

A violence prevention toolkit for Scotland. A review of the evidence.

OFFICIAL

WHAT IS THE TOOLKIT, WHY IS IT NEEDED, AND WHO IS IT FOR?

In Scotland, we take a public health approach to preventing violence. For this approach to work, it is important that as many people and organisations as possible, from across society work together. We all have a role to play.

The toolkit is intended to be a useful and practical resource for practitioners who work with young people who may be at risk of becoming involved in violence or who are already engaging in violent lifestyles. This toolkit is designed to help anyone who has the opportunity to work with and support young people, including:

- School staff
- Youth workers
- Police officers
- Health professionals
- Third sector and community organisations
- Family members

Violence is preventable and the pathway towards violence can be interrupted in a variety of different ways - from preventing the causes of violence in society to early identification in those who may be at risk and also the provision of support for those who are currently engaged in violent lifestyles. Working with and supporting young people provides a valuable opportunity to intervene early on in life. The toolkit summarises evidence to help those who are working with young people to make decisions about how to keep themselves safe from involvement in violent lifestyles.

HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

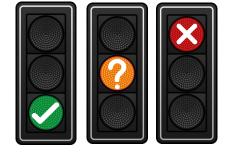
The toolkit is based on research evidence that has been summarised by researchers who are interested in "what works?" to prevent youth violence. It is designed to help you make decisions about how you can best support young people living in your area to navigate away from violence.

Information is provided on the violence prevention approaches that the evidence tells us are effective or show promise in reducing (1) the factors that increase the likelihood that a young person will become involved in violence and (2) violence related attitudes and/or behaviours.

For each approach, the toolkit provides a summary of:



The traffic light system refers to evidence-based research. Red for not recommended, yellow for shows promise, green for best practice.



STRENGTHENING SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND LIFE SKILLS

WHAT IS IT?

These school-based programmes are often delivered by teachers and aim to help young people build resilience to becoming involved in violence by strengthening their social, emotional, and life skills (e.g. problem solving, managing emotions, communication, increased empathy, and relationship skills).

The Youth Endowment Fund highlights that these programmes help young people "think before they act, understand other people's perspectives, communicate effectively, and use strategies for managing impulsiveness or aggression".

IS THIS APPROACH EFFECTIVE?

There is international evidence that programmes that seek to develop young people's social, emotional, and life skills can reduce the likelihood that they will become involved in violence, as a victim and/or as a perpetrator (Scottish Government, 2021).

One review of the evidence indicated that these programmes reduced violent outcomes (such as fighting and bullying) by 25% (Wilson & Lipsey, 2007).

Enhancing these skills can also impact risk or protective factors for youth violence.

Those that were most effective were those that had well-defined goals and used a coordinated set of interactive activities that provide young people with an opportunity to practice the skills that they are being taught (Clarke et al., 2015).



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STRENGTHENING SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND LIFE SKILLS

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE-BASED SKILL-BASED PROGRAMMES?

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS): Helping young people manage their behaviour, understand their emotions, and work well with others via a school-based social and emotional learning curriculum that gives young people the opportunity to practically apply these skills within their school day.

STRENGTHENING SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND LIFE SKILLS IN SCOTLAND

PATHS has been implemented in pre-schools and schools across various locations in the UK, including Scotland where it has been delivered in over 50 settings. In Renfrewshire, Barnardo's implemented the programme in 30 settings and supported 240 staff in 2021. The programme was delivered to 6,308 young people with the aim of teaching them pro-social skills, emotion understanding, social problem-solving and self-control.

In over half of the young people taking part, teachers reported reductions in aggressive and disruptive behaviour and improvements in social and emotional competence.

They also noted that almost 40% of young people demonstrated improvements in their levels of empathy.

In addition over 80% of young people reported that PATHS had helped them to understand their emotions better, had a positive impact on their behaviour, had helped them to understand others emotions, and develop their friendship skills. Over three quarters of the pupils noted that their problem solving skills had improved (PATHS Education UK, 2021).



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THERAPEUTIC APPROACHES

WHAT IS IT?

Therapeutic approaches tend to be used in situations where a young person has experienced and/or witnessed violence in the home or community and/or has already been involved in violence. A trained professional can deliver these approaches to individuals in a one-to-one or group setting, or may work with young people and their families together. These approaches aim to create positive changes in the lives of young people and/or their families and prevent negative outcomes. They do so by helping young people recognise and manage negative thoughts and behaviours, as well as focusing on reducing the influence of risk factors and building support within their homes and communities.

IS THIS APPROACH EFFECTIVE?

