Where's Daryl?: Results of a Gun Violence Prevention-Education Program in the Los Angeles Unified School District

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BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

From 2000-2009, firearm homicide was the leading cause of death among youth (age 15-24) in Los Angeles County (LAC). The Where's Daryl? prevention-education program was designed to create and reinforce negative attitudes and norms around guns for middle school youth with the goal of reducing youth gun violence. The program centers around a fictional character named Daryl who misses out on the things he loves most because he brought a gun to school. His character is used to challenge students' assumptions about guns and to spark discussion and critical thinking about situations in which guns could negatively impact their life. The program was developed through a partnership of Designmatters at Art Center College of Design, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), and Sentient Research Inc. with funding from the Nathan Cummings Foundation and Sappi Ideas that Matter.

METHODS

Students in four LAUSD middle schools participated in the program and completed an anonymous baseline and follow-up survey to measure changes in attitudes and knowledge about guns and gun violence. Data were analyzed as independent samples using chi-square and t-tests. In addition, teachers completed a post-program survey to assess Where's Daryl? from their perspective and identify areas for program improvement.



Educational Guide with Classroom Worksheet Templates, DVD, & Tote







RESULTS & OUTCOMES

725 students completed the baseline survey and 712 students completed the follow-up. After participating in the program, students had a statistically significant increase in 5 of 16 items assessing negative attitudes towards guns. When all 16 items were aggregated, the increase in negative attitudes overall was statistically significant (p=0.001). Students had a significant increase in knowledge in 4 of 7 items, and the overall gain in knowledge was significant when items were aggregated (p<0.001). Teachers were very positive about Where's Daryl?; 86% said it was engaging for students and 71% said lessons were effective. Only 43% of teachers had discussed guns with students before implementing the program.

Table 1. Student Attitudes** at Baseline and Follow-up

		Baseline Agreement (n=725)	Follow-up Agreement (n=712)	Difference
1	Carrying a gun makes people feel powerful and strong*	59.9%	55.1%	-4.8%
2	Carrying a gun makes people feel safe	40.8%	42.5%	1.7%
3	It's okay for children/teenagers to have guns	5.7%	4.1%	-1.6%
4	Having a gun in the house makes people safer*	48.5%	40.3%	-8.2%
5	I wish everyone would get rid of all their guns*	38.1%	47.7%	9.6%
6	It would make me feel really powerful to hold a loaded gun in my hand*	18.6%	13.7%	-4.9%
7	The people I respect would never go around with a gun because they are against hurting people	60.9%	62.2%	1.3%
8	I bet it would feel real cool to walk down the street with a gun in my pocket	11.7%	8.5%	-3.2%
9	I think it would be fun to play around with a loaded gun	7.7%	5.8%	-1.9%
10	I don't like being around people with guns because someone could end up getting hurt	76.5%	77.9%	1.4%
11	I'd like to have a gun so that people will look up to me	7.2%	7.2%	0%
12	I don't like people who have guns because they might kill someone	68.5%	71.4%	2.9%
13	Most people feel nervous around someone with a gun and they want to get away from that person	78.1%	78.2%	0.1%
14	Do you think it's okay for any person over 18 to own a hand gun?*	39.8%	32.1%	-7.7%
15	Do you think it's okay for children/teenagers to have guns?	8.5%	5.6%	-2.9%
16	Would it bother you if you knew your friend or someone at school has a gun?	76.0%	81.9%	5.9%

Table 2. Student Knowledge at Baseline and Follow-up

	Baseline Agreement (n=725)	Follow-up Agreement (n=712)	Difference
Which of the following are the 3 most common causes of death among teenagers in the US?*	19.7%	27.1%	7.4%
18 How many deaths occur each year due to guns in the U.S?*	28.3%	41.8%	13.5%
19 What percent of households in the U.S. have guns?	50.1%	47%	-3.1%
20 What percent of households with children keep a loaded gun in the U.S.?	37.3%	30.7%	-6.6%
21 People who have a gun are times more likely to be shot than people without a gun?*	14.4%	35.4%	21%
22 What is the safest way to store a gun in a home?*	46.1%	66.0%	19.9%
23 What is the appropriate thing to do if you see a gun in school?	65.5%	65.0%	-0.5%

^{*} Indicates statistically significant difference from baseline to follow-up at (p \leq 0.05).

** Answer choices included "agree" "disagree" or "unsure"

MEET DARYL

The Where's Daryl? campaign and materials feature Daryl, a fictional middle schooler whose life has been brought to a standstill because he got involved with guns. The campaign's educational toolkit is created to contain everything a teacher needs in order to spark critical thinking and discussion.

CONCLUSIONS

The Where's Daryl? program was effective in improving middle school students' knowledge and negative attitudes about guns, including attitudes related to guns making people safer or more powerful, and a reduced desire to have a gun. After the initial implementation, the program was refined using teacher feedback. Our goal is to expand this program as an evidence-based gun violence prevention-education intervention that can be disseminated across California and the U.S. for wide-scale impact.















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