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The Nonprofit Evaluation Support Program (NESP) is a collaborative effort between two University of North Carolina Greensboro organizations – The SERVE Center and The Office of Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Services (OAERS). NESP’s mission is to provide program evaluation services and program evaluation capacity building support to nonprofit and community-based organizations while providing authentic learning experiences for future leaders in the field of program evaluation.



The SERVE Center at The University of North Carolina Greensboro is a university-based research, development, dissemination, evaluation, and technical assistance center. For more than 24 years, SERVE Center has worked to improve K-12 education by providing evidence-based resources and customized technical assistance to policymakers and practitioners.



The University of North Carolina Greensboro (UNCG) is one of the sixteen university campuses of The University of North Carolina. UNCG holds two classifications from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, as a “research university with high research activity” and for “community engagement” in curriculum, outreach, and partnerships.

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## Overview

### CISNC Introduction

In the 2014-2015 school year, Communities in Schools of North Carolina (CISNC) introduced a framework that aligns site and student metrics and interventions and supports to four areas that have been shown to have the greatest impact on student success: attendance, behavior, coursework, and parent involvement, or ABC+P. Both combined and individually, attendance, behavior, and coursework are among the best predictors of a student's academic success and on-time graduation. While collecting data around ABC+P is critically important to understanding the school and student, it is even more important to use the data to drive high impact intervention and support delivery to empower each student to reach their full potential. To this end, Communities In Schools of North Carolina has partnered with the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro to design curricula specifically for CIS within the ABC+P framework to enhance student outcomes in school and success in life. This document is one of more than 50 modules developed to support local CIS staff and most importantly the students that are served. We encourage you to explore all of the modules available online at [www.cisnc.org](http://www.cisnc.org).

### Using Evidenced-Based Strategies

There are a multitude of strategies that claim to address gang prevention, but there are few that actually do so for all students. We suggest that schools use an evidence-based, decision-making model to ensure that high quality information informs the decisions made.

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) at the U.S. Department of Education defines evidence-based decision making as routinely seeking out the best available information on prior research and recent evaluation findings before adopting programs or practices that will demand extensive material or human resources (including both funding and teacher time) and/or affect significant numbers of students (Whitehurst, 2004).

Evidence-based practice means delivering interventions and supports to students (clients) in ways that integrate the best available evidence from data, research, and evaluation; professional wisdom gained from experience; and contextual knowledge of the particular classroom, school, district, or state that might impact the design or implementation.

The ABC +P framework is inextricably bound; challenges in one area can lead to challenges in another and often exacerbate a student's issues. This document focuses on student behavior, in particular, a problem behavior. Wang and Fredricks (2014) state, "...problem behaviors often elicit negative interpersonal interactions with teachers and parents, in turn leading to aggravated disengagement from school" (Bachman et al., 2008). Association with deviant peers also provides incentives for truancy and a devaluing of academic achievement (Wang & Dishion, 2012). When students are not engaged, the risk of them becoming involved in disruptive behaviors like truancy, substance abuse, gangs, delinquent

behavior and others are higher; and participation in those activities weakens the bonds to their school environment and families. While the terminology may differ across fields, the challenge boils down to a disconnect between students and their schools; this module provides an example of a strategy that will reconnect students to their schools, address students challenging behaviors, and hopefully make schools safer, supportive, and engaging.

### Problem/Rationale

Although gang activity nationwide has decreased since the 1990s, it still prevents a problem in schools. The State of North Carolina defines a street gang as “any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, that 1) has as one of its primary activities the commission of one or more felony offenses, or delinquent acts that would be felonies if committed by an adult; 2) has three or more members individually or collectively engaged in, or who have engaged in, criminal street gang activity; and 3) may have a common name, common identifying sign or symbol” (North Carolina General Assembly, Article 13A, North Carolina Street Gang Suppression Act, 2008).

There are a number of risk factors that contribute to one’s susceptibility to gang involvement and they include: commitment to school, school performance, association with delinquent peers and susceptibility to peer influence, and self-control issues, among others (Esbensen, Osgood, Peterson, Taylor, & Carson, 2013). Research suggests that gang prevention programs should attempt to address these risk factors early in adolescence, before the age of fourteen, when students typically begin to join gangs.

The current literature identifies two approaches that are most likely to prevent violence among middle school adolescents:

- Promote the development of self-management skills
- Promote the development of social skills

### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to focus on one easy to implement gang prevention strategy that can be used in middle schools.

