



SMART Team

SMART Team is an eight-module, multimedia software program designed to teach violence prevention messages and methods to students in grades six through nine (11 to 15 years old). The program's content fits well with commonly used conflict-mediation curricula and other violence prevention strategies schools may implement. Operation is straightforward, so students can access the modules independently for information, skill-building practice, or to resolve a conflict. This independence eliminates the need for trained adult implementers.

INTENDED POPULATION

SMART Team is designed for use with middle and high school students, typically 11 to 15 years old. Evaluations conducted in a large middle school 10 miles from a major midwestern city found the program motivating and effective for a broad range of students. In this school's population, which was socioeconomically and racially diverse (84 percent were White), evaluation results revealed no differences in use rates based on gender, ethnicity, or among students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches (which was used as a measure of socioeconomic status).

BENEFITS

- Gain better understanding of others' perspectives
- Increased conflict resolution and anger management skills
- Decreased beliefs that support the use of violence
- Experience behavior modeling and decisionmaking in realistic contexts

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Proven Results

- Greater self-knowledge of how specific behaviors can escalate a conflict situation
- Greater frequency of self-reported prosocial acts
- Increased intentions to use nonviolent strategies in future conflicts
- Self-reports of never getting into trouble in various locations during the past 30 days increased: at home, 13%; at school, 33%; in the community, 6%

INTERVENTION

Universal

Selective

Indicated



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention
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OUTCOMES

In the pilot study, SMART Team students demonstrated the following, relative to control groups:

- Correct responses on two of the four items increased significantly
- Significant increases in self-knowledge of how their behaviors can contribute to escalation of a conflict
- Significant increases in self-reported frequency of prosocial behavior and intention to use nonviolent strategies
- Self-reports of never getting into trouble increased whether at home (13% to 32%), school (33% to 44%), or in the community (6% to 54%)
- Students reacted positively to the software: 89% found it easy to use, 91% agreed it was enjoyable to use, 68% reported learning a lot, and 79% would recommend it to a friend
- Both males and females used the program and accessed a range of modules

In the formal evaluation, the intervention group, relative to no-treatment controls:

- Showed greater intentions to use nonviolent strategies ($p = .01$)
- Showed a reduction in beliefs supporting the use of violence ($p = .05$)

The self-awareness measure approached significance at $p = .10$, and self-efficacy and aggressive behavior remained essentially unchanged between pretest and posttest in the intervention group while increasing slightly in the control group.

HOW IT WORKS

SMART Team is designed so that the same basic content is present in every module, which allows modules to stand alone or be used in sequence. Thus, students can acquire a basic set of declarative knowledge through any of the modules. The theoretical underpinnings of the instructional design are twofold:

- **A skill acquisition model** that postulates five stages of learning a new skill, from novice to expert, with learners having different needs at each stage.
- **Social learning theory** that contributes an understanding of how children observe the verbal and nonverbal behavior of role models.

Students acquire three categories of skills:

- **Anger replacement skills** are taught using a skill-building program that combines a psycho-educational intervention with anger-control training and moral education.
- **Dispute resolution skills** help students use negotiation and compromise to resolve disputes.
- **Perspective taking skills** help students to accurately identify other people's feelings and recognize that they may be different from the student's own feelings and perceptions.

All program software modules focus on one of these skills. The modules, which use various interactive interview and game formats, are for each set of skills as follows:

Anger Management

- **What's Anger?** A didactic presentation of the anger replacement therapy model.
- **Triggers and Fuses.** An interactive interview that helps students to identify the situations that trigger their anger.
- **Anger Busters.** General guidelines for dealing with an angry person or an anger-producing situation, specific strategies for de-escalating anger-producing situations, and opportunities for practice.
- **Channel Surfin'.** A game that addresses all the anger-management skills learned elsewhere in authentic situations.

Dispute Resolution

- **Talking It Out.** An interactive mediation process that two students can work through in order to resolve a dispute. This module also provides a written contract that can be printed out.

- **Teen Talk.** The experiences of four high-school student mediators, described in their own words.

Perspective Taking

- **Celebrity Interviews.** Suggestions for resolving conflict and managing the stresses of interpersonal relationships given by four celebrities.
- **What's on THEIR Mind?** A “game-show” scenario format in which users identify different reasons underlying other people's actions to help them better understand others' perspectives.

IMPLEMENTATION ESSENTIALS

SMART Team software has been used primarily in schools, where it was loaded on computers located in classrooms, computer labs, and counselors' offices. However, SMART Team may be used in other settings such as community agencies. The sole constraint on where it can be used is the need for the necessary computer hardware.

SMART Team software is designed to operate on a Macintosh computer with a 68020 CPU or greater, 1.5 MB of RAM, 7.5 MB of hard drive space, and a System 7.0 operating system or newer CD-ROM drive. Less than a half-hour is required to load the program prior to initial use. Thereafter, the program has proved simple enough to be accessed independently by students with rudimentary computer skills. In fact, the program is so easy to use, no requests for instructor or teacher training have ever been made. Teachers may wish to conduct a followup discussion to ascertain students' reactions and reinforce the content of the modules, but direct teaching is optional.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

SMART Team is one of a series of health, education, and prevention multimedia products developed since the early 1980s at the Center for Health Systems Research and Analysis at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. David H. Gustafson, Ph.D.; Kris Bosworth, Ph.D.; Robert Hawkins, Ph.D.; and Betty Chewing, Ph.D., directed the development of the Body Awareness Resource Network (BARN) software that was the basis for SMART Team. The BARN software includes information and skill-building activities relating to six topics: 1) alcohol and other drugs, 2) body management, 3) human sexuality, 4) stress management, 5) smoking, and 6) HIV/AIDS. SMART Team originally was conceived as an additional module for the BARN system but later became a separate entity. The development of SMART Team began in 1993 with a contractual agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and was completed in 1996.

EVALUATION DESIGN

A pilot study was conducted to field-test the SMART Team software. Seventh-grade students in a small-city middle school had access to the program for 4 weeks in their computer lab. After each use, students completed a short questionnaire about their satisfaction with the software and suggestions for improvement.

Formal evaluation used a pretest-posttest design with matched intervention and control groups. This evaluation took place in a large middle school 10 miles from a major midwestern city. Two groups within the school were randomly assigned to the intervention condition (n = 321), and the third to the control condition (n = 195). SMART Team was available for 13 weeks, during which time data were unobtrusively collected by computer. The impact of intervention was assessed with repeated measures multivariate analyses of covariance. The pretest-posttest data were assessed for five outcome measures: 1) self-awareness, 2) beliefs supportive of violence, 3) self-efficacy, or confidence in using nonviolent strategies, 4) intentions to use nonviolent strategies in a future conflict, and 5) self-reported acts of aggression. For all items, the students rated their level of agreement or disagreement with various statements on a five-point scale. (See *Outcomes* for details.)

PROGRAM DEVELOPER

Kris Bosworth, Ph.D.

Dr. Kris Bosworth and colleagues at the University of Indiana's Center for Adolescent Studies developed SMART Team. Its development was supported by a 3-year cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention. Currently, Dr. Bosworth is working on a series of videos to demonstrate to teachers how to manage major and minor incidents in the classroom entitled "Peaceful Classrooms."

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RECOGNITION

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Promising Program—U.S. Department of Education