



Original article

Testing Two Approaches to Revictimization Prevention Among Adolescent Girls in the Child Welfare System



Anne P. DePrince, Ph.D.^{a,*}, Ann T. Chu, Ph.D.^a, Jennifer Labus, Ph.D.^b, Stephen R. Shirk, Ph.D.^a, and Cathryn Potter, Ph.D.^c

^a Department of Psychology, University of Denver, Denver, Colorado

^b Department of Medicine, University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California

^c Graduate School of Social Work, University of Denver, Denver, Colorado

Article history: Received February 21, 2014; Accepted June 30, 2014

Keywords: Revictimization; Child welfare; Risk detection; Executive function; Social learning; Feminist

A B S T R A C T

Purpose: Girls in the child welfare system are at high risk of revictimization in adolescence. The present study compared two interventions designed to decrease revictimization in a diverse sample of adolescent child welfare-involved girls. The social learning/feminist (SL/F) intervention focused on concepts derived from social learning and feminist models of risk, such as sexism and beliefs about relationships. The risk detection/executive function (RD/EF) intervention focused on development of specific executive function abilities related to detecting and responding to risky situations/people.

Methods: Participants were randomized to RD/EF ($n = 67$) or SL/F intervention ($n = 67$). A group of youth ($n = 42$) engaged in the research assessments only. Participants ($n = 180$) were assessed before intervention, immediately after intervention, 2 months after intervention, and 6 months after intervention. We examined revictimization (the presence/absence of sexual or physical assault in any relationship) over time.

Results: Adolescent girls in the RD/EF condition were nearly five times less likely to report sexual revictimization compared with girls in the no-treatment group. A trend suggested that girls who participated in the SL/F intervention were 2.5 times less likely to report sexual revictimization relative to the no-treatment group. For physical revictimization, the odds of not being physically revictimized were three times greater in the SL/F condition and two times greater in the RD/EF condition compared with the no-treatment group.

Conclusions: The active interventions did not differ significantly from one another in rates of revictimization, suggesting that practitioners have at least two viable options to engage high-risk youth in revictimization prevention.

© 2015 Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine. All rights reserved.

Revictimization (RV)—the occurrence of two or more instances of violence perpetrated by different people—poses enormous criminal justice and public health problems. Girls previously

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Disclaimer: Publication of this article was supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The opinions or views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of the funders.

* Address correspondence to: Anne P. DePrince, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, University of Denver, 2155 S. Race Street, Denver, CO 80208.

E-mail address: Anne.DePrince@du.edu (A.P. DePrince).

exposed to violence (particularly those who are now in foster care) are at high risk of RV in adolescence [1–6]. In turn, RV in adolescence places girls at high risk for additional intimate partner violence in adulthood [7]. In adulthood, the criminal justice (e.g., Tennessee Economic Council on Women, 2006) and public health costs [8] resulting from intimate partner violence are staggering. Therefore, preventing RV in adolescence is one of the best ways to decrease long-term criminal justice and public health costs.

Most interventions with teens have focused on primary prevention (i.e., prevention in teens not previously exposed to

violence) of physical (usually not sexual) dating violence [9]. Further, little is known about the specific mechanisms that underlie RV risk [1]. Therefore, research is urgently needed to target interventions for high-risk groups, such as teen girls from the child welfare system; rigorously test interventions grounded in RV research; and advance theory on the mechanisms that underlie RV. To that end, the present study tested two interventions that took theoretically distinct approaches to the problem of RV in a sample of adolescent girls from the child welfare system. This study offers an important opportunity to evaluate two different underlying RV intervention theories.

