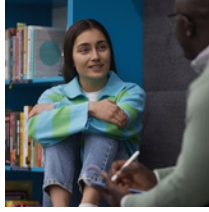


Practical Tips for Implementing School-Based Teen Dating Violence (TDV) Prevention Programs¹



a Considerations prior to initiating a school-based implementation:

- Research potential school district partners
- Think about school demographics, previous TDV prevention programming and/or research, political views related to TDV, project approval process, and school policies
- Speak with school personnel early in the process to assess program fit, identify local priority needs, and assess school readiness

b Preparing for an implementation alongside a school-based team:

- Match the implementation plan with the resources that the school has available (e.g., funding, physical space, personnel, equipment, teacher and administrator time)
- Ensure that the implementation plan has sufficient resources to sustain the program beyond the initial period of programming
- Align the whole team on project goals, theory, and outputs
- Write a project agreement at the beginning of the project, to clearly outline expectations and obligations for each team member
- Show school staff the research on your TDV prevention program and explain how the program can make positive changes as it relates to school priorities
- Discuss research and evaluation processes for the project
- Discuss how the team will work towards program fidelity, especially regarding research goals
- Focus on finding funding to support and sustain the program implementation
- Decide whether school staff or external facilitators will teach the program
- Work with in-school and/or community-based program champions to informally promote the TDV prevention program within the school and community

¹ This planning tool was developed by researchers at the Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research at Lakehead University in the Spring of 2024 as part of the Youth Violence Prevention Project in Thunder Bay and District. The tool is the result of a review of the literature on implementing universal, school-based Teen Dating Violence (TDV) prevention programs. The review was practically oriented. The goals were to identify applied, real-world information, and to summarize the insightful reflections offered by experts in the field. The hope was that compiling this information “all in one place” could be useful for those considering implementing school-based TDV prevention programs in their communities.

Citation & Link to the Full Review: Dalicandro, L., Hill, M.E., Nadin, S., Mushquash, C. J. (2024). Literature Scan: Implementing Universal, School-Based Teen-Dating Violence Prevention Programs -- Reflections from the Field. Prepared for the Thunder Bay District Health Unit (Youth Violence Prevention Project). Thunder Bay, Ontario: Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research, Lakehead University. Available here: <https://www.tbdhu.com/YVPP>

c Contingency planning:

- Plan how to respond to students who disclose harms during the program, including reports of abuse, TDV, or bullying
- Contingency plan to resolve conflicts with implementation time (e.g., inclement weather, fire or lockdown drills, holidays, Professional Development days)

d Adjusting program content to better serve student needs:

- Reflect on whether adaptations will make the program more appealing to diverse groups of students (e.g., political beliefs, developmental stage, culture, or context of students)
- Reduce program content as much as possible to make the content easy to learn and to optimize the limited time for implementation
- Evaluate if program content meets curriculum standards and could supplement or replace that content (e.g., health class)
- Get student feedback on the program content to ensure that it is relevant and realistic
- Students are more engaged when interactive and “hands-on” activities, rather than lecture formats, are used
- Engage parents in the program implementation and seek their feedback on how the program can better meet the needs of their community

e Working effectively in a school during the program implementation:

- Build good working relationships with school staff and administration through regularly scheduled team meetings and open team communication
- A project advisory board of school and research team members can guide the project and foster open communication with school team members
- Train extra facilitators so that the program continue when staff turnover occurs
- Respect the time that school staff give to the project and offer incentives to encourage participation (e.g., professional development credits, lunches, stipends, professional consultation)
- Create as little disruption as possible to school staff schedules
- Solicit feedback from facilitators, school staff, parents, and students
- Integrate that feedback into program improvements/adaptations to encourage sustainability and improve the program
- Be conscious of program fidelity; if the program is adapted in any way, try to ensure that changes do not conflict with any ongoing evaluation efforts

f Planning for sustainability:

- Allow school teams to have perpetual access to online problem-solving supports, websites with program materials, and accessible program toolkits for continued technical support
- Ensure that any online community of practice continues to be available and updated
- Maintain regular contact with the implementation team, in-school champions, and community-based champions to gauge needs for additional supports
- Consider whether annual teacher training sessions are feasible; annual training will ensure that all staff receive similar training and can reinforce the same TDV prevention concepts
- Alternatively, consider a Train the Trainer approach to increase access to training for facilitators and ensure it is available within school districts
- Use evaluation data from their school to provide evidence of positive outcomes, build buy-in, and highlight the value of continuing the program

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