

FACT SHEET



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Domestic Violence Primary Prevention: Evidence from the Past Decade

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Five Facts about DV Primary Prevention

(Primary prevention includes policies or programs that stop the onset of crime perpetration and/or victimization. Domestic violence includes sexual violence, stalking, physical violence, psychological aggression, and/or control of reproductive or sexual health by spouses, boy or girlfriends, dating partners, or hook up partners.)

1. Dating violence prevention programming for youth have a preventative effect on dating violence perpetration and victimization.
2. College campus dating violence prevention programs have not yet shown a pooled preventative effect on dating violence amongst college students.
3. Community-based domestic violence prevention programs have a preventative effect on domestic violence victimization for adult women.
4. Economic empowerment programs have a preventative effect on domestic violence for adult women, although sometimes they make violence worse.
5. Various programmatic factors (e.g., delivery method, program content and context, and participants) increase the effectiveness of these programs.

Dating Violence Primary Prevention Interventions For Youth

Youth dating violence prevention programs have a preventative effect on dating violence. Additionally, certain programmatic factors likely increase the preventative effect:

Delivery Method

- Programs delivered in multiple contexts (e.g., combining home and school activities.)
- Programs that include parents.

Participants

- Programs targeting at-risk youth.
- Programs targeting youth older than 15.
- Programs with mostly White or mixed-race participants.
- Programs with a higher proportion of girls.

Program Content and Context

- Programs that do not discuss gender roles.
- Programs that do not include bystander training.
- Programs in high-income contexts

Some meta-analyses found that length and intensity of the program were not related to differences in the preventative effect and that there was no evidence of superiority of any intervention type.

Domestic Violence Primary Prevention Interventions For College Students

The only meta-analysis focused on college students included three evaluations of campus prevention programs and found no pooled preventative effect for domestic/dating violence.

Domestic Violence Primary Prevention Interventions For Adult, Community-Based Women¹

Community-based programs, including both domestic violence prevention and economic empowerment programs, have a preventative effect on DV amongst adult women. Additionally, certain programmatic factors likely increase the preventative effect:

Delivery Method

- Interventions of longer duration.

Program Content and Context

- Interventions including a component targeting parenting practices.
- Interventions including a component targeting substance use.
- Economic empowerment programs with gender sensitization training.

Participants

- Interventions that include both women and men or men only.

Notably, some individual evaluations found an increased risk of DV associated with economic empowerment programs, primarily as partners tried to exert control over financial resources.

Some meta-analyses found that variations in the target population, country income status (low, middle, or high), and intervention type did not make a difference in the preventative effect.

¹In some of these studies, girls 15 years and older were included in the “adult women” population.