



Peers Making Peace

Program Description

Peers Making Peace is a peer-mediation program aimed at teaching students prosocial, peaceful conflict resolution skills. The goal of the program is to improve the school environment by reducing violence and discipline referrals and by increasing academic performance. The program is based on a combination of strategies that include life and social skills training, conflict prevention and resolution, and peer-led modeling and coaching. Teams of students are trained to serve as drug-free role models and “neutral third parties,” acting as mediators in peer conflicts. Peers Making Peace was developed by paxUnited.

Target Audience

The target audience for Peers Making Peace is students in grades kindergarten through 12 in public or private elementary, middle, and high schools.

Special Populations

Peers Making Peace has been replicated in urban, suburban, and rural environments and has been proven effective with all racial and ethnic groups served. It has also worked well in universal, selective, and indicated populations.

Program Components

Peers Making Peace is made up of the following program components: (1) life and social skills training; (2) training in conflict prevention and resolution; (3) parental involvement in conflict resolution education; (4) peer-led modeling and coaching; and (5) creation of a supportive school environment. Each school selects a group of 15 to 24 students who represent the community's racial, ethnic, and gender demographics. Students learn skills such as resolving conflicts, communicating nonverbally, questioning, and maintaining neutrality. The training activities for students vary in length from 10 to 45 minutes. The maximum training time each day varies by age group.

Training and Technical Assistance

A three-day facilitator training is required. Training is provided by the developer, paxUnited.

Program & Training Costs

The developer offers three-day facilitator trainings for teachers, counselors, administrators, and support staff. The training prepares participants to implement and coordinate Peers Making Peace in their schools. After the training, participants will be invited to join the Peace Partners Network, which provides ongoing technical assistance and networking opportunities with other program coordinators. The training schedule is available on paxUnited's Web site, at <http://www.paxunited.org>. There is no cost to Texas participants, as the training is underwritten by a grant from the Criminal Justice Division of the Texas Governor's Office. For non-Texas participants (or those attending trainings in locations outside of Texas), the training is \$850 per participant, not including the cost of materials. The cost of the *Implementation Kit* (including a manual, workbooks, and two videos) is \$275. paxUnited also provides fee-for-service training and will contract with organizations to provide on-site training.

Evaluation Results

The evaluation of the Peers Making Peace program used a pre-post quasi-experimental design with six experimental and six comparison schools in two school districts. Data from 360 students were collected prior to the initiation of the program and after completion of the program. The collected data included violence statistics, discipline referrals, attendance records, suspensions, vandalism incidents, retention rates, demographics, and achievement test scores. Key outcomes included the following:

- In the six schools that implemented Peers Making Peace, there were 1,305 mediations involving more than 2,400 students. Results indicated that 1,275 (97.7%) mediations resulted in an agreement.
- Discipline referrals decreased by 57.7% in Peers Making Peace schools, but increased 8.4% in control schools.
- Assaults decreased by 90.2% in Peers Making Peace schools, but increased 33% in control schools.
- Expulsions decreased by 73% in Peers Making Peace schools, but increased 6.2% in control schools.

Evaluation Components

Information on evaluating Peers Making Peace is included in the curriculum. The primary data sources are school records, police records, student surveys, Peers Making Peace forms, and a self-efficacy instrument. The measures included the number of discipline referrals, expulsions, suspensions, assaults, and absences; a measure of self-efficacy; and standardized testing scores.

Agency/Institution Recognition

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: Promising Program
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention: Promising Program
- U.S. Department of Education: Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools Promising Program

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References

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Landry, R. (2003). *Peers Making Peace: Evaluation Report*. Houston, TX: Research and Educational Services.