

Publication papers written as a result of the University of Dundee's research into child abuse prevention programmes including the VIP Tweenees programme.

Publication papers : Dr Ian Barron

Barron, I. and Topping, K. (2009). School-based child sexual abuse prevention programs: The evidence on effectiveness. *Journal of Children's Services*, 3(3), 31-53

This narrative review explored the efficacy of school-based child sexual abuse prevention programmes

between 1990 and 2002. There were 22 efficacy studies that met clear inclusion criteria.

Results covered both methodological design and the range of outcome measures.

Methodology was analysed through four dimensions (target population, prevention programme implementation, evaluation methodology and cost-effectiveness). Outcomes for children covered nine categories (knowledge, skills, emotion, perception of risk, touch discrimination, reported response to actual threat/abuse, disclosure, negative effects and maintenance of gains). The studies had many methodological limitations. Prevention programmes had a measure of effectiveness in increasing children's awareness of child sexual abuse as well as self-protective skills. Beyond minimal disclosure rates, there was no evidence to demonstrate that programmes protected children from intra-familial sexual abuse. For a small number of children prevention programmes produced minimal negative emotional effects. Recommendations for future research, policy and practice include setting realistic outcomes for child participants and locating programmes within wider abuse prevention measures.

Topping, K. and Barron, I. (2009). School-based child sexual abuse prevention programs: A review of effectiveness. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(1), 431-463.

In this systematic and critical review of purely school-based child sexual abuse prevention program efficacy studies from 1990 onwards, 22 studies met the inclusion criteria. They differed by target population, program implementation and evaluation methodology.

Measured outcomes for children included knowledge, skills, emotion, risk perception, touch discrimination, reported response to actual threat/abuse, disclosure, maintenance of gains and negative effects. Many studies had methodological limitations (e.g. sampling problems, lack of adequate control groups, lack of reliable and valid measures). Despite this, most investigators claimed their results showed significant impact in primary prevention (increasing all children's knowledge/awareness and/or abuse prevention skills). There was a little evidence of change in disclosure. There was limited follow-up evidence of actual use and effectiveness of prevention skills, and the evidence for maintenance of gains was mixed. A number of programs reported some negative effects. Very few studies reported implementation fidelity data and no study reported on cost-effectiveness. Implications for future research, policy and practice are outlined.

Barron, I. and Topping, K. (2010). School-based child sexual abuse prevention programs: Implications for practitioners. *American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children*, 22(2), 11-19.

Schools are a primary location for the delivery of child sexual abuse prevention programs.

This has both advantages and disadvantages. Further, despite the rapid growth internationally of school-based abuse prevention programs, there continues to be a lack of systematic evaluation, and many of these programs are implemented on trust rather than on evidence of their effectiveness (Finkelhor and Dzuiba-Leatherman, 1995; McIntyre and Carr, 1999a and Topping and Barron, 2009). Secrecy about abuse (Krivacska, 1990), the difficulty in

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measuring transfer of skills from programs to real life (Ko and Cosden, 2001) and the complex interaction of factors related to program, presenter, and student have all been barriers to good quality evaluation. In recent years more evidence has accumulated, but critiques have been rare. This article summarizes the authors' recent literature review and meta-analysis of the effectiveness of purely school-based child sexual abuse prevention programs (Topping and Barron, 2009) and outlines the primary implications for their effective delivery. We also provide recommendations for teachers and child protection practitioners in planning and delivering sexual abuse prevention programs. First, we present some background information to help frame the context of the issue.

Barron, I. and Topping K. (2010). School-based abuse prevention: Effect on disclosures. *Journal of Family Violence*, 25(7), 651-659.

Abstract This paper focuses specifically on the analysis of disclosures and forms part of a wider study which evaluated the effectiveness of the Violence is Preventable program. Participants included a survivor group, grade 6 group, and a grade 7/8 group with equivalent waiting-list comparison groups. Lessons were delivered either by voluntary organization workers or class teachers. Disclosures were systematically recorded by presenters. Video was used to analyze interactions around disclosures. Substantial numbers of disclosures occurred when lessons were delivered by survivor organisation presenters. Video analysis suggested this was partly due to adult-student interactions characterized by low levels of adult control. Studies on a larger scale are needed particularly comparing outcomes from different presenters with an analysis of what leads to disclosure in and beyond the classroom.

Barron, I. and Topping, K. (in press). Abuse prevention programme integrity: video analysis of interactions. *Child Abuse Review*.

This paper identifies key themes from research into programme fidelity of sexual abuse prevention programmes. It presents a detailed analysis of programme fidelity within a study of the Tweenees school-based abuse prevention programme (Barron and Topping, 2010). The paper reports how programme fidelity was addressed in a programme delivered to survivors of child sexual abuse by experienced survivor organisation workers. There was also study of programme fidelity in the delivery of the programme to grade-seven pupils through co-working between survivor organisation workers and teachers. Video was taken of all four sessions delivered to the survivors' group. To begin to explore programme fidelity when lessons were co-delivered by survivor organisation workers and a teacher, the first session of a grade-seven class was videoed. Survivor organisation workers achieved high levels of programme fidelity characterised by facilitative communicative behaviours (e.g. affirming responses, seeking clarification, checking understanding and summarising). The grade-seven teacher's communication was characterised by a behaviour management focus. Video analysis of interactions was a useful measure for programme fidelity and analysing appropriate communication underpinning delivery of the programme. Recommendations for future programme fidelity measures are provided for researchers and practitioners in the field.