

**Literature review of research  
into the effectiveness of  
self defence programmes for girls  
as a sexual violence  
and family violence prevention strategy**



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## A glossary of Māori terms used in this report

Hapū	A sub-tribe comprising a number of <u>whānau</u> (extended family) groups
Hauora	Health and wellbeing
Iwi	Tribe
Mana	Prestige, influence or authority
Rangatahi	Youth, young people
Teina	Younger brother or sister
Te reo	Māori language
Tuakana	Older brother or sister
Wāhine toa	Brave or strong women
Whānau	A descent-based family group, or a group that comes together for a common purpose
Whanaungatanga	A relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging.

## **Executive summary**

The Ministry of Social Development has funded self defence classes for school-age girls since 2001, primarily through the Women's Self Defence Network – Wāhine Toa. The Ministry sought an independent review of research and evaluations into the effectiveness of self defence programmes as a sexual violence and family violence prevention strategy for school-age girls to help ensure that funding decisions align with Community Investment outcomes and cross-government strategies on sexual violence and family violence.

The review was structured around three research questions:

- What does the literature say about self defence classes for school-aged girls in terms of their effectiveness in preventing sexual and family violence?
- What does the literature say about self defence classes for school-aged girls in terms of good practice guidance?
- What does the literature say about self defence classes for specific age groups for school-aged girls, for those from CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) backgrounds, and for those with disabilities?

## **Limited literature**

While 41 pieces of literature are cited in this report, only 19 refer specifically to school-age children and young people, and of those, only 11 refer specifically to self defence courses aimed at schoolgirls. Six of the 11 discuss various aspects of programmes delivered by one organisation, Kidpower, which operates internationally.

## **Evaluation issues**

Few programmes, including most Australian and New Zealand interventions, have been evaluated using rigorous methods. Many evaluations report on courses provided at universities in North America. Because of the age of participants, their different living arrangements (many live in student residences) and the fact that they are not representative of their community as a whole, it is difficult to apply the results to school-aged girls in New Zealand.

Measuring the effectiveness of self defence training is difficult, partly because it is hard to maintain response levels over a long period and partly because it is difficult to attribute change solely to the training. Researchers agree that more could be done to assess avoidance behaviours, victimization experiences, and women (and girls') responses to actual assaults.

## **Programme approaches**

Self defence programmes for school-age-girls can be delivered as part of a physical health or sports programme, as part of the health curriculum, through martial arts courses, or within a feminist or empowering model, often as part of a broader healthy relationships programme. The literature favours an empowerment or feminist approach, which involves: placing violence in a social context, holding perpetrators responsible for violence, teaching women and girls to use their body in self defence, and offering a range of options, including awareness and verbal self defence.

## **Outcomes and effectiveness**

Programmes for younger students focus on general safety, while those for senior school and university students focus on preventing sexual violence. Findings suggests that primary school-age girls (and boys) who take part in a programme (as opposed to a single workshop) have a better understanding of boundary-setting, stranger safety, help-seeking, and maintaining calmness and

confidence in stressful situations. Secondary school and college/university-age students who took part in longer programmes (typically between five and 12, but up to 30 hours) increased their perceptions of risk, strengthened their belief in their ability to defend themselves successfully against sexual assault, and were more likely to use effective methods of self defence.

The most notable gap in the literature related to programmes for girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The review reports general principles for what works for Māori and Pacific young people, but more work needs to be done for establishing similar principles for those from other cultures. The literature supports having programmes specifically tailored for young people with physical disabilities alongside and in addition to mainstream programmes. Programmes for young people with learning disabilities have shown consistent improvements in young people's ability to recognise and manage risky situations.

The review found no specific guidelines for good practice for developing and delivering self defence programmes for school-aged girls. Information on delivering effective school or community-based violence prevention programmes in general suggests that self defence programmes need to be tailored to participants' age and stage of development, and be delivered as part of a larger, coherent focus on respectful relationships. They also need to take participants' cultural background into account and be adapted when necessary for those with particular physical or learning impairments.

While the dearth of evaluations for self defence programmes for school-age girls made it difficult to answer the research questions with confidence, some common themes did emerge.

- Longer courses and/or courses delivered as part of a broader healthy relationships programme appear to be more effective than one-off workshops or brief interventions.
- Courses often teach physical self defence strategies alongside other components, addressing gender issues, peer pressure, social norms and other risk factors.
- There was little evidence that girls and young women actually used physical defence strategies to prevent assaults; they were more likely to use verbal and other prevention strategies.
- Courses are best delivered by trained specialists.
- Most girls preferred single sex rather than mixed-gender groups
- Adaptations of courses for girls with physical and learning disabilities appear to have been successful in improving girls' awareness and confidence, within the constraints of their disability.
- Participants, teachers and caregivers appreciated the opportunity to have courses tailored to their family member's or client's needs.
- The review found no research showing whether or not purpose-designed programmes for girls from culturally and linguistically different groups produce better results for these groups than standard programmes.

More evidence is needed on the effectiveness of programmes, linked to specific programme content, and well-defined programme logics, with clearly specified outcome measures. Evidence of programme effectiveness with diverse participants is also needed.

More knowledge about where self defence programmes fit alongside broader healthy relationships or violence prevention strategies would also be useful.

## 1. Introduction

The Ministry of Social Development has funded self defence classes for school-age girls since 2001. The Ministry has commissioned this literature review to help ensure that funding decisions align with Community Investment outcomes and cross-government strategies on sexual violence and family violence. This review focuses on research and evaluations into the effectiveness of self defence programmes as a sexual violence and family violence prevention strategy for school-age girls. It also includes some contextual information.

## 2. Research questions

The review has addressed three questions:

- What does the literature say about self defence classes for school-aged girls in terms of their effectiveness in preventing sexual and family violence?
- What does the literature say about self defence classes for specific age groups for school-aged girls, for those from CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) backgrounds, and for those with disabilities?
- What does the literature say about self defence classes for school-aged girls in terms of good practice guidance?

\*School-age is primary school (5 to 10 years), intermediate (11 – 12 years) and high school (13 – 18 years).

## 3. Methodology

The review covered New Zealand and international research and evaluations that reference the effectiveness of self defence programmes as part of strategies to prevent sexual violence and family violence. The review also considered published research and grey literature in print or digital form from 1995 – 2015<sup>1</sup>.

Literature was sourced from:

- material supplied by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and a search of databases undertaken by staff at the MSD Information Centre, using keywords such as:
  - self defence; self defense; self-defen\*
  - "self-defen\* class\*" AND "school" AND "girl"
  - "self-defen\* course\*" AND "school" AND "girl"
  - "self-defen\* program\*" AND "school" AND "girl"
  - "good-pract\*"; "best-pract\*"; "effectiveness"; "prevent\*"; "sexual violence"; "sexual harassment"; "family violence"; "domestic violence"
  - "cultural divers\*"; "linguist\* divers\*"; "English as a second language" / "ESOL"; "disabilit\*".
- The databases used were:
  - Austrom (by Informit)
  - Campbell Collaboration
  - Contemporary Women's Issues (Gale Cengage)
  - EBSCO Discovery Search
  - New Zealand National Library
  - OECD Commonwealth iLibrary
  - Scopus (by Elsevier)

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<sup>1</sup> A paper by Cummings (1992) has also been included as a number of other studies refer to it.

- Social Care Online (by the Social Care Institute for Excellence)
- Social Work Reference Centre (by EBSCO)
- SUPERU Hub (by the Social Policy Research and Evaluation Unit)
- Google Scholar (by Google)
- the Family Violence Clearing House
- a search of the Internet
- material held by the authors.

Note: North American literature tends to use the “self defense” spelling, rather than the English “self defence”. This report prefers “self defence” but on occasions, especially in quotes and in the titles of articles, the alternative spelling appears. The report has also followed the Ministry’s style of having no hyphen between self and defence.

## Limitations

The literature on the effectiveness of self defence programmes for girls is extremely sparse. While 41 pieces of literature are cited in this report, only 19 refer specifically to school-age children and young people, and of those, only 11 refer specifically to self defence courses aimed at schoolgirls. Six of the 11 discuss various aspects of programmes delivered by one organisation, Kidpower, which operates internationally. Five of the six reports referred to Kidpower programmes delivered in New Zealand and one to a programme delivered in the United States.

Because of the scarcity of research, the review includes material from evaluations of self defence programmes carried out at colleges and universities, particularly in the United States and Canada. Some of the participants in these programmes are aged 18 or 19. While this is similar in age to senior high school students in New Zealand, the context is very different, with many university students living away from home. Furthermore, the student population is not representative of the youth population as a whole,

Very little literature focuses on programmes for school-aged girls from CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) backgrounds, and those with disabilities. Kidpower in New Zealand have reviewed a pilot programme for schoolchildren with an intellectual disability and several overseas articles have looked at programmes for people who are visually or physically impaired. Two articles cover programmes for young African women in Kenya, but no articles or reports specifically discuss self defence programmes aimed at Māori and Pacific girls.

Three publications, a New Zealand literature review by Hassall and Hanna (2007), another by the SUPERU (2013), and an Australian review (Flood, Fergus and Heenan 2009), discuss the principles, qualities and effectiveness of programmes promoting respectful relationships among young people, but only one refers to self defence courses, and then only in passing. These reviews have contributed to the chapter on good practice.

Most of the literature comes from New Zealand, the United States or Canada, with small contributions from Africa and Australia. None was found from the United Kingdom or Europe. Twenty-five authors appear more than once in the bibliography, often reporting on different aspects of the same programme.

## 4. Effectiveness of self defence classes

### Evaluation issues

Canadian writer Charlene Senn (2013) notes that research literature on sexual assault education and interventions has been analysed by population (adolescent or adult) and location (high school or university). She concludes that:

Only 24% of published sexual assault interventions are conducted with adolescents... Evaluations of high school programmes are infrequently conducted and less often published. In fact, programmes with adolescents in school or community settings are much less likely to be properly evaluated than interventions conducted in universities [Senn 2013:24-25].

