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School Violence in South Korea

An Overview of School Violence and Intervention Efforts

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Abstract

This chapter first summarizes important research findings on school violence in South Korea by using Bronfenbrenner’s (1994) ecological model. Next, the chapter provides an overview of comprehensive intervention efforts initiated by the Korean government. In addition, the chapter introduces several representative school violence prevention and intervention programs in Korea by highlighting specific characteristics of each program. Finally, discussion follows regarding implications for further program development, successful school practice, and effective school policy in Korea.

Overview

In South Korea, school violence began to draw attention from the public through the wang-ta phenomenon in schools. Wang-ta, a term coined in Korea in the late 1990s, refers to social exclusion by a group of peers. It can also refer to an individual who is the target of social exclusion (Kwon, 1999). Research on school violence, especially bullying, started in 1995 when the suicide of a victimized boy shocked Korean society (Kwon, 1999). Research on school violence, especially bullying, started in 1995 when the suicide of a victimized boy shocked Korean society (Kwon, 1999).

Suicide has been one of the negative consequences of bullying (Rigby & Slee, 1999). In a survey of 4,700 middle and high school students (Korea Youth Counseling Institute, 2007), about 51% of Korean students who had attempted suicide reported a significant amount of victimization by peers. The number of bullies was also greater among suicide attempters than non-attempters. In the United States, about 78% of school shooters had suicidal ideation or attempts, and 71% were victims of chronic bullying prior to the incident (Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum, & Modzeleski, 2002; as cited in Espelage & Swearer, 2003).

According to a cross-national study of adolescents in 40 countries (Craig et al., 2009), 10.7% reported bullying others (e.g., physical, verbal, social bullying) and 12.6% reported being bullied during the past two months. In a survey of 4,073 school-aged youth (Foundation for Preventing
Youth Violence, 2010), the rates of bullying (e.g., physical, verbal, and social bullying, threatening, taking money, sexual harassment) and victimization during the previous year were 12.4% and 9.4%, respectively. In Korea, bullying others appeared to be more prevalent than being victimized. Furthermore, about 42% of students did not regard bullying as school violence. Approximately 56% of the self-reported bullies perpetrated against peers “just for fun” and “with no reason.”

Research on bullying has dramatically increased since the late 1990s. Although bullying is generated and maintained by the interaction between an individual and his or her environments, much of the research focus has addressed intrapersonal factors. Thus, this chapter first reviews Korean research on environmental contexts for bullying as well as individual factors, using Bronfenbrenner’s (1994) ecological model. Next, it examines comprehensive intervention strategies implemented by the Korean government, along with several representative programs for bullying prevention and intervention. Finally, future directions and implications are suggested for more effective bullying prevention and intervention in Korea.

Conceptual Basis

Intrapersonal Factors

While recent empirical research on school bullying has examined multiple individual factors, this review and synthesis focuses on a subset of these variables as they have been the key component of bullying prevention and intervention programs in Korea. These include self-esteem, coping strategies, self-control, and empathy. Reviewing major findings on these variables would provide some ideas on how to improve current bullying prevention and intervention strategies in Korea.

Self-Esteem

Korean researchers found that low self-esteem significantly predicts victimization by peers (Kim, 2005; Kim & Lee, 2000). However, the relationship between self-esteem and bullies has been controversial. Low self-esteem predicted bullying behaviors among Korean adolescents (Kim, 2005; Oh, 2008). In contrast, Lee and Kwak (2000) reported that bullies’ self-esteem was significantly higher than that of victims or bully-victims. Such a discrepancy might be partially explained by Lee’s (2004) findings that bullies appear to have high self-esteem in a cross-sectional analysis although bullying behaviors were significantly associated with declines in self-esteem after seven months in the study.