Two theoretically different approaches to revictimization intervention

Two prominent approaches address how girls exposed to abuse may be at increased risk of RV. One is grounded in social learning and feminist (SL/F) theory and the other in risk detection and executive function (RD/EF) perspectives (see Table 1 for overview of processes and intervention targets). From the SL/F perspective, children exposed to violence (directly by caregivers and/or indirectly by witnessing violence between caregivers) may learn that violent tactics are acceptable and effective [10]. Further, they may fail to learn social and coping skills, leading to interpersonal problems and conflict in later relationships [11]. Childhood violence exposure may also lead to negative expectations that relationships involve harm [12,13]. Youth may also learn overly rigid gender roles from maltreating caregivers that result in expectancies of harm to women and inequities in power between partners [14]. Grounded in SL/F perspectives, Wolfe et al. [10,14] developed the Youth Relationships Manual, one of the only programs rigorously evaluated to address RV in teen dating relationships. The curriculum targets four broad categories of skills: (1) understanding power in relationship violence; (2) developing skills to build healthy relationships and recognize/respond to abuse in relationships; (3) developing skills to respond to societal influences and pressures that can

lead to violence; and (4) increasing competency through social action [10].

The RD/EF perspective is based on the literature on sexual RV risk, which has focused on risk detection (RD) abilities. RD involves noticing and responding to external (e.g., a dating partner's threatening behaviors) and internal (e.g., one's own feelings of fear or discomfort) danger cues in intimate relationships [15]. Studies have demonstrated that sexually revictimized women compared with their peers take significantly longer to indicate that a man is inappropriate in an audio scenario [16,17], as well as to detect violations of social and safety rules [18].

RD abilities require a range of cognitive skills that are collectively referred to as executive functions (EFs), including the ability to shift, inhibit, and focus attention; maintain focus in the face of distracting information; updating new information in the working memory system; think flexibly about potential solutions; and plan and initiate actions. Research links child victimization to EF deficits [13,19], suggesting that addressing EF abilities may be important in interventions focusing on RD. Interventions with adolescents (not specific to RV) point to the potential usefulness of targeting EFs using mindfulness-based approaches [20].

Revictimization prevention curricula tested in present study

We modified the SL/F curriculum from [10] empirically supported manual to streamline the intervention from 18 to 12 sessions to address concerns about keeping child welfare youth engaged in a weekly intervention for 4.5 months given placement and other instabilities. We settled on 12 sessions based on the [20] manual on which the RD/EF intervention was partially based. We retained core social skill training, relationship perception, and societal awareness components. We removed social action components that focused on learning about services and agencies (see [21] for specific changes).

The newly formulated RD/EF curricula were based on [16] two-session intervention for college students, which focused

Table 1

Processes underlying the two theoretical approaches to revictimization and associated intervention targets

Approach	Process	Intervention target
Social learning/feminist	Violent tactics are acceptable and even effective routes to resolving conflict.	Understanding power and its role in relationship violence.
	Problems in assertiveness and communication skills.	Develop skills to build healthy relationships and to recognize and respond to abuse in their own relationships.
	Develop expectations that relationships will include harm.	Understand the societal influences and pressures that can lead to violence; develop skills to respond.
RD/EF	Socialization of gender roles and sexism that support power discrepancies and violence.	Increase EF to the environment (directing attention).
	Fail to notice external danger cues (e.g., something in the environment, such as the expression on another person).	Increase EF to emotions; improve emotion labeling/awareness.
	Fail to notice internal danger cues (e.g., one's own feelings of fear).	Increase EF (working memory, interference control).
	Notice cue(s), but fail to maintain and use this information or become distracted; thus, multiple danger cues seem disconnected and unrelated.	Increase EF (set shifting; inhibition).
	Notice danger and know what to do, but fail to change or inhibit current behaviors.	Increase EF (cognitive flexibility); increase knowledge of possible responses.
	Notice danger, but have difficulty generating possible behavioral responses.	Increase EF (planning); Practice generating ways to respond.
Nonspecific processes (common to both approaches)	Have difficulty planning or initiating a response.	Decrease acceptability of dating violence.
	Violence in intimate relationships viewed as acceptable.	Increase assertiveness skills.
	Deficits in assertiveness skills increase conflict and aggression in intimate relationships.	

EF = executive function; RD = risk detection.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1078476>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1078476>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)