

School-based interventions TO Prevent Dating and Relationship Violence and Gender-Based Violence: STOP-DRV-GBV systematic review

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Plain language summary

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Plain language summary

Schools are places where dating and relationship violence and gender-based violence occur. Therefore, interventions conducted within schools are ideally placed to prevent and reduce dating and relationship violence and gender-based violence. We reviewed existing research on these interventions, exploring how they were expected to work, what factors affected their implementation in practice, how they had an impact on dating and relationship violence and gender-based violence, and what specific parts of the interventions were most effective and in what contexts. We defined what sort of evidence to include in the review, carried out a comprehensive search and found 247 reports on school-based interventions to prevent dating and relationship violence or gender-based violence, most of which were conducted in North America.

Most interventions aimed to provide students with the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to prevent perpetration and victimisation. They varied in complexity; some had one activity, others had multiple activities, some were integrated into the existing school curricula and others were complex in that they sought to change how schools as a whole respond to dating and relationship violence or gender-based violence. We theorised that complex interventions would bring about greater and more sustainable change, but this was not supported by our findings. The implementation of interventions was affected by factors such as school organisation and leaders who believed in the importance of addressing dating and relationship violence/gender-based violence, along with time and resources to deliver the interventions. The ease with which the intervention could be delivered and modified was also important.

There was stronger evidence for intervention effectiveness in reducing dating and relationship violence than for gender-based violence, with significant long-term impacts on dating and relationship violence victimisation and perpetration. There was some evidence that interventions in high-income countries could be effective for reducing victimisation and perpetration of gender-based violence in the long-term. More complicated interventions were not more effective, and interventions tended to reduce dating and relationship violence perpetration in boys more than in girls. We have also been able to identify where there are gaps in available evidence, which may provide avenues for future research.

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