Others agree. Hassall and Hanna (2007), point out that the process of gaining evidence for the effectiveness of school-based prevention programmes is in a state of development worldwide. Eight years later, a SUPERU (2015) review made a similar point:

... A recurring theme in the literature is that the evidence base is limited, since only a handful of programmes have been evaluated using rigorous methods. What little scientific evidence is available is almost all derived from North American research. Some authors have noted the extent to which findings are bound to the North American socio-cultural context, and have questioned their applicability elsewhere. A large number of programmes have not been evaluated using rigorous methods, and most Australian and New Zealand interventions fall into this category. Without robust evaluation, we cannot be sure whether they are effective or not [SUPERU 2013:27].

In an Australian review, Flood et al (2009) consider the effectiveness of relationship education and violence prevention programmes in schools without specifically mentioning self defence courses. They suggest that ideally, violence prevention programmes, which could include self defence courses, should involve a comprehensive process of evaluation that, at a minimum:

- reflects the programme framework and logic
- includes evaluation of impact or outcomes, through:
  - pre- and post-intervention assessment
  - long-term follow-up
  - use of standard measures or portions of them
  - measures of both attitudes and behaviours.
- includes a process for dissemination of programme findings in the violence prevention field.

Ideally the process should include:

- longitudinal evaluation, including lengthy follow-up at six months or longer
- examination of processes of change and their mediators
- process evaluation of programme implementation and fidelity
- measures of school culture and context
- experimental or quasi-experimental design incorporating control or comparison schools, students or groups [Flood et al 2009:89].

Other writers (Cummings 1992, Orchowski, Gidycz, and Raffle 2008) recognise that it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of self defence training for students, partly because of the challenges associated with maintaining response levels over a long period and partly because it is difficult to establish whether a student is able to prevent victimization solely because of self defence training. Researchers agree that while it is easier to assess the effectiveness of training strategies and life-skills development, such as confidence, assertiveness and empowerment, more could be done to



assess avoidance behaviours, victimization experiences, and women (and girls') responses to actual assaults (Brecklin and Ullman 2015).

Brecklin (2007) also believes that evaluations of self defence programmes should include more diverse groups of women, as previous studies have been biased by including mostly white, middle-class women. The effects of training may differ based on women's cultural backgrounds.

### **Programme approaches**

Self defence instruction is defined as "preparation to minimize the possibility of assault; it is training to learn and use a small group of simple effective physical actions if no other alternative is available. Learning self defence is primarily the process of learning how to avoid becoming a victim (Cummings 1992:183-184). Advocates of self defence for women believe that the development of particular physical and mental skills will strengthen women's physical capacities, support women's independence, increase women's mobility and, ultimately, move women from a culturally-conditioned passivity to being non-passive, powerful individuals (Cummings 1992:184).

Self defence programmes for school-age-girls can be delivered in different ways – as part of a physical health or sports programme, as part of the health curriculum in schools (e.g. Kidpower programmes), through martial arts courses, or within a feminist or empowering model, often as part of a broader health or respectful relationships programme.

The review did not identify any evaluations of programmes delivered through physical education or martial arts classes. However, two articles by professionals working in the physical education sector (Heyden, Anger, Jackson and Ellner 1999; Givler 2005) urge the inclusion of a self defence training unit as part of a school physical education programme. One cites the psychological, academic and health benefits of doing this:

Introducing a self defence unit as part of a school physical education programme is a wonderful way to address a number of psychosocial issues that prevail among teenagers today...Practising these physical, mental and emotional skills in a non-competitive atmosphere, where self-improvement and empowerment are inherently a part of the learning process, makes self defence a wonderful option for helping students meet the definition of a physically educated person [Givler 2005:25].

The other points to the benefits of martial arts training, which, in their view, has many similarities to self defence training:

Surveys of the parents of over 270 children enrolled in karate classes in Toronto suggested that while boys received significant benefits from instruction, the positive effects enjoyed by girls exceeded their own and parental expectations. There was a universal improvement in self-confidence and self-discipline. Female students experienced physical and academic improvement at a rate of about double that of boys [Heyden et al 1999:33].

Most of the literature favours adopting an empowerment or feminist approach (See Flood et al 2009:33-34). Hollander (2004) writes in the context of classes for women, but the same principles are likely to apply to school-age girls, particularly those aged 13 to 17. According to Hollander:

The specific focus of these [feminist] classes is sexual violence against women, including rape and sexual assault, although the lessons learned may also be applicable to other types of violence, from sexual harassment to nonsexual assault to relationship violence. Feminist self defence classes [also] address the gender socialization and inequalities that make physical and verbal self defence challenging for many women...by including substantial

training in assertiveness (verbal self defence) and discussing psychological and emotional issues surrounding both violence against women and self defence. This contrasts with both martial arts training and non-feminist self defence classes, which may not recognize or address the psychological and emotional issues at stake for women... Self defence classes begin with the assumption that women have the ability to protect themselves, rather than relying on others for protection [Hollander 2004:203-204].

The empowerment approach to teaching self defence is similar to the feminist model. Thompson (2014) identifies four major themes in this form of training: placing violence in a social context, holding perpetrators responsible for violence, centring embodiment (i.e. having women learn to use parts of the body to strike potential targets on an assailant's body), and offering a comprehensive self defence toolbox.

One of the most important lessons in an empowering self defence course is that strikes and kicks are tools of last resort... The idea of self defence training as preparing people for nonviolence is often overlooked... In empowering self defence training, participants learn verbal strategies as well as physical skills to deal with inappropriate behaviour by people they know as well as by strangers. Physical tools are indispensable to empowering self defence because developing these tools simultaneously connects people with their bodies and dismantles myths about women's weaknesses and men's superior power. Women discover that regardless of their body type, athletic ability, or disability that they can use what they have to defend themselves from violence [Thompson 2014:355-356].

In a more recent article, Hollander (2014) noted that empowerment self defence classes:

- focus on the full range of violence against women, especially acquaintance assaults, which are the most common type of sexual assault
- include awareness and verbal self defence strategies as well as physical techniques - these skills empower women to stop assaults in their early stages, before they escalate to physical danger
- teach effective physical tactics that build on the strengths of women's bodies and require minutes or hours rather than years to master
- offer a toolbox of strategies for avoiding and interrupting violence, and, rather than teaching a single "best" way to respond to violence, empower women to choose the options that are appropriate for their own situations
- address the social conditions that facilitate sexual assault and the psychological barriers to self defence that women face as a result of gender socialization.

Several writers discuss programmes based on the AAA (Assess, Acknowledge, Act) model for sexual assault resistance programmes. This model appears to be a variation of the feminist/empowerment approach. It aims to:

- increase women's knowledge of how to assess danger in acquaintance situations
- overcome barriers for women in acknowledging that the situation had turned for the worse
- improve the range of effective self defence strategies available to them (Senn 2013).

The classic AAA programme includes two hours of self defence training. An Enhanced AAA model has also been trialled. It adds sexuality education to the basic Assess, Acknowledge and Act model, and runs over 12 hours instead of the standard nine.

In two reviews, women in an Enhanced AAA programme showed faster perception of risk and were quicker to acknowledge that leaving the dangerous situation is necessary, compared to other women. They also demonstrated increased knowledge and willingness to use verbal self defence in

the short term. The authors of the reviews (Senn et al 2011, Senn, Eliasziw, Barata, Thurston, Newby-Clark, Radtke, and Hobden 2015) note that the programme is currently being adapted for use with younger women in high school, but no evaluations are available as yet.

### Three New Zealand initiatives

Two groups provide self defence courses for girls in New Zealand; another initiative focuses on rape prevention education but does not include any self defence training.

1. For nearly 20 years, the Women's Self Defence Network-Wāhine Toa has run The Girls' Self Defence Project Aotearoa New Zealand, which offers:
  - An eight-hour self defence course for Year 7–8 girls (intermediate school-age)
  - A five-hour self defence course for Year 3–4 girls (primary school-age) and Year 10–12 girls (secondary school-age).

Over the last 19 years, the courses have reached 115,590 girls – 10,931 primary school-age girls (since 2006), 97,559 intermediate school-age girls, and 7,100 secondary school-age girls (since 2006).

The courses aim to equip girls with the skills and strategies to keep safe. The courses have been especially designed for each age group, and are usually run in a school context in school hours. All Project courses are taught by accredited women instructors from the Women's Self Defence Network — Wāhine Toa, which has some teachers competent in te reo. The expectation is that students will learn to think confidently, speak strongly and use self defence skills when necessary. Students learn ways of dealing with unsafe situations including:

- How to deal with being followed
- Obscene phone calls or texts
- Acquaintance and stranger attacks
- Sexual harassment
- Getting out of grabs and holds
- How to think their way out of threatening situations.

The courses are designed to be age appropriate and relevant to each year group. The course style is “participatory, practical, fun and empowering”. It includes discussions, games, physical sessions and role-plays. (Information from <http://www.wsdn.org.nz/>)

Feedback from participants indicates that at the end of the course they feel “braver” (years 3 and 4), stronger and more confident (Years 7 and 8, and Years 10, 11 and 12). A high proportion in each year group said that they now knew ways to keep themselves and their friends safe, and that it was important to tell a safe adult or to seek support. Teachers in the schools were also very positive about the programme (Women's Self Defence Network-Wāhine Toa 2015).

An Outcomes Focus evaluation of these programmes is currently underway.

2. The Kidpower Teenpower Fullpower Trust NZ<sup>2</sup> aims to teach people skills they need to live confidently and protect themselves, and to keep themselves safe with strangers as well as with people they know. It teaches awareness, avoidance of dangerous situations and – in case no escape is possible – some emergency self defence skills to mixed gender groups. In 2014- 15, the

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<sup>2</sup> The Kidpower Teenpower Fullpower Trust NZ is allied to Kidpower Teenpower Fullpower International, commonly shortened to Kidpower, a non-profit child safety organisation established in 1989 to teach child protection and personal safety skills to adults and children.