Research evidence suggests that interventions, which take a therapeutic approach to supporting young people, are associated with reduction in violence and violent re-offending (O'Connor & Waddell, 2015; David - Ferdon et al., 2016;Youth Endowment Fund, 2021). It is important that supportive and trusting relationships are at the heart of the practice of those who work with young people and that the support provided is tailored to the specific needs of the individual.



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THERAPEUTIC APPROACHES

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE-BASED THERAPEUTIC APPROACHES

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT): A talking therapy that can be delivered to individuals, groups, and/or families and aims to provide participants with tools to manage thoughts and behaviour patterns that are related to the young person's involvement in violence.

Multi-systemic Therapy (MST):

A community-based family driven approach that aims to address concerns relating to a young person's violence within the setting in which the behaviour occurs (e.g. home, school, community).

THERAPEUTIC APPROACHES IN SCOTLAND

<u>Cognitive Behavioural Therapy</u>: The <u>Royal College for</u> <u>Psychiatrists</u> highlight that young people under the age of 18 may be able to access CBT through trained CBT therapists who work in specialist teams like CAMHS. Others may work independently, in schools or voluntary organisations. <u>Multi-systemic Therapy</u>: There are currently four <u>MST teams</u> in Scotland across two sites (Edinburgh City Council and Fife Council). NHS Education for Scotland (NES) have come together with MST UK and Ireland (MST UK and I) now employ a full time MST Consultant and Programme Lead for Scotland.

RESOURCES FOR PRACTITIONERS

All practitioners can practice in a way that is trauma-informed (guided by an understanding of how exposure to traumatic experiences impact young people's views/relationships) and trauma-skilled (supporting recovery, developing trauma informed relationships & recognising when a person may benefit from a trauma specialist intervention). Online NES training is available to support those who work with young people to develop trauma informed/trauma skilled practice.



"Online training is available from NHS Education Scotland to support those who work with young people to develop as a trauma informed and trauma skilled practitioner"



FOCUSED DETERRENCE

WHAT IS IT?

Focused deterrence is a strategy which identifies young people who have been involved in high levels of violence and who are most likely to engage in violent crime again.

The aim of this approach is to navigate young people away from crime to positive destinations and tackle the factors that may make them more likely to engage in violence. Focused deterrence improves young people's access to support services within their community whilst emphasising that there will be consequences if young people continue to engage in violent crime (e.g. increased police presence and arrest).

An important component of this approach is wider community engagement. This includes encouraging the community to communicate that they will not tolerate violence, that the violence has to stop, and that they care about their young people.

IS THIS APPROACH EFFECTIVE?

Overall, the evidence suggests that the focused deterrence approaches that combine communicating the consequences of violence with support to navigate away from it are associated with a reduction in violent crime (Braga et al., 2019; College of Policing, 2022; Youth Endowment Fund, 2021).

Guidance highlights the importance of conducting research on the violence taking place locally in order to tailor a response that fits local communities and contexts.

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FOCUSED DETERRENCE

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE-BASED FOCUSED DETERRENCE PROJECTS?

Community Intervention to Reduce Violence (CIRV) is a focused deterrence strategy that is modelled on the Boston Ceasefire project and the Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence. To date, CIRV has been adopted to tackle violence within both <u>Glasgow</u> and <u>Northamptonshire</u>.

FOCUSED DETERRENCE IN SCOTLAND

CIRV looks at the whole person and aims to address the underlying causes of the person's involvement in crime and violence.

The CIRV model establishes a partnership among police, social services, education, housing and community safety services along with the local community. Gang members who were involved in violence were approached and offered help, support, constructive alternatives, and access to various services if they chose to engage with the project and change their lifestyle by rejecting violence. However, if they did not to engage, warnings were given of a stronger law enforcement response targeting any ongoing violence associated with the individual gang members and gangs as a whole.

Those who took part in CIRV were less likely to carry weapons following the intervention, which can prevent consequences for victims, offenders, and society (Williams et al., 2014).



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RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

WHAT IS IT?

The Restorative Justice (RJ) Council notes that RJ provides people who have been harmed with the opportunity to meet, or communicate with, the people who have harmed them. Those harmed can explain the impact it has had on their lives to the person responsible within a safe and supportive setting (Hamad et al., 2020; Children and Young People's Centre for Justice, 2021).

It can also give those harmed a sense of closure. It provides those who have caused harm with an opportunity to consider the impact of the harm and take responsibility for it, with the aim of reducing the likelihood of further offending. In some circumstances, it can also allow them to make amends for the harm caused.

Some important core values of restorative justice are that it is voluntary, confidential and safe for all participants. A trained facilitator should lead it.

