

Therapeutic intervention for victims and perpetrators of dating violence: a systematic review

WHAT IS THE RESEARCH ABOUT?

In order to assess intervention programs aimed at providing support for victims and perpetrators of teen dating violence, the researchers of this study reviewed existing literature that was published between 1997 to 2019 to understand whether and which of these intervention programs are effective for adolescents. This work examined 10 therapeutic interventions (six for adolescents ages 10-25) that were developed in the United States and Ibero-America (Colombia, Mexico and Puerto Rico).

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- This work is important because it summarizes the current scholarly research on teen dating violence intervention in order to provide educators, scholars, and the general public with an understanding about what TDV intervention strategies are available and have been evaluated.

WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS DO?

In this study, the researchers first conducted an extensive journal article search through various electronic databases. They used key words in order to find studies that were published in Spanish, English, French, and Portuguese. In order to be included in this review, the articles needed to have 1) adolescent participants of both sexes between the ages of 12-31, who were either single or in a current or previous dating relationship, without cohabiting; 2) therapeutic interventions for both victims and perpetrators of dating violence (search terms used were “dating violence” or “courtship aggression”); 3) studies with or without a comparison group; 4) a description of the study’s findings; and 5) an outline of the type of design used in the study. In this article, the authors define therapeutic intervention as “a systematic set of scientifically supported activities that seek to modify habits to improve the physical and mental well-being of people, minimizing psychological distress” (p. 109). For dating violence, this includes supporting the mental health of victims and supporting perpetrators to stop using this behavior.



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WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS FIND?

Overall, the researchers found ten interventions that were aimed at reducing dating violence. In the table below, we present the six interventions specifically focused on individuals between the ages of 10-25 and that had a comparison group. These programs used healthy relationships as a guide to teach youth about various positive dating approaches which could include topics like conflict resolution, empathy, anger management, decisions, assertiveness, communication skills, psychoeducation about dating violence and emotional regulation strategies. The majority of these intervention programs were implemented in schools and hospitals using face-to-face interactions, computers, and individual or group sessions. Specific psychological approaches used in these intervention programs were Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Motivational Interviewing.

The researchers from this study also note that dating violence intervention programs are relatively new, and so more research is needed in order to understand the long-term effects of implementing these programs.

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS RESEARCH?

This research can be used by practitioners who are interested in implementing evidence-based intervention strategies that may reduce teen dating violence among youth. This work is also critical for scholars who are looking to build on the existing literature for teen dating violence since this review provides a comprehensive analysis of concrete, therapeutic intervention programs that appear to be most effective, and demonstrates that more work in this area is needed.

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KEYWORDS

Therapeutic Intervention, dating violence, systemic review, adolescents, youth, victim

FULL REFERENCE

Yanez-Peñúñuri, L. Y., Martínez-Gómez, J. A., Rey-Anacona, C. A. (2019). Therapeutic intervention for victims and perpetrators of dating violence: A systematic review. *Revisita Iberoamericana De Psicología Y Salud*, 10(2), 107-121.