Coping Strategies

Problem-solving coping strategies, in contrast to emotionally oriented coping, were found to be negatively correlated with both bullying and victimization in a study of 679 males from Italian high schools (Baldry & Farrington, 2005). Among Korean elementary school students, it was defenders who used approach coping strategies (e.g., problem solving, support seeking) most frequently, compared to other participant roles in bullying (Sim, 2005). However, problem-solving coping is not always a protective factor; it was statistically identified as a risk factor for victimized children to be more rejected by peers (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002). Among Korean middle school girls (Kim & Lee, 2000) and elementary school students (Lee & Kim, 2001), bullies and bully-victims utilized more passive coping strategies such as emotion-oriented coping or wishful thinking than non-involved students.
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**Self-Control**

Haynie et al. (2001) reported that the level of self-control was the lowest among bully-victims, followed by bullies. Similarly, in a study of 865 Korean middle school students, both bullies and victims had lower self-control than non-involved students (Lee, Gong, & Lee, 2004). According to Unnever and Cornell (2003), self-control partially mediated the relationship between attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) status and bullying behaviors. In their study, low self-control was a significant predictor for bullying, but not for being bullied. However, the interaction between self-control and gender was significant. The association between self-control and being a victim was positive for boys while negative for girls. Among Korean adolescents, self-control partially mediated the association between family cohesion and bullying behaviors (Kim, Lee, & Kang, 2007). In addition, among elementary school girls, low self-control served as a moderator, intensifying the likelihood of bullying behaviors when peer compliance was high (Ha & Cho, 2007). The moderation effect of self-control did not exist among boys.

**Empathy**

Bullying prevention programs have focused on empathy since most research indicates a positive correlation between low empathy and antisocial behaviors (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006). In Korea, bullies also had lower empathy than others; however, lack of empathy did not significantly predict bullying behaviors among middle school girls (Kim & Lee, 2000). On the other hand, Song, Song, Baek, and Lee (2009), in a study of 696 middle school students using logistic regression analysis, found that girls’ empathy increased the likelihood of being a bully rather than being a bully-victim. This result might imply the necessity to distinguish cognitive empathy (perspective-taking) from affective empathy (empathic concern). Affective empathy has been shown to have a positive association only with defending behaviors while cognitive empathy is associated with both defending and bystanding behaviors (Gini, Albiero, Benelli, & Altoe, 2008). Similarly, affective empathy was a significant predictor for defending behaviors regardless of gender, while cognitive empathy did not predict boy’s defending behaviors (Oh, 2010). Further, among boys, affective empathy served as a mediator between Theory of Mind (ToM) abilities and defending behaviors (Song & Lee, 2010).

**Microsystem**

The microsystem consists of people with whom an individual has direct contact and has immediate influences on the individual’s adjustment (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Family, peers, and school are often discussed as an example of a microsystem.

**Family**

Parenting practices have been an important variable in explaining school bullying (Baldry & Farrington, 2005). In Korea, a father’s rejection/controlling behaviors significantly predicted both bullying and victimization by peers regardless of gender. Permissive/neglectful parenting also has a positive association with bullying behaviors. Such relationships appear in pairs between father and daughter and between mother and son (Song et al., 2009). In addition, parents’ corporal punishment was the strongest predictor for victimization while it did not predict bullying among elementary school students (Lee & Kim, 2001). In contrast, exposure to parental violence was associated with the increased risk of bullying others, but not with being bullied among high school students (Do, 2008).
In a cross-cultural study of Korean and German middle school students, lack of parental support was a significant predictor for bullying as well as victimization by peers in both groups (Kim, 2005). However, greater family support (Lee & Kim, 2001) or mothers’ supportive parenting (Song et al., 2009) was associated with increased risk of being victimized among girls. Future research needs to examine whether Korean girls misinterpreted enmeshed relationships as support, as enmeshed relationships with parents have been found to be positively associated with victimization (Finnegan, Hodges, & Perry, 1998).

Positive relationships with parents serve as a protective factor for school bullying. Secure attachment with parents is negatively associated with bully-victim experiences (Oh, 2007). Likewise, parent-child communication and parental monitoring are significantly associated with declines in bullying behaviors by enhancing anger management abilities among middle school students (Lee, Gong, & Lee, 2004).