IS THIS APPROACH EFFECTIVE?

Research evidence suggests that RJ benefits both the person harmed and the person responsible for the harm.

RJ can reduce the likelihood that a young person will become involved in violent crime again, helps people recover from the harm of experiencing violence, and provides greater satisfaction with the justice process (Kirkwood et al., 2018; Strang et al., 2013; Wong et al., 2016;.

The importance of high quality practice and safeguarding against unintended consequences has been emphasised.

"Some important core values of restorative justice are that it is voluntary, confidential and safe for all participants. A trained facilitator should lead it"

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE-BASED RJ APPROACHES

1. Direct communication: Face-to-face meeting or video conference between person responsible and victim (led by facilitator(s), restorative justice conferences and restorative justice circles).

2. Indirect communication: Facilitator acts as a go-between to allow the person responsible and the person harmed to communicate without having to meet (e.g. written or verbal).

3. Other restorative processes: Alternative methods that are deemed as partly restorative, as restorative practice, or as adopting a restorative approach when RJ is not possible (e.g. when the person harmed or the person who has caused the harm does not want to participate). These approaches may involve working with just the person who has harmed or supporting the victim). Further information can be found within the Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ) Guide to Youth Justice in Scotland

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN SCOTLAND

The Scottish Government published the <u>Restorative Justice Action Plan</u> in June 2019. The vision of the action plan is that "RJ is available across Scotland to those who wish to access it, and at a time that is appropriate to the people and case involved. RJ fits into several strands of the Whole System Approach (WSA), the Scottish Government's programme for addressing the needs of young people in conflict with the law.

The CYCJ has compiled a collection of <u>case studies</u> focusing on successful RJ approaches in different contexts. A toolkit to support "<u>Designing and implementing</u> <u>RJ in Scotland</u>" has also been developed by The University of Edinburgh and the Restorative Justice Forum Scotland. able across

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BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAMMES

WHAT IS IT?

School-based bullying prevention programmes aim to prevent and reduce "unwanted aggressive behaviour by another child or group of children who are neither siblings nor in a romantic relationship with the victim". Bullying involves repeated physical, psychological, or social harm, and often takes place in schools of other settings where children gather, and online (WHO, 2019).

These programmes aim to reduce bullying by developing social and emotional skills, challenging attitudes towards bullying, increasing knowledge of bullying, and encouraging bystanders to intervene.

Bullying prevention is most effective when it takes a wholeschool approach. This means that it creates a non-violent environment in school by combining bullying prevention activities for young people with materials for staff and parents, and wider changes to the school context (e.g. producing school policies on bullying and adapting the environment).

IS THIS APPROACH EFFECTIVE?

Several evaluations have found that school-based bullying prevention programmes are effective in reducing both bullying perpetration and victimisation (Bellis et al., 2017; Gaffney et al., 2019; Zych et al., 2015). Those that were most effective were well planned, of longer duration, took a whole school approach, trained facilitators, and were tailored to the specific age group (Kovalenko et al., 2020).

"Bullying prevention is most effective when it takes a whole-school approach"



BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAMMES

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE-BASED BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAMMES

Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme: A whole school approach, developed in Norway, with the goal of improving peer relations and making schools safer and positive places for young people by improving school culture creating a sense of community, and reducing opportunities for bullying to occur.

<u>KiVa Bullying Prevention Programme:</u> Finland's anti-bullying programme sets out to stop ongoing bullying, prevent new bullying incidents from occurring, and reduce harmful effects of victimisation by changing bystander behaviours towards bullying.

Learning Together: A UK school-based programme that involves students and staff working together to learn about and implement restorative practices throughout the school to prevent bullying & other aggressive behaviour.

BULLYING PREVENTION IN SCOTLAND

RespectMe is Scotland's National Anti-Bullying organisation. They work with adults involved in the lives of children and young people and give them practical skills and confidence to deal with children and young people who are bullied and those who bully others. The organisation works with local authorities and schools on antibullying approaches and policies and also provide training for staff and parents on how to address bullying.

Respect for All is the Scottish Government's national approach to preventing and dealing with bullying behaviour in children. It provides a holistic framework for all adults working with children and young people to address all aspects of bullying.

"RespectMe is Scotland's National Anti-Bullying organisation"



DATING VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMMES

WHAT IS IT?

Dating violence during adolescence can be defined as "physical, sexual, or psychological/emotional violence (including stalking) that occurs within a teen dating relationship."