Teachers and school staff can promote a safe, positive school climate and help students avoid gang membership and reduce violence and criminal activity with:

- Easy to implement gang prevention activities
- Additional strategies to promote a safe, positive, school-wide climate
- Tools and resources to share with parents



## Implementation Plan

### Uses

Teachers can use the information provided in this guide to help students understand the importance of a safe, positive school environment, to avoid gang membership, and to reduce violence and criminal activity. A necessary component of gang prevention is violence prevention.

### Audiences

The primary audience for the lesson is middle school students.

### Activities

The activity highlighted in the sample lesson is designed to decrease risk factors associated with gang membership, and to promote self-management and social skills.

Additional strategies listed below work in conjunction with this lesson, including:

- Individually: Define one's role and responsibilities in the family, school, community
  - Recognizing that one has important roles may minimize the lure of gang membership
  - Recognizing that one's role and responsibilities are in jeopardy when one joins a gang
- Small group work: An exercise in critical thinking and empathy
  - How to recognize the emotional state of others through visual/verbal cues and how to convey empathy
- Small group work: Anger management
  - Strategies for cooling down including taking time out, breathing, making a choice vs. reacting emotionally
- Small group work: De-escalating tensions
  - Once students have a sense of how to manage their own anger, they consider how to use those strategies to diffuse conflicts where they are bystanders

### Materials/Equipment/Space

- Paper: construction paper, posterboard
- Glue, tape, markers
- Magazines from which students can cut pictures for collage

*Note: For presentations, check for access to computer, Smartboard or data projector and screen, relevant power cords, and remote slide advancer.*

### Time

- Two and a half hours across five classes



### Lesson Plan of Activity

This sample activity will allow students to reflect on gang participation in three steps. By articulating what gangs have to offer, this makes the risk of gang participation more realistic to them. This activity is one in a series of scaffolded activities and is appropriate for 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

### Sample Lesson for Gang Prevention Collage

Activity	Process Notes
Introduce the lesson.	<i>Let students know that for the next half hour the class will be discussing what it means to make a choice in a conflict vs. reacting to a conflict.</i>
<b>Day 1 (30 minutes): The allure of gangs</b>	
Ask students what they believe draws people into gangs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Students should create a list of what gangs have to offer.</i></li> <li>• <i>In this first step, students will be making educated guesses, but they will not have conducted any research.</i></li> <li>• <i>Encourage students to be realistic.</i></li> </ul>
Ask students to work in groups to research gang membership on the internet. The research question is the same as the previous discussion question: "What do you believe draws people into gangs?"	<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Economics</i></li> <li>• <i>Support system and sense of belonging</i></li> <li>• <i>Friend/Family are in a gang</i></li> <li>• <i>Protection</i></li> <li>• <i>Status and respect</i></li> <li>• <i>Outlaw mentality</i></li> </ul> <p><i>(from Changing Course: Preventing Gang Membership; see Resources)</i></p> <p><i>Save the list that the class generated for the next day's activities.</i></p>
<b>Day 2 (30 minutes): Counterarguments to the allure</b>	
Return to the list that the class put together during that previous session and ask students to take a few minutes to think of counterarguments to the temptations of gangs.	<p><i>Students may be inclined to limit their responses to "it's wrong" or "it's illegal," but teachers should urge students to think about WHY it's "wrong." They should consider the effects of these choices. As students articulate why, they should make a list.</i></p>
	<p><i>Students should do research for this portion.</i></p> <p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Economics: Street-level gang members make roughly minimum wage</i> <a href="http://freakonomics.com/books/freakonomics/chapter-excerpts/chapter-3/">(http://freakonomics.com/books/freakonomics/chapter-excerpts/chapter-3/)</a></li> <li>• <i>Protection: Gangs often mete out physical punishment for rules infractions; in gangs, women face greater risks of sexual abuse.</i></li> </ul>