**Peers**

The lack of good friends or peer connection has been discussed as a risk factor for school violence (Furlong, Chung, Bates, & Morrison, 1995). In a study of Korean elementary students (Jang & Seong, 2007), peer support demonstrated the strongest negative correlation with being victimized, compared to family or teacher support. Peer support also had a negative correlation with girls’ bullying behaviors; however, social support had no association with boys’ perpetration. It is important to note that low peer support was a significant predictor only for victimization by peers among girls (Kim & Lee, 2000; Lee & Kim, 2001). Since girls are more relationship-oriented, perhaps the lack of peer support makes them more vulnerable to victimization. Most Korean studies on bullying have compared different sources of social support as a risk factor for bullying and victimization. It is necessary to address the nature (e.g., emotional, instrumental, informational) of social support as well as its source.

Regardless of gender, an important predictor for bullying behaviors was contact with delinquent peers (Kim, 2007). Friends’ delinquency more strongly predicted bullying among middle and high school students than in a group of elementary school students (Kim, 2006). It is not difficult to understand this finding, given that peers become more important in children’s lives as they grow older. On the other hand, friends’ delinquency was also the strongest predictor for victimization by peers among Korean middle school students (Kim, 2006).

**Schools**

Researchers have concluded that bullies, victims, and bully-victims received less teacher support than non-involved students, and those who engage in frequent bullying reported the lowest level of teacher support (Flaspohler, Elfstrom, Vanderzee, & Sink, 2009; Natvig, Albrektsen, & Qvarnstrom, 2001). Similarly, hostile relationships with teachers increased the likelihood of adolescents becoming a bully (Lee, 2005; Oh, 2007). The lack of teacher support contributes to victimization among elementary school students (Jang & Seong, 2007). Thus, it is surprising that girls in middle schools were victimized more often although they received more teacher support (Kim & Lee, 2000). This result is plausible, considering children who are perceived by others as tattlers or “teachers’ pets” are usually disliked by classmates (Kim & Lee).

Bullying behaviors increase significantly when teachers’ discipline is too strict, teachers rely more on punishment, or punishment by teachers is inconsistent and unfair (Kim, 2007; Lee, 2005; Hwang, Shin, & Park, 2006). Bullying behaviors also increased as classmates were more permissive of school violence (Kim, 2007). In addition, teachers’ use of corporal punishment was a significant predictor for victimization regardless of gender (Kim, 2007). A path analy-
sis demonstrated that the association with delinquent peers partially mediated the relationships between negative school climate and bullying behaviors. The exposure to negative school climate increases perpetration through enhancing the affiliation with delinquent peers. At the same time, it enhances a student’s likelihood of bullying others even after controlling for the effect of delinquent peers (Hwang et al., 2006).

**Mesosystem**

The mesosystem is best described as the interconnections among two or more microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Kim, Chung, and Lee (2008) found boys in middle and high schools did not engage in bullying behaviors if they had peer or teacher support, despite their exposure to parents’ domestic violence. Their findings reflect the interactions between a child’s family and peers/schools. Another example can be found in Lee et al.’s (2004) study that indicated attachment with teachers or school deters perpetration of school violence by decreasing contacts with delinquent peers. Their findings involved the interactions between a child’s school and peers.

**Exosystem**

The exosystem consists of different settings that do not directly involve the individual, but where events occur that indirectly affect his or her life (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). A good example of the exosystem is mass media. Research has indicated that the violent content of mass media affects individuals’ bullying behaviors. For example, exposure to media violence likely increases perpetration of school violence while simultaneously moderating the relationship between aggression and bullying behaviors (Do, 2008). Media violence was the strongest predictor for bullying only among elementary school students (Kim, 2006). However, among high school students who had more exposure to media violence, there was no association between bullying and media exposure (Kim, 2006). Ferguson, Miguel, and Hartley (2009) reported that violent video games, not violent TV programs, predicted more bullying behaviors among youth aged 10 to 14. Likewise, Kim, Lee, and Lee (2010) demonstrated a full mediation model among internet game addiction, violent thoughts, and perpetration of school violence.

