

SPECIAL SKILLS

PERSONNEL TRAINING

Type: SEMINAR/WORKSHOP, Location: ONSITE (user)/OFFSITE (developer or trainer location), Length: BASIC/REFRESHER (phone TA)

The Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee should participate in a 1.5-day training with a certified trainer and attend 1- to 2-hour monthly meetings.

All school staff should participate in a .5- to 1-day training session and participate in regular teacher discussion groups during the first year of the program.

Technical assistance is available for interested schools, including followup telephone consultation provided to the onsite coordinator every 3 to 4 weeks during the first year of implementation.

Depending on the school's size, a program will require a part- or full-time onsite coordinator.

COST (estimated in U.S. dollars)

\$1,001–5,000

Cost considerations for implementing this Model Program as recommended by the developer:

MATERIALS

A complete set of products—*Teacher's Handbook: Olweus' Core Program Against Bullying and Antisocial Behavior, Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*, Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire, computer software for processing student responses to the questionnaire, "Bullying" video, supplemental lesson plans \$300

Information packet for parents:
Bullying Among Children and Young People

TRAINING

Initial training: (per school, in groups of 12, one certified trainer per school, training materials, not including products) \$1,000

INTENDED AGE GROUP

CHILDHOOD (5–11), EARLY ADOLESCENT (12–14), TEENAGER (15–17)

This program was developed for elementary, middle school, and junior high school students, 6 to 15 years old.

INTENDED POPULATION

WHITE

This program has been evaluated in Norway.

GENDER FOCUS

BOTH GENDERS

This program is used with both male and female students.

REPLICATION INFORMATION

NO INFORMATION PROVIDED

CONTACT INFORMATION

ABOUT THE DEVELOPER

Dan Olweus, Ph.D.

For almost 30 years, Professor Dan Olweus has been involved in research and intervention in the area of bullying among school children and youth. In 1970, he started a large-scale research project, now generally regarded as the world's first scientific study of bully/victim problems. In the 1980s, he began the first systematic study of bullying intervention and documented the positive effects of this program. During the late 1990s, Professor Olweus and his research and intervention group at the University of Bergen conducted several new large-scale intervention projects using a somewhat different study design, again gaining good results. Dr. Olweus has been named "the world's leading authority" on bully/victim problems by *The Times* newspaper of London. His book, *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*, has been published in 15 different languages.

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