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<b>Day 3 (30 minutes): Create a Public Service Announcement in the form of a collage that articulates the counterargument(s).</b>	
Begin putting together an anti-gang poster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask groups to come up with a one-sentence claim that they would like to turn into visual argument. For instance: "Gangs don't protect gangsters."</li> <li>• Students should be encouraged to use pictures, drawings, text, etc. to create a gang prevention collage</li> <li>• The emphasis should not be on polished artwork but on getting students to articulate a clear argument against gang membership. If possible, students should be able to continue working outside of class. For homework, each member might have to find five images related to the visual argument.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples of finished posters:</b>                  The Vancouver Sun runs an annual gang prevention poster design contest for teens. Examples can be seen here: <a href="http://www.vancouversun.com/news/Gallery+Teens+against+gangs+poster+entries/2923641/story.html">http://www.vancouversun.com/news/Gallery+Teens+against+gangs+poster+entries/2923641/story.html</a></p>
<b>Day 4 (30 minutes): Create a Public Service Announcement in the form of a collage that articulates the counterargument(s).</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students should continue work on PowerPoint presentation.</li> <li>• If they had tasks for homework, such as finding images, they need to come together to choose which images best suit the project.</li> </ul>
<b>Day 5 (30 minutes): Presentations of completed posters</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In turn, ask students to share their work with the class. (If an overhead projector is available, this is preferable.)</li> <li>• Ask classmates to try to identify the one-sentence claims based on the images in the poster.</li> <li>• Vote on the best poster, perhaps to be posted around the school.</li> </ul>

## Tier 2 Intervention and Support Examples

**Example #1:** Aggression Replacement Training (ART) is a 30-hour cognitive behavioral program for 8-12 at-risk students. The program is broken down into 1-hour sessions that focus on Skillstreaming (modeling, role playing, performance feedback, and transfer training), anger control training, and moral reasoning training.

Goldstein, A., & Glick, B. (1994). Aggression replacement training: Curriculum and evaluation. *Simulation & Gaming*, 25(1).

**Example #2:** The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP) Gang Reduction Program seeks to reduce gang violence through Community Mobilization, Opportunities Provision, Social Intervention, Suppression, and Organizational Change and Development.

Cahill, M., & Hayeslip, D. (2010). Findings from the evaluation of OJJDP's Gang Reduction Program. Washington, DC : U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

U. S. Department of Justice. (2009). *The OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model*. Washington, DC: Institute for Intergovernmental Research.

Wyrick, P. (2006). Gang prevention: How to make the "front end" of your anti-gang effort work. *United States Attorneys' Bulletin*, 54(3), 52 – 60.





## Resources

The following resources will provide additional information and suggestions for enhancing activities related to gang prevention and using data for making decisions about strategies for reducing gang activities. Read through the resources carefully to become familiar with any concepts and instructions as they may pertain to the content and the extension of activities.

***Changing Course: Preventing Gang Membership*** is the result of a collaboration between the Office of Justice Programs and the National Center for Injury Prevention. It is intended to provide “practitioners who work in the trenches, such as law enforcement officers, teachers and community services providers” access to current research on keeping children out of gangs. Of interest is Chapter 7: What Can Schools Do to Help Prevent Gang-Joining?

Simon, Thomas R., Nancy Ritter, Reshma R. Mahendra. (2013). *Changing Course: Preventing Gang Membership*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, and National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/239234.pdf>

***Changing Course: Preventing Gang Membership: Executive Summary*** is a particularly helpful overview of the above text, as it provides teachers and administrators the major take-away points.

<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/239233.pdf>

The following optional resources provide additional information and concepts, or may be used in sharing with others or to expand the activity. Read through these resources to become familiar with the information and to determine their level of usefulness within the school setting.

**Gang Prevention: An Overview of Research and Programs** is published by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Department of Justice. This comprehensive bulletin provides an overview gang membership risk factors, as well as approaches for reducing and preventing gang membership.

<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/231116.pdf>

### Video

- Juan Martinez shares his decision to move away from gangs and join the Eco-Club.

- <http://ed.ted.com/lessons/detention-or-eco-club-choosing-your-future-juan-martinez>

*Note: All posters, images, and activity guides identified are copyright cleared for non-commercial use.*



## Measuring Success

Identifying outcomes and collecting data to measure the success of school violence prevention strategies can help the school track quality of implementation as well as the effectiveness of these strategies. Following are some suggestions that schools may find useful to begin measuring success.

*Measuring Violence-Related Attitudes, Behaviors, and Influences Among Youths: A Compendium of Assessment Tools* (Dahlberg, 2005) offers a robust array of tools for measuring attitudes, behaviors, and environments related to school violence. Among those instruments are surveys meant to measure exposure to, and attitudes about, gangs. For instance, one survey that may be useful for measuring changing attitudes about gangs and gang activity includes the following items:

	Not true for me	True for me
1) I think you are safer, and have protection, if you join a gang.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) Some of my friends at school belong to gangs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) My friends would think less of me if I joined a gang	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4) Some people in my family belong to a gang, or used to belong to a gang.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Dahlberg, L. (2005). *Measuring Violence-Related Attitudes, Behaviors, and Influences among Youths: A Compendium of Assessment Tools*. Atlanta, Ga. : Division of Violence Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/yv\\_compendium.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/yv_compendium.pdf)