According to the World Health Organisation, dating violence prevention programmes aim to prevent and reduce violence in dating and intimate partner relationships through developing life skills, adding to children's knowledge of abuse, and challenging gender stereotypes and social norms (the informal rules shared by social groups around which attitudes and behaviours are acceptable) that increase the risk of violence. These programmes tend to be delivered within a school setting.

Some of these programmes adopt a bystander approach that aims to educate and empower young people to be "active bystanders" who intervene when they observe violent incidents.

IS THIS APPROACH EFFECTIVE?

There is promising evidence that these interventions are effective in improving violence-related attitudes and knowledge (Scottish Government, 2020). However, the evidence on whether these programmes influence violent behaviour is less clear. More research is needed to helps us better understand whether these approaches can lead to changes in young people's behaviour.



"There is promising evidence that these interventions are effective in improving violence-related attitudes and knowledge"



DATING VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMMES

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE-BASED DATING VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMMES?

<u>Safe Dates</u> is an interactive programme aimed at teaching young people the skills and equipping them with the tools needed to create and foster positive relationships.

Mentors in Violence Prevention is a bystander intervention designed to be implemented with young people. This intervention takes the form of a peer mentoring programme giving young people the chance to explore and challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that drive gender-based violence, bullying and other forms of violence. It addresses a range of behaviours and uses a 'bystander' approach where individuals are not looked upon as potential victims or perpetrators but as empowered and active bystanders with the ability to support and challenge their peers in a safe way (Eriksen, 2015; Powell, 2011; Williams & Neville, 2017).

PREVENTING DATING VIOLENCE IN SCOTLAND

Equally Safe is Scotland's strategy to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls nationally. In line with the strategy, Equally Safe at School has been developed for secondary schools to help them take a whole school approach.

The Scottish Government has created a <u>resource</u> for professionals to help them support positive relationships and sexual wellbeing in young people. The key messages are relevant to all romantic relationships.

The SVRU are currently working with young people to co-create a programme which aims to promote healthy equal relationships and prevent dating violence during adolescence. This work involved looking at existing programmes with young people to gather their perspective on the content and how it can be adapted to a Scottish context.



"The Scottish Government has created a resource for professionals to help them support positive relationships and sexual wellbeing in young people"

PARENTING PROGRAMMES

WHAT IS IT?

Parenting programmes aim to reduce violence by encouraging safe, stable, and nurturing relationships between parents and young people. This is relevant as the relationship between parents and their children can directly affect a child development.

IS THIS APPROACH EFFECTIVE?

There is promising evidence that programmes which aim to develop parenting skills, and strengthen the relationship between parents and children, may reduce the likelihood that a young person will become involved in violence (WHO, 2015).

Although, there is limited research looking directly at the impact of parenting programmes on actual criminal and violent behaviour, taking part in these programmes is linked to a reduction in child maltreatment and children's behavioural difficulties, both of which have been shown to increase a young person's risk of engaging in violence later in life.

The benefits of these programmes have been shown to last for several years (Bellis et al., 2012; David-Ferdon et al., 2016).



"There is promising evidence that programmes which aim to develop parenting skills, and strengthen the relationship between parents and children, may reduce the likelihood that a young person will become involved in violence"

PARENTING PROGRAMMES

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMMES?

• Triple P

• <u>The Incredible Years</u> These are both examples of programmes that focus on parenting and aim to strengthen family relationships, promote resilience in children, and act as a buffer against adverse childhood experiences.

PARENTING PROGRAMMES IN SCOTLAND

The implementation of both the Incredible Years and Triple P programmes in Scotland are supported by NHS Education for Scotland's, Psychology of Parenting Programme (PoPP) which is a national roll-out of evidence-based parenting programmes. These interventions are currently available to families of children aged 3-6 years, however, the PoPP is now moving into the next stage of its development and will be working with families of 7-12 year olds where there are concerns about the child's social, emotional or behavioural development. Since its launch, 806 early years practitioners (across multiple sectors) have been trained, equipped and supported to deliver one of these programmes and over 6,200 families in Scotland have taken part in the groups. One recent study provided support for the use of parent training programme for reducing behavioural difficulties in "at risk" preschool children in Scotland. Their findings highlighted that, following the intervention, 60% of young people were no longer scoring as "high-risk". To enquire about becoming a Psychology of Parenting Programme site, receive implementation support, and complete training to make evidence-based parenting interventions available to families in your community please contact psychology@nes.scot.nhs.uk



"Since its launch, 806 early years practitioners have been trained, equipped and supported to deliver one of these programmes"



MENTORING

WHAT IS IT?

Within the context of youth violence, mentoring involves an older peer or adult(s) acting as a positive role model for a young person, and mentors often provide social, emotional, and/or academic guidance.