Trust worked with 681 participants through Parent Child workshops, 2,872 children through Kidpower workshops, 119 teens through Teenpower and the Violence Prevention Toolkit. 402 people were educated through the Trust's Healthy Relationships resources for young people with intellectual disabilities (Kidpower Teenpower Fullpower Trust NZ 2015). All the programmes for school-age students are co-educational. Most programmes have been evaluated and relevant courses are discussed below.

3. A third initiative, The BodySafe Rape Education Programme, has been delivered to Auckland secondary school students since 2005. It aims to reduce the incidence of sexual violence victimisation within adolescent populations. The programme has the broad aim of promoting positive sexual relationships and preventing sexual violence, but does not include training in self defence skills. In their evaluation of the programme, the authors provide a justification for this approach:

There is some evidence that teaching females self defence strategies such as hitting, punching, kicking and screaming and yelling to attract help can reduce victimisation and increase self-efficacy among individuals (Anderson and Whiston, 2005; Sochting, Fairbrother and Koch, 2004). However, Robertson and Oulton (2008) suggest that while rape avoidance and resistance can be an answer for individual women; they cannot be a solution for women as a group due to males deterred by such tactics moving on to target females who have not experienced self defence training. [Dickinson et al 2010:24]

Findings from an evaluation show that while the key messages of the BodySafe programme relating to consent, sexual violence, risky situations relating to sex and help-seeking were well understood by students, focus group participants wanted more opportunities for skills-based activities that would help them deal with the situations talked about.

## **Outcomes and effectiveness**

### **Primary school-age children (7-10 years)**

The review identified two reviews of programmes for primary school-age children, both provided by Kidpower, one in New Zealand and one in the United States.

The Everyday Safety Skills Program (ESSP) includes a workshop designed to increase children's knowledge of safe choices, with weekly follow-up sessions, and homework assignments over 10 weeks. The workshop covers skills training related to stopping unwanted touches as well as yelling and running to safety. Parents are involved through the homework component, and the children have opportunities to practice safety skills in the follow-up sessions.

In one example, third-grade students in the United States (aged 8-9) participated in pre- and post-tests of safety skills, and were compared to a group that did not participate in the programme. Findings showed that participants had greater increases in safety knowledge (maintained over three months) than the comparison group. Children's understanding of the competency areas - boundary-setting, stranger safety, help-seeking, and maintaining calmness and confidence – improved. The authors attributed the success in part to the relevance of the content (appropriate scenarios), in part to consistency in delivery, in part to the involvement of parents/caregivers (through homework), and in part to the opportunity the children had to practice skills (Brenick et al 2014).

In 2004, The Kidpower, Teenpower, Fullpower Trust NZ received a grant from The Todd Foundation to pilot and evaluate outcomes of one-hour sessions with 8 to 12 year old children in classes in low decile schools in New Zealand. The safety workshops were designed to teach children of different

ages and abilities how to protect themselves from violence. The schools could choose from three pilot one-hour programmes (the full Kidpower curriculum takes six to seven hours):

- Out and About (Safety skills for when they are on their own)
- Safety with Peers (How to avoid and/or stop bullying)
- Boundaries on Touch and Teasing (How to set boundaries with people the child knows)

Each session included one self defence move for an emergency situation.

The pilots were evaluated at the end of each course and three months later, using self-report questionnaires. In general, both the students and their teachers were happy with the programme, but the limited response to the follow-up questionnaire suggests a lack of sustainability,

Most students believed that the Kidpower programme made them feel safer and more confident, as well as being fun. Straight after the workshop most of the 845 students could identify the Kidpower skills they had been taught – what to do when grabbed, how to get help and using the [metaphorical] “rubbish bin”. However, fewer than half completed the three-month follow up questionnaire. While most said they had used some of the skills at least once, few had used physical self defence strategies.

Only 17 of the original 32 teachers responded to the follow-up questionnaire. They believed that the students were more confident, remembered their skills and were better able to stop someone bothering them. They were unsure whether the children were making safer choices or dealing effectively with name calling and bullying (Bouma 2004).

### **Intermediate school-age children (11 – 12 years)**

Only one programme was identified for this age group, also under the aegis of Kidpower. In 2011, Kidpower NZ delivered a violence prevention programme to intermediate age year 8 (12 year-old) and year 10 (14 to 15 year-old) students in Nelson. It was taught to mixed classes of boys and girls and involved:

- Physical practice (role play) of different strategies to follow in a variety of situations. Scenarios were presented on 16 skill cards, with a large picture on one side and descriptions of how to practice each skill on the reverse.
- Students developing scenarios in the classroom using story boards (sketched sequences). These outlined a potential problem situation and then added a solution by using one or more of the strategies presented on the skill cards.
- Practical self defence taught by qualified Teenpower instructors and a man dressed in protective gear.

An evaluation found that the students enjoyed the section on self defence the most, although some students wanted to practice several scenarios rather than just attacks from behind. The programme reinforced appropriate strategies for year 10 students and/or taught them new skills but the results were not as strong or apparent for the year 8 learning group.

Gender differences noted in various questions suggested that girls gained more from the programme than boys. For example, girls were more inclined to attempt to completely leave a threatening situation while boys were more likely to keep out of reach but stay nearby. Girls also seemed more inclined to deal with problems with friends by talking to them or telling them to stop. Girls were less likely to accept an unwanted hug than boys. Finally, girls reported more often than boys that the Teenpower Project had a positive influence on being more mentally prepared or assertive in unsafe situations (Wilson 2011).

### High school-age children (13 – 18 years)

Four papers referred to programmes for high school-age girls – two in Canada and two in Kenya.

The first programme (Wolfe et al 2009) aims to prevent adolescent dating violence, which is defined as acts ranging from threats of harm to punching or hitting with an object. The programme takes a broad approach, recognising that because both boys and girls perpetrate violence, interventions need to target both sexes. For this reason, the programme has a limited focus on self defence, discussing it only as a small part of a broader healthy relationships initiative and it teaches no physical self defence strategies.

The programme involved 1722 students (53% girls) aged 14 to 15 from 20 in public schools in Ontario. Teachers who specialised in health and physical education delivered a 21-lesson manualized curriculum. Teachers received a six-hour training workshop and parents received information about what was being taught. Classes were sex-segregated. Three units (seven sessions each) covered: (1) personal safety and injury prevention, (2) healthy growth and sexuality, and (3) substance use and abuse.

The first unit included extensive skill development using graduated practice with peers, aimed at developing positive strategies for dealing with pressures and the resolution of conflict *without* abuse or violence (by boys or girls). It included examples of conflicts faced by teens and took a gender-strategic approach to dating violence by emphasizing gender-specific patterns and factors and matching activities accordingly.

A follow up after two years found that reported use of physical dating violence was significantly lower for those who had completed the programme than for those in control schools, and the reduction was greater among boys than girls. In qualitative interviews, girls described the circumstances surrounding their use of dating violence as a response to male partner violence approximately half the time (i.e. self defence or retaliation), with the remaining incidents described as efforts to engage, tease, or express anger toward their male partner. The authors conclude that it is important to understand the contexts of violence when developing appropriate programmes for girls (and boys) (Wolfe et al 2009).

Another Canadian, Senn (2013), described the outcomes of a programme delivered to 59 Grade 11 and 12 female students (aged 14 to 19) in Ontario. The programme consisted of three three-hour units based on the AAA model. The physical self defence instruction component made up 1.5 to 2 hours of the third unit (Act). The aim was to enhance young women's existing knowledge and skills and to provide practice in applying them so that they were better at resisting the coercive sexual behaviour of known men. The programme was successful in increasing both young women's perceptions of their risk of acquaintance sexual assault, and their belief in their ability to defend themselves successfully if they were sexually assaulted. Younger women held women-blaming and other rape myths more strongly than older students, but in both groups the programme reduced students' general acceptance of rape myths as well as harmful beliefs in uncontrollable male sexuality and female provocation as causes of rape. The same programme was also delivered to first and second year undergraduate women at university and Senn concludes that the same programme can be used for both groups with only minor modifications to examples and scenarios to increase their relevance.

The two Kenyan programmes were both based on the No Means No Worldwide model, which uses the IMpower system of prevention and training. IMpower is a school-based programme and the self defence curriculum is manual-based, and was developed over three years to address the special needs of women

and children living in areas where the incidence of rape is high. The programme is based on women's empowerment and self defence programmes from the United States, Europe, and Israel. Its goals are:

- to reduce the incidence of sexual assault by increasing women's use of assertiveness/boundary setting
- to enhance ability to detect and respond to risky scenarios
- to increase the use of verbal and physical self-protective strategies
- to enhance self-efficacy in responding to threatening sexual violence situations
- to reduce feelings of self-blame for those who have previously been assaulted.

In addition, the programme provides information about recovery and assistance for assaulted women.

Classes are taught in six-week cycles, three times per school year, with the number of students ranging from 7,000-9,000 per cycle. The aim is to provide male and female students with an awareness of the causes and effects of sexual gender based violence and the skills to intervene or prevent it. Educational sessions include role-plays, facilitated discussions, and extensive verbal and physical technique practice. Six 2-hour intervention sessions are held weekly for 6 weeks. Two-hour refreshers are offered at 3, 6, and 10 months.

Both studies found that adolescents who underwent training in assault prevention strategies were more able to protect themselves from sexual assault and harassment, and more likely to disclose assaults that did take place, than those who did not receive training. Most intervention participants said that they used the skills learned during training to thwart physical assault or sexual harassment. They mainly used verbal tools to deter both assault and harassment. Among adolescents who did experience sexual assault, those who underwent training were far more likely to report the assault (Sanquist et al 2014, Sinclair et al 2013).

Sinclair et al (2013) note that while martial arts take years of training to master, the basic self defence programme used in IMPower was taught in less than 12 hours, followed by several booster sessions. Training was provided at a cost equivalent of \$1.75 USD per student, a fraction of the estimated \$86 currently spent on immediate medical aftercare services for each sexual assault victim treated in Africa.