## Appendices

A. References

B. Research Alignment



## Appendix A: References

- Bachman, J. G., O'Malley, P. M., Schulenberg, J. E., Johnston, L. D., Freedman-Doan, P., & Messersmith, E. E. (2007). *The Education-Drug Use Connection: How Successes and Failures in School Relate to Adolescent Smoking, Drinking, Drug Use, and Delinquency*. Psychology Press, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Esbensen, F., Osgood, D. W., Peterson, D., Taylor, T., & Carson, D. (2013). Short- and long-term outcome results from a multisite evaluation of the G.R.E.A.T. program. *Criminology and Public Policy, 12*(3), 375 – 411.
- Kahn, L., Knichen, S., Shanklin, S., Flint, K., Kawkins, J., Harris, W., & Lowry, R. (2014). Youth risk behavior surveillance—United States, 2013. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report Surveillance Summaries, 63* (Suppl (1-168)).
- Meyer, A. (2004). Choosing to be violence free in middle school: The student component of the GREAT Schools and Families Universal Program. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 26*(1).
- National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (2015). *Understanding School Violence*. Atlanta, GA.
- Wang, M., & Dishion, T. J. (2012). The Trajectories of Adolescents' Perceptions of School Climate, Deviant Peer Affiliation, and Behavioral Problems During the Middle School Years. *Journal of Research On Adolescence* (Wiley-Blackwell), *22*(1), 40-53.
- Wang, M., & Fredricks, J. A. (2014). The Reciprocal Links Between School Engagement, Youth Problem Behaviors, and School Dropout During Adolescence. *Child Development, 85*(2), 722-737.





Appendix B: Research Alignment

Citation	Brief Summary of Strategy	Sample Size	Impact/Evidence of Efficient	Implementation
Botvin, G. J., Griffin, K. W., & Nichols, T. D. (2006). Preventing youth violence and delinquency through a universal school-based prevention approach. <i>Prevention Science</i> , 7, 403-408.	Students completed a pretest questionnaire before the program and a posttest questionnaire assessment after the program.	A total of 4,858 6 <sup>th</sup> grade students from 41 schools, randomly assigned to a control group (n=2484) and an experimental group (n=2374).	Results found that adding a violence prevention program can be effective. Students who completed the program were less likely to engage in verbal aggression, physical aggression, fighting, and delinquency.	A violence prevention component was added to Like Skills Training, a program found to be significant in preventing tobacco, alcohol, and drug use. The program contains 15 sessions that are completed in 3 months.
Esbensen, F. A., Peterson, D., Taylor, T. J., Freng, A., Osgood, D. W., Carson, D. C., & Matsuda, K. N. (2011). Evaluation and evolution of the gang resistance education and training (G.R.E.A.T.) program. <i>Journal of School Violence</i> , 10(1), 53-70.	This longitudinal randomized control study is a second national evaluation of the G.R.E.A.T. program.  A question-and-answer forum given as a debriefing with gang task force members. A paper and pencil questionnaire was completed by youth and their parent/guardian	3,800 students from 31 public middle schools in 7 cities across the United States.	The students in G.R.E.A.T. “were more likely to report positive attitudes about police, less positive attitudes about gangs, more frequent use of refusal skills, greater resistance to peer pressure, and lower rates of gang membership” (64) than the non-GREAT students.	The G.R.E.A.T. program has 3 main goals: (1) teach youths to avoid gang membership, (2) prevent violence and criminal activity, and (3) assist youths to develop positive relationship with law enforcement. Program contains 13, 30-45 minute, lessons taught by certified criminal justice professionals. The lessons should be



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Citation	Brief Summary of Strategy	Sample Size	Impact/Evidence of Efficient	Implementation
				taught no earlier than one day and no later than two weeks after previous lesson.
Esbensen, F. A., Peterson, D., Taylor, T. J., Osgood, D. W. (2012). Results from a multi-site evaluation of the G.R.E.A.T. program. <i>Justice Quarterly</i> 29(1), 125-151.	A group-administered (confidential) pre and post program questionnaire was conducted. And four annual follow-up surveys	4905 students participated in 31 schools	"G.R.E.A.T. can be effectively included as a primary prevention component of a larger community-wide effort to reduce gang membership and youth violence" (144).	See above.