**Macrosystem**

As a societal blueprint, the macrosystem involves values, belief systems, customs, lifestyles, and societal structures of a particular culture (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Researchers often suggest that failing to conform to in-group norms may contribute to ostracism and peer victimization within a collectivistic society (Lee & Kim, 2001). However, on an individual level, collectivistic tendencies were a significant predictor for being bullied despite the cultural background of a society. For example, a lack of vertical collectivism (emphasizing more on group hierarchy and obedience) among Korean middle school students, but a lack of horizontal collectivism (emphasizing similarity and cooperation among in-group members) among the German counterpart, predicted victimization (Kim, 2005).

However, lack of parental support was the strongest predictor of both bullying and victimization among Korean youth. In contrast, permissive attitudes toward violence was the strongest predictor of bullying, where lower social acceptance was most predictive of victimization among German youth (Kim, 2005). This result might reflect the collectivistic nature of Korean society compared to more individualistic characteristics found among Germans (Kim, 2005).

The Korean educational system is another example of a macrosystem. Due to excessive pressure for academic achievement, Korean students experience a significant amount of stress (Park,
According to Chon, Lee, Yoo, and Lee (2004), academic stress significantly increased conformity to norms supporting bullying within a group. Furthermore, working in an educational environment that only focuses on academic excellence, Korean teachers became passive in addressing school violence (Hwang et al., 2006).

### Comprehensive Intervention Efforts

#### National School Violence Prevention and Intervention Plan

Since "wang-ta" began to draw attention in the late 1990s, a large number of sporadic interventions to cope with school bullying were developed and implemented in Korea. More comprehensive intervention efforts were initiated by the Korean government’s five-year plan along with legislation regarding school violence prevention and intervention in 2004 (Korea Ministry of Education & Human Resources, 2005). The Five-year Plan of Prevention and Intervention for School Violence is a multilevel system approach which relies on the collaboration of each operating body such as Department of Education, school districts, and local schools (Goal 1). Priority was given to prevention programs rather than intervention approaches based on studies showing proactive approaches being more effective than reactive approaches (Goal 2). The shortage of school counselors in the Korean school system highlighted the importance of a classroom teacher’s ability to cope with school violence and thus enhancement of a classroom teacher’s ability to deal with school violence was emphasized (Goal 3). The plan also initiated a variety of nation-wide movements for creating a safe school climate (Goal 4).

Implementation of this ambitious plan resulted in significant changes (Korea Ministry of Education, Science, & Technology [MEST], 2009). First, a collaborative network for reducing school violence was created, based on task force teams in local school districts. Second, all local schools throughout the nation established a school violence autonomy committee—a special school board discussing various school violence issues. Third, in addition to bullying prevention programs, there was widespread hiring of school police officers and installations of CCTV cameras. Fourth, all teachers were mandated to take in-service training on school violence prevention every year since 2008. Particularly noteworthy, a national study indicated a decrease of school violence in general since the implementation of the plan from 17.6% in 2006 to 11.3% in 2009 (Korea Youth Prevention Foundation, 2009; as cited in Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, 2009).

However, the plan did not achieve one of its objectives which intended to reduce school violence by 5% every year, thus reducing school violence by 25% over the course of five years, relative to baseline conditions. Furthermore, although verbal and physical violence were diminished in general, social or relational violence slightly increased from 2.5% in 2005 to 3.4% in 2008 (MEST, 2009). Furthermore, there was a considerable increase of school violence among younger children during this period (Foundation for Preventing Youth Violence, 2009). Responding to these challenges, the Korean government recently announced a new plan for the next five years (2010–2014). Table 40.1 outlines specific policy tasks for achieving each of the plan’s six goals.