### **University students (typically 17 to 22 years)**

Self defence programmes in North American universities tend to focus on reducing the risk of sexual assault on young women, rather than on reducing violence more generally. They often target first-year students who are seen as most at risk. While many of these students are aged 17 or 18, which is similar in age to senior high school students in New Zealand, the three studies reviewed below drew on somewhat older samples. In two cases the women had a mean age of 21. This and the different living arrangements typical in North American universities, where a high proportion of students live in residences, and the fact that university students are not necessarily representative of the population as a whole, means that the findings of these evaluations must be used with caution. Five case studies are summarised below:

- *Study one (no programme name provided)*  
Participants in a 2006 evaluation of a sexual assault self defence and risk reduction programme for US college women were mostly aged 18 or 19 (Gidycz, Rich, Orchowski, King and Miller 2006). The programme had three components: an initial didactic and interactive course; a feminist self defence course; and a booster session review of programme material. The specific goals of the programme were to: (a) reduce the incidence of sexual assault, (b) increase

women's recognition of risky dating situations, (c) increase women's use of self-protective dating behaviours, (d) increase women's use of assertive sexual communication, (e) increase women's self-efficacy in responding to potentially threatening dating situations, (f) decrease feelings of self-blame among women who experience sexual victimization, (g) provide women with information regarding recovery from sexual victimization and resources to use following an experience of sexual victimization.

Results suggest that the programme was effective in increasing women's self-protective behaviours. Participants were more likely than those in the control group to say they would pay more attention to their dating partner's drug/alcohol intake, speak directly and assertively, and pay greater attention to their surroundings should they need to escape. At the follow-up assessment, most women had used the methods that they were taught in the self defence portion of the programme; those who had been victimised were more likely to blame the offender than themselves for the assault; and participants were more likely than those in the control group to identify unwanted sexual advances early on.

In a subsequent article (Orchowski, Gidycz and Raffle 2008), the authors explored the impact of including a section on addressing psychological barriers to reacting assertively. The importance of making a plan to respond assertively and taking a protective stance when in social situations was discussed as a specific strategy that women could use to reduce their risk of harm. These strategies were effective in increasing the use of self-protective behaviours, self-efficacy in resisting potential attackers and the use of assertive sexual communication.

- *Study two (Assess, Acknowledge, Act model)*

Hollander (2004, 2014a) has studied the effects of two separate self defence courses based on the Assess, Acknowledge, Act model. The first was a 10 week course of physical and verbal self defence training plus required weekly 1.5-hour discussion sections. The small sample of 36 women, mean age 21, reported increased confidence in potentially dangerous situations, more comfort interacting with others and transformed beliefs about men, women and gender. Hollander notes that the women had higher educational attainment and came from a more privileged group than the general population (Hollander 2004).

Ten years later she evaluated a 30-hour, 10-week self defence course, with a one-year follow-up period. The participants had a mean age of 21. The course included physical and verbal self defence techniques plus academic discussion using a feminist approach. Results showed a reduction in attacks, sexual assaults and rapes. Hollander argues that this suggests that self defence training changes both women's responses to assault and women's behavioural or interactional patterns so that they are less likely to be targeted by potential assailants. Self defence students' assertive responses to intrusion, even relatively minor intrusions, may well have deterred further unwanted interaction (Hollander 2014a).

Others have also trialled the Assess, Acknowledge, Act model (Senn, Gee and Thake 2011, Senn 2013, Senn, Eliasziw, Barata, Thurston, Newby-Clark, Radtke, and Hobden 2015) with similar results.



- *Study three (for sexual assault victims)*

Brecklin and Ullman (2015) examined the effects of self defence or assertiveness training on sexual assault victims with an average age of 21.7. Multivariate analyses showed that victims with pre-assault training were more likely to say that their resistance stopped the offender or made him less aggressive than victims without training. Women with training before their assaults were angrier and less scared during the incident than women without training, which is consistent with the teachings of self defence training.

### **Young women clients of Women's Refuge**

Mossman and Jordan (2013) completed an evaluation of four pilot programmes with 54 women aged 17 – 24 years who were clients of Women's Refuges in New Zealand. The service was provided by the Women's Self Defence Network – Wāhine Toa.

The overall aims of the Violence Prevention Project were:

- to empower the young women involved
- to build the capacity of Women's Self Defence Network - Wāhine Toa to work effectively with these high needs young women
- to further strengthen the collaborative links between WSDN-WT and Women's Refuge (at national and local levels).

Fifty-four women began the course; 44 completed it. The programme included:

- Sexual violence awareness discussions, e.g. 'victim'/'attacker' dynamics, power and control issues, recognising and responding to early signs of potential violence.
- Self-esteem and confidence building, building the belief in participant's own abilities to deal effectively with situations of potential/actual risk of sexual violence.
- Strategies to keep/get safe from sexual violence, including cyber sexual violence (internet, texts, etc.)
- Physical self defence skills and strategies, e.g. strong voice, knowing vulnerable points, grab and strangle releases, defences from ground position, defence against weapon attacks etc.

Information was gathered from participants, refuge workers and instructors. There were statistically significant improvements in participants' confidence in their ability to perform each of ten key programme objectives. Increases in participants' confidence that they are able to recognise abuse, identify risky situations, make good choices to stay safe and use self defence strategies, together with increased likelihood of disclosing abuse and seeking help and support, suggest the programme is effective in increasing the likelihood of preventing and/or ensuring early intervention to stop the re-victimisation of these young women in the future.

### **Summary**

Very little research is available on the effectiveness of self defence courses for school-age girls as a strategy to reduce sexual or family violence. Outcomes are difficult to assess in any objective way, courses are often short, and many report on courses provided at universities in North America. The results may not apply in New Zealand. Programmes for younger students focus on general safety, while those for senior school and university students focus on preventing sexual violence. They are more likely to be based on a feminist or empowerment model, with self defence skills being taught as part of a broader programme.

Findings suggests that primary school-age girls (and boys) who take part in such classes have a better understanding of boundary-setting, stranger safety, help-seeking, and maintaining calmness and confidence in stressful situations. Secondary school and college/university-age students increased their perceptions of risk, strengthened their belief in their ability to defend themselves successfully against sexual assault, and were more likely to use effective methods of self defence.

## **5. Self defence classes for specific groups of school-aged girls**

The literature on appropriate self defence classes for specific groups is mixed, with more information available on classes for girls and women with disabilities than for girls and women from different cultural groups. At a high level, writers agree that programmes should:

- be relevant, that is, informed in all cases by knowledge of their target group or population and their local contexts
- be inclusive and culturally sensitive, embodying these principles in all stages of programme design, implementation and evaluation
- be sensitive to the needs of everyone, including those with physical limitations, and people with visual and hearing impairments - Instructors should be able to focus on individualised defences for women with specific disabilities
- involve consultation with representatives or leaders from the population group(s) participating in the programme, where appropriate (Cummings 1992, Flood et al 2009).

### **Programmes for girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds**

Apart from two self defence programmes delivered for adolescent girls in Kenya, only one report discussed the delivery of programmes aimed at girls from different cultural groups e.g. Māori, Pacific or Asian people (Women's Self Defence Network Wāhine Toa 2015). However, the report gives no information on effectiveness or what, if any, modifications were made to the standard programme. The Kidpower Teenpower Fullpower Trust does not survey children or young people for ethnicity.

In 2014-15, the Women's Self Defence Network Wāhine Toa (2015a) delivered courses to 7,807 girls. Just over half (52%) were Pakeha; 28% were Māori; 8% identified as Pacific Island, 5% were Asian and 8% were from another ethnic group. In the Appendix to their Provider report (Women's Self Defence Network Wāhine Toa 2015:11), the authors note that "The outcomes of self defence, as indicated by the girls' [post-course] evaluations, are the same across all ethnicities, showing that the programme is relevant and appropriate across different ethnicities".

A report by SUPERU (2013) considered the current thinking and evidence about what works for Māori and Pacific students (Years 7–13) in relationship education. Themes that recur in the literature on what works to improve Māori outcomes include:

- Access to traditional knowledge, including values and practices, is important in supporting rangatahi Māori in developing positive, affirming notions of who they are in relation to their whānau, hapū, iwi and other Māori collectives.
- Culturally responsive programmes are grounded in Māori relational concepts and practices such as hauora, mana, whanaungatanga and tuakana-teina.
- Māori need to be involved in developing and evaluating programmes to ensure programmes reflect Māori aspirations, values and knowledge.
- Educators who can relate well to rangatahi Māori are essential.

- Māori potential is undermined by systems and individuals who reinforce a 'deficit' view, exert 'power over' Māori and have low expectations for Māori achievement. [SUPERU 2013:62]

Factors that help to improve outcomes for Pacific students include:

- Recognition that there is no generic 'Pacific community'; interventions must acknowledge and respond to diversity within and between Pacific peoples.
- Strong relationships between school, home and community (often the church community) are essential, and collective ownership of challenges and solutions is important.
- Interventions should be grounded in Pacific world views and ways, bearing in mind that each ethnic grouping has distinct philosophies, traditions and practices.
- Positive student-teacher and peer relationships at school foster positive social and academic outcomes for Pacific students.
- For young Pacific people, developing a secure identity involves more than just ethnic affiliation. [SUPERU 2013:62]

### **Programmes for girls with physical disabilities**

In 2013-2014 the Women's Self Defence Network Wāhine Toa (2014) developed a one-day programme for girls with disabilities to increase their confidence, resilience and safety. Six of these programmes were delivered to girls aged 8 to 17 with visual impairments (four programmes) and mobility impairments (two programmes). Programmes often had mixed age groups, and some participants had cognitive as well as physical impairments, which presented a challenge to tutors. All classes had two self defence tutors and focused on participants' strengths.

Evaluations using pre and post questionnaires asked for responses to five statements

- I can recognise the difference between appropriate and inappropriate 'help'
- I know ways to deal with inappropriate 'help'
- I know ways to deal with unwelcome touching
- I know ways to stay safe
- I can identify safe adults who I could tell if something bad happened to me.

The evaluation found significant positive shifts in all five topics, with the greatest shift in Statement 3: Dealing with unwanted touching. Parents and partner organisations also noted big improvements in girls' knowledge about how to stay safe, as well as in their confidence and resilience.

