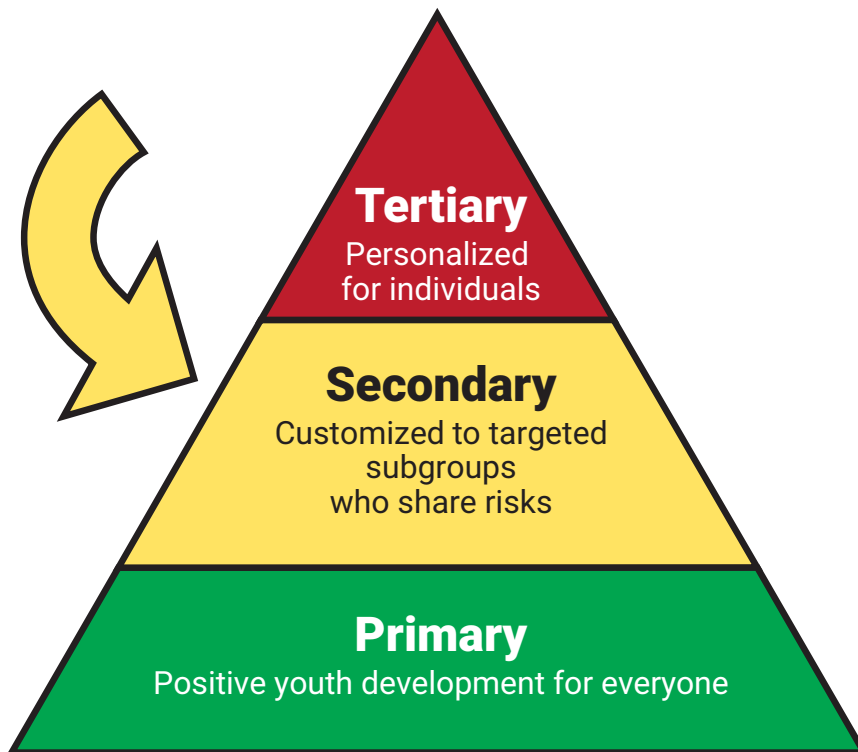# ripple effects

**Targeted Prevention:
Risk Reduction**

The following is an excerpt of this manual for preview purposes. The full manual is made available upon purchase.

Three tiered prevention

The fields of education, health and public safety all increasingly rely on a model of three-tiered intervention: primary for universal preventive intervention; secondary for targeted risk reduction; and tertiary for personalized, adaptive intervention after school failure, injury, or anti-social behavior have begun to occur. Ripple Effects' software-based training program is effective for all three levels of intervention. This guide focuses particularly on secondary prevention: risk factors that affect groups of children, such as injury, health-related problems, and school failure.

Tertiary
Personalized
for individuals

Secondary
Customized to targeted
subgroups
who share risks

Primary
Positive youth development for everyone

Contents

Where to start?

So many prevention issues

So many proven strategies

So many kinds of learners

So few hours

Interlinking variables

School failure, behavior problems, substance abuse, and mental health issues including depression and Post-traumatic Stress Response (PTSR), have been shown to be interdependent variables that can be linked to each other, as well as to common external risk factors often related to trauma - from poverty, to family discipline patterns, to mental health problems, to racism, to community violence. Teachers report that 25% to as much as 80% of instruction time is spent dealing with problem behavior.

Cause and effect

In some cases, substance abuse leads to multiple problem behaviors, and problem behavior leads to school failure. In others, school failure leads to substance abuse, and substance abuse leads to problem behavior. In still others, anti-social behavior leads to school failure, which in turn leads to substance abuse. Individual mental health problems, especially Post Traumatic Stress and depression, may trigger any, or all, of the three responses. Regardless of which is the first presenting problem, they commonly are enmeshed and related to deeper personal, family and community issues, which also need to be somehow addressed.

Proven effective prevention strategies – but one size does not fit all

The field of prevention has developed at the intersection of public health, public safety, and public education. A range of school-based programs have been developed to separately affect anti-social behavior, school failure, mental health issues and substance abuse. Proven effective strategies include affective, cognitive-behavioral, social skill and attention training, as well as counseling. However, there is not one strategy that works for every child, all the time. A range of evidence-based strategies work in some situations, with some students. The key to successful prevention is to make the closest possible match between an individual student's needs and the prevention strategies offered. Ripple Effects' database structure and library of media- rich content bring a whole spectrum of proven effective strategies to each student. Ripple Effects programs enable a more personalized approach, without adding to the already heavy burden of teachers.
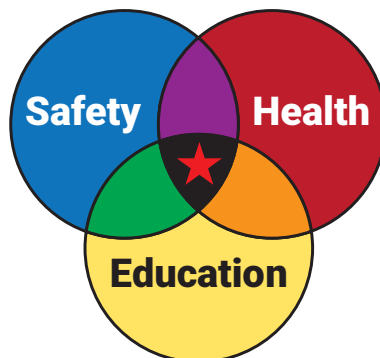
Strengths-based risk reduction