The new plan provided more sophisticated interventions based on the results from the first five-year plan. First, a customized prevention program based on local needs assessment was emphasized, because general prevention programs targeting large and broadly defined groups were not effective (MEST, 2009). Second, the new plan put an emphasis on school accountability. Each school has to demonstrate its efforts for decreasing bullying by monitoring the degree of school violence among its student population and linking that data to school-based
Third, collaboration of parents, teachers, and communities are encouraged. For example, teachers are expected to be actively involved in PTA (parent-teacher association) in order to empower family involvement in prevention. Teachers can help families better through sharing information and providing advice or possibly training to parents on several topics such as child supervision, family communication, and decision-making as a part of a broad prevention approach. The participation of other helping professionals in the community is also supported.

Fourth, high quality counseling services for victims and bullies are provided through community counseling centers.

### Representative School Violence Prevention and Intervention Programs

Along with systematic intervention efforts by government, a number of other school violence prevention and intervention programs have been developed in Korea. Given the urgency of dealing with school violence during the last decade, most programs have been applied to school settings without going through rigorous outcome evaluations. Therefore, empirical studies that examine treatment effects of such programs are scarce. The following programs were selected based on by multiple criteria, including credibility of developer, supply ratio of the program, and overall quality and quantity of supporting empirical research. Key characteristics of selected representative programs are summarized in Table 40.2.

Some of the above programs reported the result of their effectiveness. Kwak, Kim, Kim, and Koo (2005) found that the participants in the HELP-ing program showed decreased bullying victimization compared to the control group in elementary and middle schools. The Korea Youth Counseling Institute (2008) also reported that elementary students who joined in the Care Enhancement Program showed higher perspective-taking, empathic concerns, and care for others, possibly linked to reduced bullying behaviors.
In addition to prevention programs, various intervention programs for victims were developed as well, though few programs reported their effectiveness. The Youth Rainbow Program (KYP, 2002, as cited in Kang, 2008) was designed for victims in two formats: one is for an intensive 3-day camp, and the other is for a 10-day group counseling session. The “Let’s Play Together” was selected as the best program at the school violence intervention program contest which was sponsored by the Korea Youth Counseling Institute (KYCI, 2004, as cited in Kang 2008). This program has been widely implemented in many counseling centers and it consists of a two-step procedure: three-day intensive camp followed by five group counseling sessions for five months.

Table 40.2 Summary of Selected School Violence Related Programs in Korea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Programs</th>
<th>Key Components</th>
<th>Key Features</th>
<th>Format/ Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prevention</td>
<td>• HELP-ing (Help Encourage yourself as a Leader of Peace-ing) by Kwak et al. (2005)</td>
<td>• Increasing responsibility</td>
<td>• Improving bystanders’ coping skills by increasing their social cognition abilities</td>
<td>Classroom guidance activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Care Enhancement Program for the Prevention of School Violence by Korea Youth Counseling Institute (2008)</td>
<td>• Taking perspective of others</td>
<td>• Intensified program by running 3 sessions a week for a month</td>
<td>(1–8 sessions) for elementary and middle school students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• KEDI School Violence Prevention Program by Korean Educational Development Institute (2007)</td>
<td>• Taking perspective of others</td>
<td>• Adapting interdisciplinary approach with other subject matters</td>
<td>Classroom guidance activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Youth Rainbow Program by Korea Youth Protection Committee (2002)</td>
<td>• Discovering strengths</td>
<td>• Watching animation DVD followed by a teacher’s instruction</td>
<td>(4 sessions) for elementary school students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “Let’s Play Together” Program by Korea Youth Counseling Institute (2004)</td>
<td>• Increasing interpersonal skills</td>
<td>• Exploring effective intervention in three levels: personal, class, and school levels</td>
<td>Small group activity for victims or risk group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Expressing themselves by participating in psychodrama</td>
<td></td>
<td>Two formats: One is for 3-day camp and the other is for 10 sessions for 10 weeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Exploring solutions by making a video skit with others</td>
<td></td>
<td>Small group activity for victims or risk group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Two steps: First is 3-day camp and second is 5 sessions for 5 months.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

by the Korean Educational Development Institute (2007) also demonstrated its effectiveness by increasing the participants’ awareness of school violence and coping skills compared to a control group.