The providers acknowledged that mainstreaming is the generally accepted approach for most matters relating to people with disabilities and girls with disabilities have always been included in Girls' Self Defence Project mainstream courses. The Girls' Self Defence Disability Pilot was in addition to mainstream courses, and focused on tailoring courses for girls to build on disabled girls' strengths in a way that is often not easily possible in large mainstream courses. A girl with a mobility impairment who participated in one of the pilot courses had previously participated in two mainstream self defence courses at school. She told the self defence teachers that she had found the tailored small group course far more beneficial than the mainstream courses. The provider concluded that:

Providing both mainstream and tailored self defence courses for girls with impairments maximises the opportunities and benefits for the girls. [Women's Self Defence Network Wāhine Toa 2010:17]

In an overview article, Ballan and Freyer (2012) focused on domestic interpersonal violence involving women with disabilities. They concluded that teaching women with disabilities a variety of self-protection skills, including preventive, psychological and physical skills would enhance their ability to protect themselves. An intervention following this model found that women not only felt more prepared to physically defend themselves in the event of an attack post intervention, but also felt in greater control of their emotions during an attack and better able to discourage an assault.

Kohoutkova et al (2015) discussed self defence for visually impaired people. In many countries, self defence courses are offered for the visually impaired, usually at counselling centres or in special courses of martial arts or sports which have been adapted to the visually impaired. The authors concluded (from interviews with a small sample), that a self defence course for people with visual impairments should focus on coping with a pre-conflict situation through knowledge of threats and the risks people face. Once there is a conflict situation, the aim should be to keep the conflict at a verbal level and the focus on preventing the transition from verbal to physical conflict.

### **Programmes for girls with intellectual or learning disabilities**

A “Healthy Relationships” programme designed by the Kidpower Teenpower Fullpower Trust (NZ) aims to teach young people with intellectual disabilities, personal safety through explanations and interactive stories. The goal of the stories is to develop understanding of the four rules of a 'Healthy Relationship' - Is it safe? Is it okay with both people or necessary for health and safety? Is it allowed? Is it not a secret? - and allow the skills to be rehearsed in a group or as an individual. Prior to the programme's delivery, residential care workers, teaching staff, teacher aides, and parents and caregivers agreed that effective change would be demonstrated when the participants developed an awareness of personal boundaries, appropriate relationships and how to seek help from a safe authority figure (Hamilton and Turner 2009:22).

In reviewing the programme, Hamilton and Turner (2009) refer to a set of evidence-based criteria for effective programmes, all of which may be adapted and applied to the prevention of abuse against those with intellectual disabilities (Barger et al 2009). The authors conclude that these criteria “place the Kidpower Teenpower Fullpower Trust on sound theoretical ground in terms of the underpinnings of the ‘Healthy Relationships’ programme, as many, if not all of these recommendations were evident in the development of the programme”. Effective programmes for this group should be:

- Comprehensive. The programme should involve all the systems that have a direct impact on the participants. For those with intellectual disabilities, this may include family, friends, partners, caretakers, case workers, therapists, or employment support professionals.
- Theoretically based. The programme should be based on a clear theoretical model that explains the problem of abuse against those with intellectual disabilities. Applying a theoretical foundation encourages consistency throughout all aspects of the programme.
- Intensive. The programme should offer sufficient contact between the trainer and participants. For participants with intellectual disabilities, short and frequent sessions that use a variety of teaching methods may prove most effective.
- Tailored to the needs of the participants. The programme should account for participants' age, communication abilities, care needs, cognitive functioning, and developmental level. The material should be intellectually appropriate and flexible enough to accommodate the varying communication and learning needs of the participants.

- Focused on skill development. The programme's curriculum should be active and provide hands-on experiences to increase participants' skill level. The programme should offer practical and feasible tools that are relevant to real life for those with intellectual disabilities.
- Sufficient follow-up. In general, the positive effects of prevention programmes wane over time without appropriate follow up. Participants with intellectual disabilities may need to attend "booster" sessions.
- Evaluated. The programme is continuously evaluated.
- Have consumer ownership. The people for whom the programme is intended (those with intellectual disabilities) should be involved in all levels of the programme development, including planning, implementation, evaluation, and advisory boards.

Hamilton and Turner found that the programme produced significant benefits for many of the young people with intellectual disabilities who attended. Teachers were able to report many specific instances where violence had been averted, abuse had been reported, and dangerous behaviours reduced, which they attributed to the students' involvement in the 'Healthy Relationships' programme. They believed that 100% of the students in the programme had displayed at least a small level of improvement over the short time it had been rolled out.

In 2011, the Kidpower Teenpower Fullpower Trust (NZ) was funded by the Ministry of Justice to create a violence and abuse prevention package for adults (and young people) with learning disabilities. Three CD-ROMs with accompanying booklets help people recognise potentially unsafe situations, use skills to keep safe, escape from risky situations and seek assistance. Participants can pick from a number of different scenarios and practice the skills with the help of coached role plays. The programme is designed to be used by support workers or teachers with minimal assistance from Kidpower personnel. The interactive programme offers instructions on the steps needed to learn specific skills and to explore the scenarios. The scenarios that focus on interpersonal relationships have a direct link to issues of intimacy and sexual abuse. The skills learned in the programme include how to assess a situation (for example, not keeping important/risky things a secret), saying stop or no, walking away from risky situations, seeking help and persisting in seeking help (Wilson 2013).

An independent evaluation of the second year was conducted across five special needs schools: Arohanui Special School (Auckland), Allenvale School (Christchurch), Ruru Special School (Dunedin), Kimiora School (Wellington) and Mana College (Kapiti Coast) with (Dunbar and Holland 2011). While all schools took part in email, postal or computer-based surveys, researchers were only able to visit one school, to carry out interviews and run focus groups. The low response rate by teachers to the post-programme survey means that results need to be treated with caution. (The baseline survey response rate was 85.5% and the post-programme survey response rate was 39.5%). Seven families of students attending three of the participating schools took part at baseline, while nine took part in the post-programme survey.

The study confirmed that there was consistent behaviour change after the programme for middle and higher ability students, but change was less marked among low ability students. The report makes some suggestions to improve teacher training and classroom resources, and to increase parent involvement. (The programme had been designed to be shared with parents, but this did not happen in the way recommended by the programme designers).

In a later study responses to the scenarios indicated that up to 80 percent of participants were generalising healthy relationship skills to situations not encountered in the Healthy Relationships

programme. The programme is effective with people who are endeavouring to live more independently and who move about within their social circles and the community generally without support. It can teach adults with mild to moderate learning disabilities to (a) recognise potentially risky situations and to (b) understand how they can secure their own safety and/or act responsibly. It can also be used successfully with younger people who are still in school or who are working individually with a support worker (Wilson 2015).

## Summary

The most notable gap in the literature related to programmes for girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The review has been limited to reporting general principles for what works for Māori and Pacific young people, and more work needs to be done for establishing similar principles for those from other cultures.

The literature supports having programmes specifically tailored for young people with physical disabilities alongside and in addition to mainstream programmes. Programmes for young people with learning disabilities have shown consistent improvements in young people's ability to recognise and manage risky situations.

## 6. Good practice guidance for self defence classes for school-aged girls

The review did not identify any literature that specifically discusses good practice for self defence programmes for school-aged girls. This reflects the anomalous position of self defence programmes, which can be seen as both a primary and a secondary violence prevention initiative:

- primary in that they are for a general population group, regardless of individual risk factors, and take place before violence occurs
- secondary in that they work with those at a heightened risk (girls and young women) specifically to build their personal protective factors.

The public health model is often used to guide sexual violence prevention programming, but it rarely emphasises training young women (or women generally) in the tactics of self defence, focusing instead on discussing rape myths, norms about dating and relationships, definitions of consent and bystander intervention. McCaughey and Cermele (2015:31) argue that teaching self defence is consistent with other primary prevention programmes offered in a university setting, and its inclusion as part of a whole school approach to violence prevention may be appropriate.

Self defence programmes are provided in both school *and* community settings, and relate to both family violence *and* sexual violence (although many focus specifically on the latter), and self defence strategies can be used to manage bullying.

When offered in New Zealand schools, they link with different parts of the curriculum or school environment. For example, the promotion of violence-free relationships fits within the health and physical education curriculum. The topic also contributes to the development of students' communication competencies and it can be part of relationship education, including sexuality education and 'social and emotional learning/wellbeing'. Self defence programmes can also be a component of the implementation of 'Positive Behaviour for Learning' strategies, management of bullying, and involvement in wider, community violence prevention projects (see <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/>).

### **Good practice for school-based violence prevention initiatives**

Only two research reports specifically discuss good practice of self defence programmes, albeit with different participants. In an evaluation of a children's safety-skills programme delivered to girls *and* boys in the US, Brenick et al (2014) identify best practice in what they call "child victimization prevention interventions", while Cummings (1992) discusses self defence training for female (US) college students and identifies how to best meet programme goals.

Three reports identify good or best practice for school-based violence prevention initiatives. While each report has its own focus, collectively they offer the closest alignment to the work of self defence programmes for school students. Flood et al (2009) reviewed good practice in respectful relationships education, as a school-based violence prevention approach in Victoria, Australia, and distilled five criteria for good practice. Hassall and Hanna (2007) also established best practice criteria for evaluating school-based primary prevention initiatives in New Zealand. Another New Zealand report, SUPERU (2013), addresses the effectiveness of relationship education programmes for years 7 to 13 to reduce relationship violence. Obviously some of the good practice principles these sources identify are more relevant to self defence programmes for school-aged girls than others.

## **Programme design**

### ***Programme logic model and theory base***

There is general agreement that relationship violence prevention programmes should be informed by the latest evidence, and have a coherent programme logic (i.e. a representation of the ways in which project resources, activities and processes will be used to achieve the intended outcomes). The SUPERU (2013) report notes that successful programmes in the fields of relationship violence prevention, sexual violence prevention, social and emotional learning and sexuality education are informed by theory and evidence. Flood et al (2009) argue that programmes must:

Incorporate an appropriate theoretical framework for understanding violence that draws on relevant feminist research, in particular in addressing the links between gender, power and violence, examining violence-supportive constructions of gender and sexuality, and fostering gender equitable and egalitarian relations [Flood 2009:33].