Multiple groups – overlapping risk factors

One challenge with school-based, secondary prevention is that multiple groups are represented, with sometimes overlapping risk factors. Since it's not possible to address every issue that might be a problem for every student, it makes sense to focus on reducing the risk and increasing the protective factors that affect multiple problems, then selectively offering "just in time, just enough" information and training to provide added protection against specific illness, injury or academic problems that differentially affect groups of students.

Two lists for scope and sequence

For this reason, the suggested scope and sequence for each thematic area includes two lists. First, the list of skill training that can be protective in this area and across multiple domains. You will notice that these are drawn from the core social-emotional competencies that comprise primary prevention (universal promotion) programs. Lack of specific skills are risk factors for specific disorders, such as lack of empathy being tied to bullying or bias activity. But learning those skills do more than protect against a single disorder; they are linked to other positive outcomes. For instance, the ability to empathize with others is also connected with popularity and with test scores. Thus, even in secondary prevention, the focus is on building strengths.

A second list is of application areas specifically related to the particular prevention topic of focus, like violence, substance abuse, or sexual harassment. These "Personal Topics" are often what students are drawn to in the topic index. As with adults, students are more likely to seek help to alleviate some point of personal pain, than to invest in personal growth.

Easily adaptable to different grade levels

Due to the great variance among groups who might be the same age, or share some of the same risks, there is no set grade-by-grade sequence. However, R*ipple Effects Individualized Implementation Guide* walks you step-by-step through choosing a set of topics that are personalized, leverage your students' (and your own) strengths, and fit into your site-specific goals, constraints, and opportunities.

Removing controversial content

To maximize user choice in how to handle sensitive and potentially controversial areas, you can remove any topic you deem inappropriate for a particular group of students, or in a particular context. Just log in with the administrative password provided with purchase. Select "*Customizing Topics*," and remove topics to fit your needs.

A comprehensive approach

Primary: Universal training to build strengths

Primary prevention is geared toward promoting success and preventing a whole population from developing a disorder. In health, it's the good diet and exercise approach. In school, it's the basic reading curriculum. For behavior, it's universal promotion of abilities that increase the likelihood of school and life success: character education, asset building, positive youth development, social-emotional competence, etc. Instructions for using Ripple Effects for primary prevention are included in a separate manual, the *Universal Promotion Guide.*

Secondary: Targeted risk reduction

Between the two poles of universal promotion and individual intervention, lies secondary prevention: targeted efforts for subgroups of people who share one or more risk factors for injury, illness or school failure. It's the extra support needed for success. For social behavior, it often takes the form of prevention curricula, designed to head off a problem before it occurs; for instance, school violence, substance abuse, teen pregnancy or bully prevention.

Tertiary: Individualized intervention to prevent re-occurrence

Tertiary prevention is intervention after the fact. It aims to reduce the chance that injury, illness or school failure will continue or reoccur. In health terms, this is the prescriptive approach. In reading it's remedial tutoring. For behavior, it's individualized counseling and skill training. In each case, the key to success is individualizing – getting the right match between the student's need and the intervention offered (See *Individual Treatment Plans Manual*).

Assessment a key factor at every level

At all three levels, continual assessment and progress monitoring are an important component of success. Ripple Effects *Planning & Assessment Kit* and *Data Viewer* are easy to use tools for planning, assessment, and monitoring at both group and individual levels.

Ongoing staff development has parallel, tiered levels

Ripple Effects also provides tiered training for the adults who work with kids: universal leadership training to develop core social-emotional assets, specialized training to respond to students with diverse needs and private coaching for dealing with problems as they come up. Adult training – *Ripple Effects for Staff* - uses the same learning system as the student program.

How it works:
easiest vs. more structured

The easiest way

The simplest and also most personalized way to use Ripple Effects as a prevention curriculum is to simply assign the topic that corresponds to your major concern (like marijuana use, bullying, or depression). Make sure that they complete the interactive parts of the assigned topic ("Got it," "Brain" "Profiles"). To do this, have students show you their scorecard or check the *Ripple Effects Data Viewer*. Then encourage students to follow the links in the topic, in whatever direction makes the most sense for them. This allows students the opportunity to self-direct their skill-build and problem solving around the issue of concern.

