

Peers Making Peace

Center for Substance Abuse Prevention Exemplary Program
(taken from www.samhsa.gov)

Brief Program Description

Peers Making Peace (PMP) is a peer-mediation program developed to help create and maintain safe and drug free schools by equipping students with attitudes and skills to stay drug-free, stay in school and avoid violence by resolving conflicts in a peaceful, prosocial manner. The goal of the program is to improve the school environment by reducing violence, assaults, discipline referrals, and increasing academic performance. In the PMP intervention, teams of student volunteers are trained to serve as drug free role models and "neutral third parties" to provide mediation services for their peers who lack the skills to successfully resolve their conflicts. The program is based on two parallel philosophical foundations: a strong "no use" message, and the "resiliency and protective factor" approach to prevention.

Program Strategies

Peers Making Peace is based on a combination of proven prevention strategies known to decrease the likelihood that youth will initiate or continue the use or abuse of substances. Strategies include: life and social skills training, training in conflict prevention and resolution, parental involvement in conflict resolution education, peer-led modeling and coaching, increasing schools responsiveness to students' needs and the creation of a supportive school environment. The intervention is designed to increase resiliency in the individual and peer domains in social competence, personal problem solving skills, sense of autonomy, and opportunities for meaningful participation. The intervention increases protective factors in the school and family domains by involving youth in highly structured, scripted, supervised peer mediations to resolve conflict, booster training sessions for peer mediators, and by promoting new skills in family communication involving both parents and youth.

Population Focus

Peers Making Peace is a universal program with services available to entire classrooms at the elementary level to entire campuses at the middle and high school levels. The program involves both universal and selective populations of school-aged male and female children and youth ages five to 20 years who are enrolled in a regular public or private elementary, middle and high school.

Suitable Settings

The program can be implemented in urban, suburban and rural school systems.

Required Resources

The Peers Making Peace curriculum is required.

Implementation Timeline

The program is designed to be ongoing, becoming a part of the fabric of the classroom/campus.

Outcomes

Six high schools with corresponding control schools were evaluated. Program outcomes included:

- Of the six evaluated high schools, 1305 mediations involving more than 2400 students occurred. Results indicated that 1275 (97.7%) resulted in an agreement.
- There was a significant difference in discipline referrals post evaluation between intervention and control schools. Discipline referrals decreased by 57.7% in Peacemakers schools, but increased by 8.4% in control schools.
- There was a significant difference in assaults post evaluation between intervention and control schools. Assaults decreased by 90.2% in Peacemakers schools, while increasing by 33% in control schools.
- There was a significant difference in expulsions post evaluation between intervention and control schools. Expulsions decreased by 73% in Peacemakers schools, but increased by 6.2% in control schools.