These programmes can be delivered to all young people in a year group/school (universal) or can be focused at young people who are known to be at increased risk of engaging in violence (targeted).

IS THIS APPROACH EFFECTIVE?

There is promising evidence that mentoring programmes are effective at reducing young people's involvement in crime and violence and lessen the influence of factors that are associated with risk of violence (Bellis et al., 2017; David Ferdon et al., 2016; Scottish Government, 2020; Scottish Government, 2021). It is important to note that research shown that mentoring programmes, if not delivered correctly by trained mentors, can have a detrimental effect on young people and their behaviour (Waddell & O'Connor, 2015).

Advice for Those Commissioning Mentoring Programmes from the Early Intervention Foundation highlights that "mentoring can be a valuable part of preventative work" and there's promising evidence to suggest it can have positive impacts if delivered right. This guidance notes the positive effects of mentoring tend to be stronger when certain characteristics are included. Some of these are: emotional support as a key part of the mentoring provision, mentors/mentees meet at least once a week, spending more time together at each meeting, the mentoring is over a prolonged period, it is part of a wider suite of interventions (mentoring alone may not reduce re-offending) and the programme is well-run with effective training/support for mentors and careful monitoring of contact. g can be

"Mentoring can be a valuable part of preventative work"

MENTORING

EXAMPLES OF MENTORING APPROACHES?

Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP): A peer mentoring programme that gives young people the chance to explore and challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that drive genderbased violence, bullying and other forms of violence.

Big Brothers Big Sisters: This

programme creates and supports one-to-one mentoring relationships between adult volunteers and young people with the aim of helping young people to develop social and emotional skills that build resilience, promote mental health and wellbeing, and reduce the likelihood they will engage in risk taking behaviour such as violence.

MENTORING IN SCOTLAND

MVP is delivered by Education Scotland and is Scotland's largest anti-violence schools programme. It addresses a range of behaviours including namecalling, sexting, controlling behaviour and harassment, and uses a 'bystander' approach where individuals are not looked on as potential victims or perpetrators but as empowered and active bystanders with the ability to support and challenge their peers in a safe way.

The programme trains senior pupils to act as peer mentors who then deliver sessions to younger students in the school. By 2021 all 32 local authorities have engaged with the programme with 30 now actively delivering it in their secondary schools.

Following MVP, both mentors and mentees are more aware of the issues related to violence, gender based violence and bullying and there is a positive increase in the percentage of young people who report that they would act if they saw particular behaviours occurring (Williams & Neville, 2017).

"By 2021 all 32 local authorities have engaged with the programme with 30 now actively delivering it in their secondary schools"



APPROACHES THAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED

WHAT IS THIS APPROACH?

Programmes that set out to deter young people from getting involved in violence by using scare tactics or confrontational techniques. They are intended to highlight the negative consequences of engaging in that behaviour (Lipsey, 2009). They are typically aimed at young people who are considered to be at risk of engaging in violent or criminal activity.

WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE TELL US ABOUT DISCIPLINE AND FEAR BASED APPROACHES?

It was assumed that providing the young people with testimonials from people who were currently incarcerated, and exposing them first-hand to the reality of prison life, would scare or shock them into not engaging in violence.

However, evidence has demonstrated that these programmes are associated with an increased risk of offending and their implementation should be avoided (Petrosino et al., 2013). "These programmes are associated with an increased risk of offending and their implementation should be avoided"



APPROACHES THAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED

EXAMPLES OF THIS APPROACH?

"<u>Scared Straight</u>" is a example of this approach that has been implemented in the US.

THE USE OF DISCIPLINE AND FEAR BASED APPROACHES IN SCOTLAND

To our knowledge, the use of this approach to prevent youth violence has not been examined within a Scottish context. Evidence mostly comes from the US but there is sufficient evidence to warrant caution against using them. "Evidence mostly comes from the US but there is sufficient evidence to warrant caution against using them"



In order to learn more about "what works" in prevention and to improve outcomes for young people, we need to continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the programmes and projects that are taking place within our communities in Scotland.

If you are interested in learning more about how you can embed evaluation and collect information on whether the programmes, approaches, and services you are implementing are having an impact on the young people that you are working with, you can find guidance within our SVRU research hub.

DO YOU HAVE A PROJECT OR PROGRAMME THAT YOU THINK WE SHOULD INCLUDE IN THIS TOOLKIT?

As more evidence becomes available, we will update and improve this toolkit. Please get in touch to tell us about any work that you are doing in Scotland via email (violence.reduction@scotland.police.uk) or on Twitter @vruscotland.