In addition to prevention programs, various intervention programs for victims were developed as well, though few programs reported their effectiveness. The Youth Rainbow Program (KYP, 2002, as cited in Kang, 2008) was designed for victims in two formats: one is for an intensive 3-day camp, and the other is for a 10-day group counseling session. The “Let’s Play Together” was selected as the best program at the school violence intervention program contest which was sponsored by the Korea Youth Counseling Institute (KYCI, 2004, as cited in Kang 2008). This program has been widely implemented in many counseling centers and it consists of a two-step procedure: three-day intensive camp followed by five group counseling sessions for five months.
Discussion

According to ecological systems theory, successful interventions for school violence should focus on environmental contexts as well as individuals. However, most of the bullying prevention and intervention programs in Korea have focused on individual factors, ignoring the complex interactions among individuals and their ecological contexts. Mental health professionals such as school counselors or psychologists should keep in mind the importance of a comprehensive approach. For example, family environments with little parental monitoring would contribute to a child’s exposure to violent media or internet games. Exposure to violent media is a crucial determinant in predicting young children’s bullying behaviors (Kim, 2006). Therefore, limiting media violence can be a relevant approach for bullying prevention. Harsh and physical parenting practices lead to younger children’s victimization by peers (Lee & Kim, 2001) and over time can contribute to bullying behaviors among high school students (Do, 2008). Thus, in order to reduce bullying, parenting practices should be another focus of early intervention.

Furthermore, research indicates positive school climate as a protective factor for school violence (Hwang et al., 2006; Kim, 2007). One of its components is teachers’ disciplinary strategies. In 2010, dissemination of a video clip showing a teacher’s use of corporal punishment ignited national debate on whether corporal punishment should be completely prohibited in the Korean school systems. Teachers’ abilities to provide behavioral guidance to students are already severely constrained under such a competitive educational environment. The complete prohibition of corporal punishment might be another problem for student management unless more effective disciplinary strategies are provided for teachers. Certainly, School-Wide Positive Behavioral Support (SWPBS), a systematic approach for behavioral management, could be a solution. SWPBS provides clear expectations of acceptable behaviors for both students and teachers, and relies on a continuum of reinforcement for positive behaviors (Osher, Bear, Sprague, & Dolye, 2010).

Meanwhile, academic stress of Korean youth facilitates their conformity to bullying within a group. Oh (2009) identified that a high level of students’ stress influenced their bullying behaviors through increased aggression. Therefore, helping students cope with their academic stress can be another strategy for bullying prevention. In addition, it may not be effective to focus on empathy training without considering the specific type of empathy and the gender of the students involved (Oh, 2010; Oh & Hazler, 2009). However, it appears that most bullying prevention and intervention programs have not taken such research findings into consideration. The weak connection of these programs with empirical research might result in little or inconsistent treatment effectiveness.

An important issue in bullying prevention and intervention in Korea is that most efforts are weighted toward intervening with victims. Although the new Five-year Plan of Prevention and Intervention for School Violence includes counseling services for both victims and bullies, it is still more common for perpetrators of school violence or bullies to receive punishment, rather than psychological intervention (Park, 2006). For example, both the Youth Rainbow and “Let’s Play Together” programs are directed toward empowering victims. However, bullies also require a comprehensive intervention program in order to reduce various risk factors that lead to bullying behaviors.