Different theoretical frameworks place different emphasis on how to address relationship violence and sexual assault. Older feminist power and control models, such as the Duluth model developed in Minnesota in the 1980s, have been subject to challenge on the grounds that they do not account for different kinds of violence, such as female perpetration of violence and violence within same-sex relationships. Nor do they address psychological or emotional causes of violence, such as attachment disorders, neurological deficits, substance abuse disorder, problems with impulse regulation, and inadequate socialisation. There are ongoing discussions about whether and how theoretical frameworks can be effectively translated to programme delivery, and which aspects of which theoretical frameworks (hence, programme components) have the greatest impact on reducing violence or improving women and girls' ability to defend themselves (Urbis 2012).

One criterion for good practice in schools-based violence prevention is that a programme incorporates both an appropriate theoretical framework for understanding violence *and* a theory of change. This links a sound understanding of the problem – the workings and causes of violence – with ways to change the situation. Even if violence prevention programmes do not have a programme logic model, they should be able to specify precisely what impact the programme is intended to have, how the programme's activities will generate this, and how the impact will be evaluated (Flood 2009:33-34).

### ***Tailor programme to the participants***

Researchers agree that tailoring the programme content and delivery to ensure it is appropriate for participants is essential. This is considered good practice for schools-based violence prevention by Flood et al (2009), Hassall and Hanna (2007) and SUPERU (2013), while Brenick et al (2014) identify it as best practice for child victimization prevention initiatives. Tailoring a programme to fit within the cultural beliefs and practices of specific groups as well as local community norms is considered one of the nine principles of effective prevention programmes (Hamilton and Turner 2009, Nation et al 2005).

Matching occurs when programmes are: relevant (informed in all cases by knowledge of their target group or population and their local contexts); inclusive and culturally sensitive at all stages of programme design, implementation and evaluation; and consult representatives or leaders from the participants' population group(s), where appropriate (Flood et al 2009). Hassall and Hanna (2007) also see a programme as socio-culturally appropriate and acceptable to those involved when it is tailored to the community and cultural norms of participants; recognises barriers to participation by subgroups; and treats participants with dignity and respect.



SUPERU (2013) notes that when working with Māori, programmes need to be grounded in Māori relational concepts and practices such as hauora, mana, whanaungatanga and tuakana-teina. This required access to traditional knowledge, Māori involvement in programme development and evaluation, using suitable facilitators and avoiding 'deficit' views, 'power over' Māori and low expectations of Māori achievement (SUPERU 2013:11).

Brenick et al (2014) note that programmes need to be matched to the developmental stage of participants by recognising their cognitive, behavioural and emotional abilities and addressing their particular risk factors. Flood et al (2009:46-7) emphasise that "violence prevention ... among children and young people is most effective if it is timed and crafted to suit their developmental needs, including the character of their developing identities and social and sexual relations". For example, "Among older, adolescent populations, the curriculum should give greater and more explicit attention to sexual behaviours and sexual relationships. It should work to identify and undermine dynamics of power, control and coercion in young people's intimate and sexual relations, or their 'dating relationships'".

The literature on single-sex versus mixed-sex classes is somewhat ambivalent. Programmes offered by Kidpower are delivered in mixed-gender classes. While this may be appropriate for primary school-age children, Brecklin (2008) suggests that schools should require female-only self defence classes for all girls at intermediate and senior high school level as part of their physical education courses to counter traditional gender-role socialization and to encourage females to realise that they have both the right and ability to defend themselves.

Brecklin also notes that after women-only self defence courses, participants have commented in both semi-structured interviews and qualitative questionnaires, on the importance of the group environment for encouragement, emotional support, bonding, and sisterhood. In addition, women are less likely to be passive or embarrassed in a women-only self defence class, because their unique needs are taken into account, allowing them to move beyond traditional gender-role expectations.

Gidycz et al (2006) acknowledge that although there are undoubtedly some merits to conducting mixed-sex programmes:

We have argued that the goals for men's and women's programmes diverge in a number of respects, making it difficult to address the needs of both sexes in the same programme. Further, it is likely useful to keep potential perpetrators unaware of women's resistance strategies, and mixed-sex programmes could provide potential rapists with information about what makes women more vulnerable to assault (Gidycz et al 2006:174).

### ***Targeting risk and protective factors***

Hassall and Hanna (2007) stress that for programmes that aim to intervene *before* violence occurs and in a way that reduces the likelihood of future violence, the first step is to identify appropriate risk and protective factors. Hassall and Hanna (2007:20, 49-50) discuss the risk and protective factors for different forms of violence, while Russell (2008:19) identifies risk and protective factors for sexual violence. Wolfe et al (2009) and Thompson (2014a) acknowledge that because females can also be perpetrators of violence, especially in a dating relationship, programmes need to address this risk.

The next step is to identify how best to modify those factors. This involves considering: the strength of the association between the risk factor and the outcome; how and when it can best be modified, and how the interaction between risk and protective factors may reduce or enhance the effectiveness of the intervention (Hassall and Hanna 2007:20).

Successful programmes in the fields of relationship violence prevention, sexual violence prevention, social and emotional learning and sexuality education take a comprehensive multi-pronged approach (Nation et al 2003, Thompson 2014a).

## **Programme context**

### ***Within schools***

A number of researchers support a whole-school approach as the single most important criterion for effective violence prevention and respectful relationships education in schools – i.e. the goals of self defence courses should be congruent with, and reinforced by, the programmes' context. Flood et al (2009:28), for example, conclude that: "evaluations and reviews of violence-prevention and sexuality/ relationships education are unanimous in advocating a 'whole-school approach' in order to maximise programme effectiveness". A whole school approach is consistent with a comprehensive strategy to target multiple problems and is more likely to effectively reduce violence and to address participants' social norms (Thompson 2014a).

A whole-school approach to violence prevention:

- addresses the context and culture in which children and young people learn and interact in order to foster safe and supportive school environments
- fosters sustainable and comprehensive efforts among teachers, other staff and schools, and builds capacity to initiate and sustain programme efforts and innovations
- engages all relevant stakeholders
- involves a concerted approach across entire schools, which is necessary to effect cultural change
- addresses the practices, policies and processes in classrooms, schools and departments relevant to building health-promoting and non-violent schools (Flood et al 2007).

SUPERU (2013) also note that successful programmes are integrated into the curriculum and are cognisant of environmental influences.

Hassall and Hanna (2007:11) are clear that schools can contribute to preventing interpersonal violence by:

- modelling and teaching healthy relationships within the classroom and playground
- making the school culture peaceful
- leading or contributing to community-wide violence prevention programmes
- identifying and helping to change students with antisocial behaviour
- equipping students to avoid inflicting or suffering intimate partner violence and inflicting child maltreatment in the future as adults
- ameliorating determinants of violence such as inequality, poverty, drug and alcohol misuse, access to weapons and risk taking behaviour.

Self defence programmes for female students obviously fit within several of these strategies.

### ***Wider community setting***

Any violence prevention programme operates within, and is influenced by, a wider community context. Flood et al (2009:28) also advocate for comprehensive, multiple intervention programmes to target a range of behaviours, recognising the various contexts in which adolescents live, and including the critical domains of influence (peers, teachers, parents, community, media).

Collaboration between domains, e.g. between school and children /youth; school and family; and school and the community is a characteristic of successful programmes (Hassall and Hanna 2007:50).

Brenick et al (2014:154) note that best practice for child victimization prevention programmes is to include parents/caregivers, so that they learn how best to protect their children and intervene if necessary, and to involve members of the larger community in supporting and protecting children. This enables schools and parents to provide a coherent child safety message across different settings, making it much easier for children to learn.

### **Programme management**

Effective curriculum delivery involves managing the programme's content, teaching methods, and structure to ensure they are the most effective to produce change in participants (Flood et al 2009). Programmes need to use strategies that are empirically supported; have been proven to be effective in rigorous evaluations; and can be implemented with fidelity (Hassall and Hanna 2007:49).

### ***Programme structure***

The programme's duration and intensity needs to give participants a sufficient 'dosage' to have the intended effect. Children and young people who participate in multi-session, rather than single session, preventive programmes are better able to sustain the safety skills they learned (Nation et al 2003, Hassall and Hanna 2007, Flood et al 2009, SUPERU 2013). Flood (2009:44) suggests that programmes using classroom-length or similar sessions comprise at least five sessions, and "to achieve behavioural and attitudinal change, programmes (would) ideally run over a lengthy period of time, with multiple sessions over successive years".

### ***Programme delivery***

Effective prevention programmes use multiple teaching methods, including some type of active, skills-based component (Nation et al 2003). Focusing on skills building, and providing opportunities to learn, develop, practice and reinforce skills, and to generalise these to other domains, is good practice (Hassall and Hanna 2007:50).

According to Cumming (1992:186) effective self defence training for US college-aged women needs to provide "hands-on practice, not only to develop the skills necessary to defend against an assailant, but also to understand any limitations in their strength and ability. The basic skills that are practiced should focus on the assessment of a given situation and on assertiveness, verbal resistance, physical releases/escapes, strikes, and target areas on the body". This enables students to (1) increase their awareness of their environment and self, including their capabilities and limitations; (2) recognize potentially threatening situations and identify high-risk behaviours; (3) consider a variety of self defence options for a given situation; (4) implement mental, vocal, and physical techniques that will help them escape from dangerous or threatening situations; (5) identify campus and community resources available to them; and (6) find ways to continue learning about self defence after course completion".

One-off sessions, 'lecture' style delivery and a focus only on knowledge acquisition or raising awareness (without specific strategies to change attitudes, norms, skills and behaviours) are generally considered to be ineffective (SUPER 2013:38).

