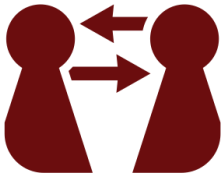


Body Safety Training USA



Type of intervention

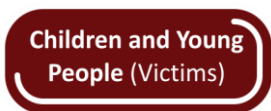


Individual Work



Classroom setting

Target group/s, level/s of prevention and sub-group/s:



Primary prevention

Young Children (0-5 Years), Children (6-11 Years) | Male & Female | Individual Work, Classroom Setting | English, Spanish

Target population

Children aged 3 to 8 years old.

Delivery organisation (e.g. LFF UK, Prison Service of England and Wales)

Dr. Sandy Wurtele (USA).

Mode and context of delivery

The programme involves a workbook that adults can work through with children, of which there are two versions: one that teachers can use with small groups of children in school, and another that parents can use at home one-on-one with a child.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required (e.g. professional background)

Parents and teachers can use the programme with children.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

The programme consists of ten lessons.

Description of intervention

The Body Safety Training (BST)© programme was created by Dr. Wurtele in 1986 and revised in 2007. The programme consists of a workbook (two slightly different versions; one for teachers and one for parents) which have also been translated into Spanish.

Both versions of the workbook contain ten lessons; the first half of the workbook covers general safety (fire, gun, pedestrian, poison, home alone) and the second half covers body safety (teaching children the body-safety skills of recognising, resisting, and reporting inappropriate touching).

BST learning objectives include the 5 “R”s (a) helping children recognise potentially abusive situations or potential abusers, (b) encouraging children to refuse sexual requests by saying ‘No’, (c) teaching children to resist by getting away from the perpetrator, (d) encouraging children to report previous or ongoing abuse to a trusted authority figure and (e) explaining that secret or inappropriate touching is never the child’s responsibility (Wurtele, 2008).

The BST teaches the “R”s by way of multiple examples (stories with accompanying pictures) and provides ample opportunity for children to practice the skills (using a behavioural approach). BST consists of several stories (each story has an accompanying picture) about children in situations, either safe or potentially dangerous, with various people (potential abusers include a stranger, cousin, aunt, babysitter, uncle, a school employee, a neighbour, and a father). Most (80%) are male and all victims are children, with half being male and half female. Self-protection skills are taught by using instruction, modeling, behavioural rehearsal, social reinforcement and feedback.

Evaluation

The effectiveness of the BST in teaching children body-safety rules and skills has been demonstrated in numerous studies. A series of experimental studies with preschoolers in the USA demonstrated that BST participants as young as 3 years can learn body safety skills (Wurtele, Gillispie et al., 1992; Wurtele, Kast et al., 1992). After participating in the BST, children have demonstrated increased ability to: (a) recognise potentially abusive situations, (b) resist potential lures, (c) report abusive situations, (d) blame the perpetrator, not the child, and (e) report positive feelings about their bodies and genitals (Wurtele & Owens, 1997). Programme effectiveness has been replicated with Latino preschoolers in Florida (US) (Kenny, Wurtele, & Alonso, 2012), and with Chinese preschoolers in Beijing, China (Zhang et al., in press).

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