Furthermore, it is crucial to understand bullying as a group dynamic that involves not only the bully and victim, but also bystanders (Oh & Hazler, 2009). The fact that bystanders are the majority of the participants in bullying episodes implies that bystanders can play a critical role in maintaining or prohibiting the bullying dynamic (Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt, & Hymel, 2010). However, most bystanders are less likely to intervene or defend victims, because they try to avoid getting involved due to a fear of revenge or the uncertainty of the intervention (Oh & Hazler, 2009). Therefore, it is critical to find out how to foster positive bystander responses in bullying
situations, in order to increase the number of defenders for victims. A program such as HELP-ing, which focuses on improving bystanders’ coping skills, would be a vehicle for this type of change.

Comprehensive bullying prevention and intervention requires effective networking with a variety of service providers within a community. The school violence prevention and intervention program of 2004 did not achieve its goal of a 25% bullying reduction. This failure was in part due to the lack of service networks available to the school system (Kim, 2007). Since 2005, the Korean government has developed a Community Youth Safety Net (CYS-Net), an integrated helping network with various community-based service providers. The Korean Department of Education has been developing a WEE (We + Emotion + Education) system. It is a hierarchical network system of counseling services. A WEE class (a new name of the previous counseling office) in a local school level is connected with a WEE center at the school district level, and the WEE center is linked to a WEE school which is specially established for students requiring intensive counseling services at the province level. The number of WEE classes has been increased from 1,530 in 2009 to 2,530 in 2010 (MEST, 2009). Taken together, these increases in networking capacity hold the promise of supporting more effective school violence interventions.

Collaboration is a key for success in the case of network building with community-based service providers. As previously discussed, a comprehensive approach addressing diverse systems is necessary for more effective bullying prevention and intervention. Consultation from allied professionals and collaboration among them are also critically important. Thus, a local school-based coordinator of collaboration is essential to successful school violence interventions. At this point, Korean legislation mandated a school counselor as the professional responsible for facilitating local school violence prevention and intervention efforts. School counselors can serve as a coordinator while working with other helping professionals such as a school social worker or psychologist. This suggests that more pre-service and in-service training in consultation and collaboration is critical for school counselors in Korea.

Conclusions

Since the late 1990s, school violence, especially bullying, has been a serious educational and social issue in Korean society. Many prevention and intervention efforts for school violence have yielded some positive changes; however, new challenges have emerged such as an increase in school violence at an earlier age. Furthermore, many Korean prevention and intervention pro-

Table 40.3 Implications for Practice: Towards Effective Prevention and Intervention Strategies

| 1.    | Effective interventions for school violence include comprehensive strategies addressing individuals, family, peers, school, and community. |
| 2.    | Priority needs to be given to prevention programs rather than intervention approaches, because proactive approaches are more effective than reactive approaches. |
| 3.    | A customized prevention program based on needs assessment is more effective than general prevention programs targeting large and broadly defined groups. |
| 4.    | Successful strategies require strong networking with diverse helping service providers. |
| 5.    | Effective interventions based on ecological perspectives require various helping skills including counseling, collaboration, and consultation. |
| 6.    | Effective interventions are directed toward all participants, including bullies as well as victims. |
| 7.    | Effective prevention programs include strategies to improve bystanders’ skills, empowering them to change their roles from outsiders to defenders of victims. |
| 8.    | A school-wide systemic approach for behavioral management (e.g., School-wide Positive Behavioral Support) fosters positive school climate as a protective factor for school violence. |
grams have been applied without thorough outcome evaluations; increased research on treatment effects is necessary. It is also important to strengthen the connection between school practices and empirical studies on school violence. Although research indicates the importance of understanding a group dynamic in bullying, many programs still focus only on victims. They also focus more on individuals despite the roles of various ecological systems. Along with creative approaches to intervene with the bullying dynamic, multilayered strategies addressing individuals, family, peers, school, and community should be developed. Comprehensive programming, efficient collaboration among stakeholders across the student’s ecology, improved training, and leveraging service networks, together, hold the promise for increased success of bullying prevention and intervention approaches in Korea.

References


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