### ***Programme facilitation***

A principle of effective prevention programmes is that they are implemented by sensitive and competent staff who have sufficient training, support, and supervision (Nation et al 2003, SUPERU

2013). Providing facilitators with training (and/or explanatory manuals) can improve programme fidelity (Hassall and Hanna 2007).

Educators in violence prevention and respectful relationships curriculums should be able to model appropriate non-violent, non-discriminatory behaviours and provide strong ethical leadership. Sexual health education teachers should be well trained in gender, violence and sexual health issues, have an approachable manner and be:

- comfortable talking about ‘taboo’ issues such as the physical aspects of sex
- able to create a climate of trust
- seen by students as ‘protector and friend’
- assertive enough to eliminate hurtful humour while not being dismissive or judgemental
- able to make the programme fun (Flood et al 2009:50-51).

Along with supporting facilitators with adequate resources, training and supervision, programmes should have clear rationales for using teachers, community educators, and/or peer educators, and female and/or male staff (Flood et al 2009:50).

### ***Programme evaluation***

Flood et al (2009:57) note that good practice programmes involve a comprehensive process of evaluation that is integrated into programme design and implementation. Evaluations should reflect the programme’s framework and logic; include evaluation of impact or outcomes, through pre- and post-intervention assessment, long-term follow-up, the use of standard measures or portions of them, and measures of both attitudes and behaviours, and include a process for disseminating findings to others involved in similar work. Best practice involves systematically documenting results relative to the programme goals (Hassall and Hanna 2007:49).

### **Summary**

The review found no specific guidelines for good practice for developing and delivering self defence programmes for school-aged girls but there is good information on delivering effective school or community-based violence prevention programmes in general.

It is clear that self defence programmes need to be tailored to participants’ age and stage of development, and be delivered as part of a larger, coherent focus on respectful relationships. They also need to take participants’ cultural background into account and be adapted when necessary for those with particular physical or learning impairments.

## **7. Conclusion**

The Ministry of Social Development commissioned this review to help the Ministry make funding decisions that align with Community Investment outcomes and cross-government strategies on sexual violence and family violence.

An extensive search supported by the Ministry found scant literature on the effectiveness of self defence programmes for girls, here or overseas. Two programmes dominated the literature – those delivered by the Kidpower, Fullpower, Teenpower Trust (five reports from New Zealand, one from the United States), which do target school-age girls, and the Assess, Acknowledge, Act programme delivered in colleges and universities in North America (five reports).

While the dearth of evaluations for self defence programmes for school-age girls made it difficult to answer the research questions with confidence, some common themes did emerge.

- Longer courses and/or courses delivered as part of a broader healthy relationships programme appear to be more effective than one-off workshops or brief interventions.
- Courses often teach physical self defence strategies alongside other components, addressing gender issues, peer pressure, social norms and other risk factors.
- There was little evidence that girls and young women actually used physical defence strategies to prevent assaults; they were more likely to use verbal and other prevention strategies.
- Courses are best delivered by trained specialists.
- Most girls preferred single sex rather than mixed-gender groups
- Adaptations of courses for girls with physical and learning disabilities appear to have been successful in improving girls' awareness and confidence, within the constraints of their disability.
- Participants, teachers and caregivers appreciated the opportunity to have courses tailored to their family member's or client's needs.
- The review found no research showing whether or not purpose-designed programmes for girls from culturally and linguistically different groups produce better results for these groups than standard programmes.

More evidence is needed on the effectiveness of programmes, linked to specific programme content, and well-defined programme logics, with clearly specified outcome measures. Evidence of programme effectiveness with diverse participants is also needed.

More knowledge about where self defence programmes fit alongside broader healthy relationships or violence prevention strategies would also be useful.

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## Appendix 1 Details of case studies cited in this report

Study	Design	Participants	Relevant findings	Notes
Bouma (2004)	Kidpower programme – one hour workshop. Post-workshop questionnaire, three-month follow-up by questionnaire; self-report, no comparison group	845 students aged 8-12 years, low decile schools and 32 teachers completed post workshop questionnaires  382 students, 17 teachers at three month follow up	Students enjoyed the workshops and said they had learned some skills. Limited use in the three months following.  Teachers also positive about the programme.	Relies on self-report; Limited response to follow up and limited analysis.  Effects appeared to diminish over time.
Brecklin & Ullman (2015)	Multivariate analysis using US National Survey of Intergender Relationships data; used 10 item Sexual Experiences Survey to assess experience since age 14	3,187 female college students – representative of US higher education enrolment; 1,623 had undertaken self defense or assertiveness training.	Victims with pre-assault self defence or assertiveness training felt their resistance was more effective than non-participants; they were angrier and less scared during assaults, but rated their degree of resistance lower than non-participants.	The data did not allow a comparison between those who undertook training before or after an assault, nor did it include details about the length or type of training. All reports were retrospective.
Brenick, Shatuck, Donaln, Duh and Zurbrigggn (2014)	Kidpower Everyday Safety Skills Programme - Pre and post tests and comparison group who did not have the programme	128 third-grade students had in-school workshop, weekly follow-up sessions, and homework assignments over 10 weeks. Had skills-training, parental involvement, and opportunities to practice safety skills.	Students who participated had greater increases in safety knowledge (maintained over three months) than the comparison group	The study targeted a specific, high-risk population. More studies are needed with a larger youth population to accumulate evidence of the generalisability of the programme's effectiveness.
Dickinson, Carroll,	Evaluation of BodySafe	Programme delivered in 3-5	Students reported	Thorough and well-

Kaiwai and Gregory (2010)	programme - case study design using “a detailed, in-depth description and analysis of the project drawing on multiple sources of evidence”. Includes a formative, process and outcome evaluation; document and evidence review; key informant interviews; observations	sessions to secondary school students (13 -16 year olds in Years 9, 10 and 11). 1104 students completed programme and gave feedback. Seventy participants took part in focus groups within six months of completion	increased knowledge of laws and skills about sexual safety; knew where to go for support and help.  Most girls in mixed gender groups would have preferred a female only group. While the content of the BodySafe programme was “just right” for most students, culturally specific modules may be needed in some schools.	considered evaluation.  Authors note that school-based sexual violence prevention programmes may have little long-term impact on changing behaviour. Such programmes need to be implemented in the context of a whole school and community approach focusing on respectful relationships.
Dunbar and Holland (2011)	Evaluation of Healthy Relationships programme for pupils at five special needs schools. Pre and post survey with teachers and parents; interviews and two focus groups (teachers, students) at one school	Programme delivered by teachers in one hour or half hour segments over three months.  The baseline survey response rate for teacher was 85.5%; post-programme the response rate was 39.5%.	Teachers’ confidence in delivering the programme increased with training. They made suggestions for improving the resources.  Behaviours changed least among low ability students. Behaviour of middle and high ability students changed either somewhat or a great deal.	Very low response rate to survey at follow up. Interviews and focus groups only involved one of five schools.  Parents were not generally aware of the details of the programme, nor were they involved in it.
Gidycz, Rich, Orchowski, King and Miller (2006)	Initial assessment with participants and control group - 3 and 6 month follow ups	500 women aged 18 and 19 in first or second year at university – half assigned to waiting list control group.  Seven hour programme in two sessions; video vignettes	Participants significantly increased their protective behaviours over the 6-month follow-up period compared to the control group. No significant differences regarding rates	Authors considered the follow up period (6-months) too short to understand how the programme may impact women over time and interact with other types of

		<p>and discussion plus a physical self defence component.</p> <p>A booster session for programme participants was conducted for the programme group women immediately following the completion of the 3-month outcome surveys.</p>	<p>of sexual victimization, assertive communication, or feelings of self-efficacy over the follow-up periods. Participants who were victimised during the 3-month follow-up period were more likely than the control group to blame offenders for their assaults.</p>	<p>information or training that women may experience.</p>
Hamilton and Turner (2009)	<p>Evaluation of the Kidpower Fullpower Healthy Relationships Programme for children with intellectual disabilities – used literature review and qualitative data only</p>	<p>Survey of 12 parents prior to programme in two schools; interviews with 5 teachers, teacher aides (number unknown), 4 residential care workers, 4 parents</p>	<p>Teachers reported many specific instances where violence was averted, abuse reported, and dangerous behaviours reduced, which they attributed to the students involvement in the programme.</p> <p>Residential care workers and parents/caregivers had limited knowledge about the programme and what changes to expect.</p>	<p>Very small sample. Authors recommend that for Phase 2 more resources are directed towards ensuring that parents and caregivers are involved and that the survey method is planned and introduced at the beginning. Need to recognise that a significant minority of participants are unable to display or report changes.</p>
Hollander (2004)	<p>Pre and post-test design of course based on the Assess, Acknowledge, Act model. Data drawn from surveys at beginning and end of classes. The surveys included both closed and open-ended questions, and used purpose-</p>	<p>36 women aged 19 to 25, mean age 21, who enrolled in two feminist 30-hour, 10-week self defence classes taught at a major state university in the western United States</p>	<p>Students reported increased confidence in potentially dangerous situations, in interacting with others; more positive feelings about their bodies, increased self-confidence; and revised beliefs about</p>	<p>Small sample of young women with higher than average educational attainment and class status. Results are not generalizable beyond university populations.</p>

	designed measures and pre-existing scales.		women, men, and gender.	
Hollander (2014a)	<p>A mixed methods study of a 10-week, 30 hour US university-based, feminist self defence class based on the Assess, Acknowledge, Act model.</p> <p>Includes surveys, interviews (20 participants) and participant observation as assistant trainer.</p>	<p>119 women volunteered to participate - aged 18 to 53 with a mean age of 21. A comparison group included 179 women who had not taken self defence classes.</p> <p>286 students completed the first survey; 75 (64.1%) of the self defence students and 108 (63.9%) of the non-self defence students completed the follow-up survey 1 year later.</p>	<p>Women in the self defence class reported significantly fewer sexual assaults during the subsequent year than control group women. They were also more confident in their ability to effectively resist assault.</p>	<p>No random assignation; the self defence students were, on average, 1 year older than the control group students (21 vs. 20 years old) and significantly more likely to be “ upper-class” students (undefined)</p> <p>Difficult to generalise.</p>
Kohoutkova, Cihounovka, Skotakoya and Reguli (2015)	Questionnaire survey - structured interview	<p>19 visually impaired people aged 15 to 44</p> <p>Individuals were asked to rate their level of confidence in situations which involve prevention, verbal and physical assault.</p>	<p>Overall, visually impaired people felt quite confident in case of prevention, less confident in terms of verbal conflict and not at all confident with physical conflict. Self defence strategies, especially verbal strategies, helped people with visual impairment to feel more confident in risky situations.</p>	<p>The small sample makes it impossible to generalise results but a useful study with a vulnerable group.</p>
Mossman and Jordan (2013)	A mixed method evaluation with input from the programme participants (pre and post questionnaires) and	54 young women (aged 17 to 24) who were clients of Refuges; four refuge workers	The women had learnt new skills and strategies to keep safer from violence and	Small sample of women at high risk. No longer term follow up but benefits for providers and agencies are

