

Aggression Replacement Training

The positive effects of cognitive multimodal programs such as Aggression Replacement Training (Goldstein, Glick & Gibbs, 1998), has been documented through several studies both nationally (Gundersen & Svartdal, 2005) and internationally (Goldstein, Glick, Carthan & Blancero, 1994; Nugent & Burley, 1998; Nugent, Burley & Winimaki, 1999; Barnonski & Aos, 2004). For several of these studies Aggression Replacement Training (ART) program shown good results in terms of reducing antisocial and aggressive behavior for young people, just as it was designed to do. In addition, the ART program is also recommended for the prevention and treatment of behavior problems in school (Nordahl, Gravrok, Knudsmoen, Larsen and Rørnes, 2006) and behavioral institutions (Andreassen, 2003). The basis for the success of running the ART groups towards aggressive, violent and antisocial youths, are promising.

Based on previous research (Andreassen, 2003; Andrews & Bonta, 1998), we know that the actual implementation of the program is important to ensure results. To be efficient and to secure the integrity of the treatment, it is important to implement the program as intended in theory and design. Andreassen (2003) says, based on research CR Hollin and F. Lösel et.al., that to ensure the integrity of the treatment, the program must be based on a specific theoretical approach.

Aggression Replacement Training emphasizes cognitive behavioral approach as a strategy to strengthen the social skills and replace aggressive behavior for adolescents. The goal of ART is to increase participants' social skills through systematic training of social skills, anger management and the ability of moral reasoning.

- Social skills training (action component) includes specific training in well-defined social skills, such as listening to another, to start a conversation, and more complicated as to avoid trouble and deal with peer pressure, a total of 50 different actions. The training consists of demonstrations, role-playing, testing and specific generalization in small groups, all these methodology-based actions are implemented according to pre-defined procedures. The required skills are presented and modeled by coaches, the participants reflect on the benefits, the different situations will be role played by all the participants, and they are given tasks that involve practicing skills in everyday life. Participants in the role plays are evaluated by the rest of the group with an emphasis on what was good. The goal is for students to increase their social skills through training on relevant social behavior.

- Anger Control Training (emotional component) students are trained to recognize their feeling of anger, increase their self-control and manage their anger more efficiently through the use of exercises and different techniques. Students train either through fictitious or actual conflicts, in situations where they previously reacted with anger. Great emphasis is placed on positive feedback and that students should be protected from problem areas where they are at risk of exposing and hence embarrass themselves to the others. The aim is to enable youngsters to reduce aggressive behavior and to be equipped with the tools needed for self-control when they become aggressive.

- Moral reasoning training (thinking and value component) - is training to resonate at an advanced and value-reflective way of ethical and moral dilemmas. The aim is to develop the ability to take other people's perspective, to tackle situations in their own lives according to their own moral and ethical values, and develop the participants ability to make mature decisions in social situations.

The goal is for participants, through observation and exercises, to learn how to develop empathic abilities to handle their anger and to use appropriate social skills that can replace aggression and build positive relations.

The participation in the group and the different exercises should be voluntary. ART is implemented as a course of 30 hours during approximately 10 weeks/ three hours per week, one hour of each component. The training takes place in small groups of 5-8 participants and two coaches. Rules and regulations for the exercises are clearly defined. The focus in the program is on positive feedback and enhanced training to maintain motivation. The ART program has a clear and firm structure in implementation including defining of theme/ context, modeling, questions about how and when the skill can be used, role playing, feedback, and homework. The themes for the three areas are taken from real situations in the participants' lives. In order to generalize the trained skills, which means to be

transferred to real life situations, support systems through school, family and networks that encourage the new patterns of behavior should be established.

The skills the participants get, will be generalized, i.e. transferred to real life situations, often with the support of the transfer coaches, family and networks that encourage and reinforce new patterns of behavior. The use of skills, and hence " external benefits " in the form of praise, rewards and positive relations, which for a time gets converted to " internal gains " in terms of personal development and goal achievement.

*Tell me and I forget,
show me and I remember ,
let me do it and I learn*

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