Prevention 101: The Science Behind Healthy Decision Making for Students
Presenters

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  • Member, D.A.R.E. National/International Board of Directors
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Goals of Prevention Science

• Etiology of problem behavior
• Identify/understand predictors of problem behavior
• Develop intervention
• Evaluate intervention
• Disseminate research findings/effective interventions
Law of Indirect Effect
D.A.R.E./kiR Elem/Mid Curricula

• D.A.R.E./kiR curricula have an “indirect” influence on changing behavior by changing key components of curricula, particularly decision-making skills
D.A.R.E./kiR: Importance of Theory

• Social and Emotional Learning
  • Self-awareness
  • Self-management
  • Social-awareness
  • Relationship skills
  • Responsible decision-making
  • Teachers/administrators comfortable with SEL
Logic Model

Diagram:

- Bullying Self-Efficacy
- Peer Pressure Refusal Skills
- Beliefs about Consequences
- Decision-Making Skills
- Use of Alcohol Cigarettes Marijuana
- Parental Attentiveness
- Normative Beliefs
- Lifestyle Incongruence
- Intentions
- Intervening on Bullying
Evidence-based Practice & Practice-based Evidence

• Efficacy – RCTs for elementary-middle curricula
• Effectiveness – curricula delivered across US
• Taking program to “scale” – training infrastructure
• Sustainability – in existence for 36 years
• D.A.R.E. has Mental Health/enhancement lesson “More than Sad” with American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
Impact on School Climate

- D.A.R.E. (D.A.R.E. Officers & School Resource Officers) is an example of supporting and identifying extended roles with law enforcement in school safety and to positively impact overall climate
  - The whole child
  - Infrastructure
  - Crisis and emergency management
  - Cyber security
Is middle-school kiR “efficacious”?

• This type of question relies on evidence from:
  • RCTs (randomized controlled trials) of kiR
  • Teachers trained 1-2 days on curriculum
  • Schools randomly assigned to get kiR, not get kiR
  • Initial equivalence across schools
  • kiR students are better on important outcomes
  • There have been 3 large-scale RCT studies of middle-school kiR – replication of results confirmed – Yes, it is efficacious
kiR Middle-school Delivered by Teachers is Efficacious

- President’s Commission on Combatting Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis (2017)
- California Healthy Kids Resource Center
- United Nations: D.A.R.E. only prevention curricula holds consultative status with UN Economic & Social Council and Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations
- Return on Investment from kiR – $1 investment leads to $27 in benefits
Does D.A.R.E./kiR Mid-school Work?

• “New” D.A.R.E./kiR – middle-school curriculum adapted for delivery by officers, launched in 2009
• Evaluation study now being conducted by UNCG
• Assumption:
  • If kiR middle-school curriculum was efficacious and effective delivered by teachers who received 1-2 days training, it is reasonable to assume equal or better results when delivered by law enforcement officers who receive 80-hours of training on delivering the curricula with fidelity.
D.A.R.E./kiR Elementary Curriculum

- Aligned with National Common Core 5th Grade Standards in areas of:
  - Reading (Literature, Informational Text, and Foundational Skills)
  - Writing
  - Speaking
  - Learning
Does D.A.R.E./kiR Elementary Curriculum Work?

• D.A.R.E./kiR elementary curriculum (2013)
  • 1 published study – efficacious, needs replication

• More likely that youth will:
  • Resist pressure to use drugs
  • Increase confidence in ability to resist pressure
  • Increase knowledge DM, communication/relsps
  • Improve skills of DM, communication/relsps
  • Improves attitudes toward police
Evaluation Design

Teachers will be asked to:

• Complete brief observation forms during each D.A.R.E. lesson
• Initiate an audio recording device to record the D.A.R.E. officer's delivery of the program

Students will be asked to complete three surveys per year.

• Pretest surveys will be administered as soon as is reasonably possible in the fall semester, allowing for sufficient time to complete informed consent procedures and avoiding otherwise protected dates.
• Posttest surveys will be administered immediately after the completion of the D.A.R.E. delivery.
• Follow-up surveys will be delivered as late as possible during the spring semester, avoiding protected dates.
Research Targets

Skills

- Decision-making
- Refusal
- Risk assessment
- Stress management
- Confident communication
Research Targets

Beliefs
• Harmfulness of substances
• Prevalence and acceptability of peer substance use
• Lifestyle incongruence

Behaviors and Intentions
• Substance use (alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, non-prescription pain killers)
• Bullying observation and reporting
Research Targets

Implementation

• Fidelity
• Quality
• Adaptation
• Differential Exposure
“Taking D.A.R.E. to Scale”: Infrastructure

• “Taking D.A.R.E. to Scale” involves effective/efficient dissemination of D.A.R.E. -- practice-based evidence

• D.A.R.E. is in 50 states, U.S. territories, and 52 other countries

• D.A.R.E. has teams of mentors who have trained large cadres of D.A.R.E. officers

• Team of state coordinators, state conferences, regional directors, 22 state training centers, training centers in 6 other countries
Does D.A.R.E. Work? Sustainability

- D.A.R.E. has been around since 1983 – 36 years
- D.A.R.E. has Board of Directors, Advisory Boards (Law Enforcement, Education, Science, Youth)
- In 2019 D.A.R.E. conducting 32nd National & International Conference – 75 or so workshops
- New curricula on Opioid/Rx, vaping, mental health, progress on D.A.R.E. after-school
- Youth Advisory Board, $20K scholarship each yr
- Has contributed $500,000 in scholarships
So, Does D.A.R.E. Work? BIG PICTURE

Comprehensive coverage – K-12
Evidence-based, positive impact on outcomes
Infrastructure (teams of mentors, 22 training centers, 6 international level training centers, state-level coordinators)
Rigorous 80-hours of training
Implementation fidelity emphasized
Respite for elementary teachers
Officers usually reflect diversity in community
“Local” partnership education/law enforcement
D.A.R.E. puts a known “human face” on prevention locally
Questions – Please Contact

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