	interviews with refuge workers and the instructors.	and three instructors	abuse and felt empowered.  Women's Self Defence Network – Wāhine Toa (WSDN-WT) instructors believed their capacity to work effectively with high risk young women had improved as a result of this programme.  The programme strengthened collaborative links between WSDN-WT and Women's Refuge (at national and local levels).	recognised
Orchowski, Gidycz and Raffle (2008)	Review of a revised protocol for an existing programme to address psychological barriers to resistance (see Gidycz et al 2006 above for summary of earlier study). In this study, a placebo-control group was used rather than a wait-list control group.	300 undergraduate women enrolled in psychology courses at a medium-size Midwestern US university. 95% were first or second-year students; 92% were 18 or 19 years old.  Of the 300 women who participated in the pre-test assessment, 264 (88%) participated in the 2-month follow-up; 137 (52%) completed the 4-month follow-up assessment.	The revised protocol increased women's use of self-protective behaviours, assertive sexual communication, and self-efficacy in potentially threatening dating situations over the 4-month follow-up period.  In the control group, self-protective behaviours declined over time. Those of the programme group increased and were maintained over time.	The ability to generalise was limited by low return rates for the 4-month follow-up. The sample of college women was limited in ethnic diversity.  Relied on self-report measures.
Sarnquist, Omondi,	Cross-sectional study using	1978 adolescents aged 13 to	This intervention decreased	No randomisation below

<p>Sinclair, Gitau, Paiva, Mulinge, Cornfield &amp; Maldonado (2014)</p>	<p>pre and post surveys, and a control group, who received a short life skills class.</p> <p>Surveys were closed-ended, structured, In English or Kiswahili, anonymous, and collected via the ballot box method.</p> <p>The follow-up survey was administered 10.5 months after intervention</p>	<p>20 from 4 neighbourhoods near Nairobi, Kenya, were taught empowerment, de-escalation, and self-defence skills in six 2-hour sessions. The control group (n = 428) received a life skills class.</p> <p>Response rates at 10.5 months were 79% in the intervention group (1562) and 73% in the SOC group (314).</p>	<p>sexual assault rates among adolescent girls in Kenya and increased the disclosure of assaults. This enabled survivors to seek care and support and possibly lead to the identification and prosecution of perpetrators.</p>	<p>the community (school) level. The outcome was assessed by self-report and the loss at follow-up was fairly high. (The team is currently designing a randomised control trial with a larger population.)</p> <p>Different setting and issues to New Zealand</p>
<p>Senn (2013)</p>	<p>Quasi-experimental pilot investigating short-term effects of the “Assess, Acknowledge, Act” (AAA) sexual assault resistance programme. Used pre and post questionnaires and focus groups.</p>	<p>107 female Canadian university students, aged 17 to 32, and 59 high school students aged 14 to 19.</p> <p>Of these 88 (82%) and 41 (70%) respectively completed the post-test and were included in the study.</p>	<p>Increased awareness that young women are at risk of acquaintance rape and could defend themselves effectively if necessary. Minor modifications to examples and scenarios may be necessary for younger students.</p>	<p>The author was aware that the lack of a high school control group was a limitation for the project, as was the lack of a range of measures of self defence self-efficacy. The programme was evolving and changing as it was being evaluated.</p>
<p>Senn, Eliasziw, Barata, Thurston, Newby-Clark, Radtke, and Hobden (2015)</p>	<p>Randomized, controlled trial enrolled first-year female students at three universities in Canada from September 2011 to February 2013.</p> <p>All participants completed a computerized survey both before and 1 week after completion of the</p>	<p>451 women aged 17 to 24 in the programme, 442 in the control group. The Enhanced AAA Sexual Assault Resistance programme had four 3-hour units with information-providing games, mini-lectures, facilitated discussion, and application</p>	<p>The risk of completed rape (the primary outcome) was significantly lower at 1 year among the women who participated in the programme than among the control group. The 1-year risks of attempted rape, attempted coercion,</p>	<p>Outcomes were self-reported.</p>

	intervention and offsite Web-based surveys at 6 months and 12 months.	and practice activities. The control group received brochures on sexual assault.	and non-consensual sexual contact were also significantly lower.	
Senn, Gee, Thake (2011)	Randomized experimental design evaluated the effectiveness of a basic and sexuality-enhanced version of a sexual assault resistance programme against an unrelated programme control.  The enhanced programme included a 3-hour Sexuality and Relationships unit.	214 first-year Canadian university students (median age 19) completed either the basic or the Enhanced AAA programme.  98 women in a control group had no programme.  At 3-month follow up 159 (74%) participants and 74 (76%) control group women took part.  At 6-month follow-up 142 (66%) participants and 58 (59%) control group women took part.	Both programmes, increased women's perception of their own risk, their confidence that they could defend themselves if attacked, and their use of more effective methods of self defence in hypothetical situations of acquaintance sexual assault, compared to the control group. Effects were maintained from 3 to 6 months after programme completion. No significant reductions in completed sexual assault were found.	Approximately 20% of the women who were assigned to the Enhanced AAA programme did not complete the components of the programme on overcoming risk cues, discussion of overcoming barriers to resistance, debunking myths about self defence, or effective physical and verbal self defence.  Some sub-samples were small and all relied on self-report.
Sinclair, Sinclair, Otieno, Mulinge, Kapphahn and Golden (2013)	Population-based survey of 522 high school in the Korogocho-Kariobangi locations in Nairobi, Kenya, at baseline and 10 months later. Subjects were assigned by school to either a "No Means No Worldwide" self defence or to a life-skills class	402 girls in the self defence course; 120 in the life skills course. Ages 14 to 21 with median age of 16.7	In the self defence intervention group, the incidence of sexual assault decreased from 24.6% at baseline to 9.2% at follow-up. In the control group, the incidence remained unchanged (24.2% at baseline and 23.1% at follow-up.)  Over half of girls in the	The study was not a cluster randomized trial, but was a census-based longitudinal cohort study. Surveys were anonymous, precluding linking of baseline data to follow-up data, so individual subjects were not observed longitudinally. The authors accept that the study may

			intervention group had used the self defence skills to avert sexual assault in the year after the training. Verbal skills alone were the first line of defence for most girls (83%) who thwarted an attack. Others used physical self defence skills as well.	not be applicable in other populations.
Wilson (2011)	Evaluation of Teenpower Violence Prevention Project in schools  Before and after surveys/questionnaires with interviews with four teachers, one instructor and five students plus a class presentation	149 students -78 males, 71 females; aged between 12 and 15 plus control groups of students.  Programme involves physical practice of different strategies in a variety of situations; the development of scenarios by students in the classroom using story boards; practical self defence taught by qualified Teenpower instructors and a man dressed in protective gear.	Overall, the year 10 learning groups showed improvements in most of the learning areas tested by the survey. The year 8 students in contrast showed few gains as a result of the project, even though they perceived that learning had occurred in the opinion related questions.  The findings suggest that girls gained more from the project than boys.	Unclear whether differences were age – related or due to differences in delivery (by teachers)  Differences for girls suggest it may be better to teach classes to smaller sub-groups, including girl-only groups.  Expectations of what is required of teachers need to be clearly established.
Wilson (2015)	Review of Fullpower’s Healthy Relationships programme, designed for adults with learning disabilities.  Pre and post-test design with	Participants were from one of five organisations. Four provided vocational programmes for people with learning disabilities; one helped with supported living	Overall the results suggest that the Healthy Relationships programme is effective in teaching adults with mild to moderate learning disabilities to (a)	None of the participants was of school-age. All were in the mild to moderate disability category.



	<p>six months follow-up. The testing criteria were six scenarios depicting problem situations that were not part of the Healthy Relationships programme. The participants were each asked to say what they would do in that situation.</p>	<p>options for people who were flatting alone or with friends.</p> <p>60 people enrolled, 42 (20 men and 22 women) completed the pre and post-test; 18 took part in follow up survey. Ages ranged from 17 to 58; average age was 35.</p>	<p>recognise potentially risky situations and to (b) understand how they can secure their own safety and/or act responsibly.</p>	
<p>Wolfe, Crooks, Jaffe, Chiodo, Hughes, Ellis, Stitt, &amp; Donner (2009)</p>	<p>Cluster randomized trial with 2.5-year follow-up; subgroup analyses by sex</p> <p>Intervention: A 21-lesson curriculum delivered during 28 hours by teachers with additional training in the dynamics of physical dating violence and healthy relationships. No specific self defence techniques were taught.</p>	<p>1722 students aged 14-15 from 20 public schools in Canada (52.8% girls). At follow-up, 88% of the sample provided data.</p> <p>(The message delivered about the unacceptability of violence was similar for the two groups, whereas the intervention group had interactive, skills-based delivery and a focus on positive relationship skills)</p>	<p>Reported physical dating violence was greater in control vs intervention students. The intervention effect was greater for boys than for girls.</p>	<p>Self-reported acts of dating violence perpetration, which “cannot capture the intensity, frequency, or context of such behaviour”. Adolescents were predominantly from white, 2-parent families. The extent to which the patterns generalize to youths of different ethnicities or family characteristics remains unknown.</p>