Prevention of Poly-victimization
Prevention Framework

- **Primary or universal prevention**
  - Before any risk factors or symptoms of problems occur.
  - Provided to a whole population, such as all students in a school or all newborn children in a community.

- **Secondary or targeted prevention**
  - Individuals and groups who have been exposed to key risk factors.

- **Tertiary or indicated prevention (aka intervention)**
  - Specific, targeted individuals who already have the problem in efforts to reduce its duration or prevent reoccurrence.
Widespread Interest in Violence Prevention

Finkelhor, Vanderminden, Turner, Shattuck, & Hamby (2014)

- Analyses of prevention program exposure among school-age youth (ages 5 to 17)
- 65% of youth reported taking part in a violence prevention program
- 55% took part in violence prevention in past year.
- Majority of participants said it was helpful (although substantial numbers also said not helpful and repetitive)
Anti-bullying prevention was most commonly reported. General violence avoidance and conflict resolution also very common. 1 in 3 teens reported exposure to dating violence prevention.
Current State of the Field: Formats & Examples

- Classroom-based curricula
  - Individual skill building and awareness
  - Examples
    - Safe Dates – middle and high school
    - Olweus Bullying Prevention – middle school
    - Bringing in the Bystander – college

- Mentoring
  - Big Brothers Big Sisters
Current State of the Field: Formats & Examples

- Family based and early childhood
  - Nurse Family Partnership
  - Zero to Three

- Community based programs
  - Increasing collective efficacy
  - Identifying violence “hot spots”

Examples
  - Shifting Boundaries
  - Social marketing campaigns: Red Flag; Know Your Power.
Selected indicators of quality prevention programs

- Information for parents
- Parent meetings
- Active learning via role plays
- Longer duration (more than one time dose)

Young children (ages 5-9) exposed to high quality programs reported less peer victimization and perpetration

Victims exposed to high quality prevention were more likely to tell authorities.
Common Prevention Components (NatSCEV)

- Encouraging youth to disclose to adults.
- Identifying warning signs
- Elements of healthy respectful relationships
- Fewer than half were multi-day programs or provided active skill building practice.
- Only 16.7% of children in the sample were exposed to a high quality program.
Limitations

- Focus on one form of violence at a time
- Not enough evaluation for effectiveness
- Often small doses of prevention
  - One time or brief programs
  - One component rather than comprehensive approaches
- Almost no data on minimum required dose or most effective components
What can practitioners do with the current state of knowledge?

- Connect parents and children to prevention resources as part of intervention services for families who have experienced or are at risk for poly-victimization.
  - Family based services
  - Mentoring programs like Big Brothers Big Sisters
  - These can be important parts of a treatment plan. Help parents and caregivers see prevention as part of a treatment plan.
Teach key prevention lessons as part of intervention services

- Social-emotional learning
  - Empathy
  - Conflict resolution
  - Emotion regulation
- Bystander skills and safety (National Sexual Violence Resource Center has training materials on this)
Involve others and practice skills

- Involve parents and caregivers in learning prevention messages
- Practice prevention via active learning (i.e. role plays) as part of therapy sessions.
What can practitioners do?

- Help schools and communities choose evidence based and effective prevention curricula
- Advocate for longer prevention programs and involvement of parents
- Help professionals ensure that prevention curricula in places like schools are sensitive to poly-victims who may participate
Be part of wide community solutions

- If you work in schools
  - Encourage school-wide approaches
    - Social marketing campaigns
    - Policy reviews
    - Identifying hotspots

- If you work with community agencies that serve youth
  - Encourage them to include prevention.
    - For example, Stop It Now? Circles of Safety and Enoughabuse.org offer training related to sexual abuse prevention.
How can you start building toward the next generation of prevention programs?
Move To A Coordinated Violence Prevention Model

Specific content for bullying & peer aggression:
- Specific content should be offered in elementary school; bullying peaks in middle school
- Coping with peer social hierarchies
- Cyberbullying & how to be careful online

Core content for all violence types:
Many of these topics can be introduced as early as preschool & primary grades and revisited regularly

Currently common in most classroom prevention programs:
- Encourage disclosure (88%)
- Identify warning signs (78%)
- Teach healthy relationship skills (73%)
- Teach conflict resolution techniques (71%)

Additional core content suggested by the research literature:
- Role of bystanders in violence prevention
- Coping with prior victimization
- Promoting self-regulation

Other approaches that prevent multiple types of violence:
- Family-centered and early childhood services
- Increasing security/adult presence in violence “hotspots”

Specific content for gang & delinquency prevention:
- Pressure to join gangs and affiliate with delinquent peers starts in middle school, offer before
- Dealing with pressure from delinquent peers
- Community mobilization strategies

Specific content for dating violence:
- Risks for dating violence is low in middle school, can offer this in middle school before dating begins in earnest
- Rigid gender roles
- Navigating intimacy

Specific content for sexual assault:
- Some risk for sexual assault exists throughout childhood, but it rises dramatically in middle and high school years, especially extrafamilial abuse. Can be introduced in middle school.
- Negotiating consent
- Educating about safe sex, birth control

Model from Hamby, Banyard & Grych, 2014, rates from Finkelhor et al., 2014
Target Etiological Processes That Affect Most Forms of Violence

**Person**
- Cognitive Processes
  - Beliefs about aggression
  - Schemas
  - Automatic cognitions
- Affective Processes
- Self-Regulatory
- Personality
  - Impulsivity
  - Narcissism

**Situation**
- Environmental Conditions
  - Heat
  - Overcrowding
- Drug/alcohol use
- Social Integration
- Behavior of Others
  - Hostility
  - Rejection
- Family Context

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A very large number of prevention programs only focus here!
RESOURCES & ASSETS:
- External resources (what you have)
  - SES
  - Caregivers (kids)/Partners (adults)
  - Safe, stable environment
- Internal assets (who you are)
  - Personality
  - Cognitive abilities
  - Character strengths

COPING RESPONSES:
(What you do) Coping, including appraisal, regulatory behavior, meaning-making behavior

ADVERSITY:
- Victimization, loss, illness/injury, other life events

WANT TO PREVENT ABUSE?
FOCUS HERE

WANT TO MINIMIZE THE HARM OF PAST ABUSE?
FOCUS ON THESE TARGETS

PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH:
- Well-Being, Affect, Symptoms

From the Portfolio Resilience Model; Grych, Hamby & Banyard, 2014