Kids - "Got It" Activity

Kids - "Profile"

Kids - "Brain"/Journal

More structured approaches

If you prefer to have all students follow the same scope and sequence, you can chose topics from the lists suggested in the following pages to fit within your constraints. Each session should allow approximately 15 minutes per assigned topic, with extra time for personal exploration. Sessions can consist of various combinations of independent exploration and directed discussion.

One group model is to introduce a topic beginning with the "What If," then have students complete the topic independently, and then follow it up as a group, using the "Apply It" scenarios for role plays or discussion.

Another model is to assign a scope and sequence for all to complete, but have them do it privately, with or without discussion after completion. In your planning include time for students to have personal exploration. **Research on Ripple Effects shows clearly that, at least with teens, students who use the program with adult monitoring, but not any adult mediation of content, have better social and academic outcomes than those who have adult mediation.**

Successful facilitation: do's and don'ts

Facilitating Ripple Effects prevention programs is different from presenting other prevention programs. It takes much less up-front preparation on your part. You don't labor over lesson plans. You don't present the content. You don't design or grade the assessments. Nonetheless, your role is vitally important. You ensure that students receive the intervention. You reinforce key concepts throughout your other instruction time.

Do not over-direct – every way is a right way

There is no wrong way for a student to complete a particular topic. They do not need to complete the activities in any particular order.

Do enforce compliance and monitor completion

All students need to complete the interactive "Got It," "Brain" (assisted journal writing) and "Profile" elements. (Not all topics have a "Profile.") This interactivity is key to program success. Monitor completion of the assigned topics by having students show you their "Scorecards," or by using the *Ripple Effects Data Viewer*.

Respect student privacy

Again and again we have seen that students are more open to the program when they can explore it privately. Younger children will need more guidance than older children, but even young children often prefer some privacy in dealing with sensitive issues.

Remember: Be the guide on the side, not the sage on the stage

It may be a new role for you to not be the content expert. Enjoy it. Spend the extra time investing in your relationships with students and you'll both benefit from it.

Bullying

Bullying is a "gateway" problem behavior and a pervasive one. Students who bully others during their school years, especially middle school, are much more likely than other students to get in trouble with the law as adults. Bullies often come from homes where physical punishment is the norm. This punishment may have crossed over into actual abuse.

Contrary to what used to be believed, research has shown bullies demonstrate little anxiety and report strong self-esteem. They often lack empathy for their victims, or blame them for "asking for it." A substantial number of bystander students actually agree with this analysis.

Because bullying is primarily about power dynamics, the most successful bully prevention programs are schoolwide ones that address these power dynamics from all three directions: bully, target and bystander. Nonetheless, individual interventions that target bullies and their victims separately can also be effective.

Goals of intervention - students will:
- Understand the part they play in the bullying dynamic
- Internalize norms against bullying
- Identify with others
- Stand up for themselves and those who are weaker
- Manifest greater self-control (both feelings and behavior)
- Redirect desire for power and dominance
- Understand reasons behind their anger or fear

A suggested scope and sequence - Teens

CORE CONTENT TOPICS
Bullying
Bullied
Internet bullying
Bystander

SKILL TRAINING TOPICS
Self-efficacy
Courage
Getting help
Power
Self-efficacy
Strengths

Connecting with others
Bystander
Digital citizen
Kindness
Perspective taking
Predicting feelings
Empathy
Connecting with others
Making friends

Assertiveness
Assertive posture
Assertive words
Assertive message
Ignoring
Speaking up

Controlling yourself
Self-control
Stopping reactions
Consequences - predicting

Managing feelings
Body clues
Managing feelings
Mindfulness
Self-talk

Decision-making
Decisions
Problem-solving
Resolving conflict

RELATED PERSONAL TOPICS
Anger
Fear
Isolated
Social media
Teasing
Threats – internet
Turning someone in
Vulnerable

A suggested scope and sequence - Kids

CORE CONTENT TOPICS
Bully – you do it
Bullied
Bystander
Internet – bullying

SKILL TRAINING TOPICS
Self-efficacy
Self-efficacy
Strengths
Getting help

Connecting with others
Bystander
Point of view
Feelings - predicting
Empathy
Connection with others
Making friends

Assertiveness
Assertiveness
Assertive body
Assertive voice
Assertive message
Ignoring

Controlling yourself
Impulse control
Reactions - controlling
Consequences – predict

Managing feelings
Managing feelings
Self-talk

Decision-making
Decision-making
Problem-solving
Resolving conflict

RELATED PERSONAL TOPICS
Angry
Afraid
Social media
Teasing
Threats
Telling
Vulnerable