

Overview of Study

Through funding from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), a cross-disciplinary team of researchers from the University of South Florida conducted a study of the implementation of programs implemented through the Students, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) School Violence Act of 2018 (H.R. 4909). A total of 128 grantees across the U.S. were awarded funding through the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) in 2018 and 2019 to improve school safety by implementing STOP programs in the Violence Prevention and Mental Health Training category.

Grantees included:

- State and county education departments
- School districts
- Law enforcement agencies
- Non-profit organizations
- What the perceived barriers and facilitators of implementation were
- What led to better satisfaction with implementation

A mixed-method study was used to understand implementation capacity, barriers, and facilitators at a broad level through a cross-site survey as well as a locally contextualized level through case studies.

Mental Health Problems in Schools

Agencies reported high levels of mental health problems in schools, with each condition

Implementation Capacity

Results also showed that those with higher responses to school mental health capacity questions also had higher responses to implementation capacity questions. This is important for ongoing efforts to implement violence prevention programs and mental health training, as it shows that capacity to address mental health problems and implementation readiness are associated with each other.



Factors that Led to Effective Implementation

- Increasing collaborations between official departments, law enforcement, community agencies, and research partners
- Establishing memberships with professional associations (e.g., Association of Threat Assessment Professionals; workgroup through National School Safety Alliance)
- Having administrative buy-in
- Partnering with other STOP grantees (e.g., offering YMHFA from one grant to crisis line and threat assessment teams from another)
- Additional capacity, support, and funding at federal and states levels
- Ensuring mechanisms for students to have safe staff member to reach out to
- Using other funding streams to complement STOP-funded programs and training
- Having informational resources for evidence-based programs
- Utilizing virtual platforms and new technologies to increase capacity for training and family outreach
- Engaging in technical assistance from National Center for School Safety
- Conducting annual progress reviews
- Having well-trained staff

