

What Works Clearinghouse



Wyman Teen Outreach Program (TOP)

Effectiveness No studies of the *Wyman Teen Outreach Program (TOP)* that fall within the scope of the Dropout Prevention protocol meet WWC evidence standards. The lack of studies meeting WWC evidence standards means that, at this time, the WWC is unable to draw any conclusions based on research about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of *TOP*.

Program Description¹

The *Wyman Teen Outreach Program (TOP)* is a life skills curriculum for 12- to 17-year-olds that aims to prevent negative youth behaviors, such as school failure and early pregnancy. Trained facilitators deliver the curriculum in weekly classes throughout the school year. Participants discuss topics such as goal-setting, peer pressure, relationship dynamics, values, and communication skills. The program can be integrated with a school's

existing curriculum, or offered as an in-school elective, or an after-school program. During the program year, teens enrolled in *TOP* must also plan and carry out a community service project. These projects require a minimum of 20 hours of service and can include activities such as fund raisers, graffiti removal, tutoring, volunteering at food pantries, petition drives, or other student-initiated activities.

The WWC identified 9 studies of *TOP* that were published or released between 1988 and 2008.

Seven studies are within the scope of the review and have an eligible design, but do not meet WWC evidence standards.

- Three studies do not establish that the comparison group was comparable to the treatment group prior to the start of the intervention.

- Four studies use outcomes that are measured in a way that is inconsistent with the Dropout Prevention protocol. Specifically, these studies use outcomes that are not defined for students who have dropped out of school.

Two studies are out of the scope of the review, as defined by the Dropout Prevention protocol, because they do not present primary research.

1. The descriptive information for this program was obtained from a publicly-available source: the program's website (<http://wymancenter.org/teens/teen-outreach/>, downloaded November, 2008). The WWC requests developers to review the program description sections for accuracy from their perspective. Further verification of the accuracy of the descriptive information for this program is beyond the scope of this review.

References Studies that fall outside the Dropout Prevention protocol or do not meet evidence standards

- Allen, J. P., Philliber, S., and Hoggson, N. (1990). School-based prevention of teen-age pregnancy and school dropout: Process evaluation of the national replication of the Teen Outreach Program. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 18*(4), 505–524. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because it only includes outcomes that are overaligned with the intervention or measured in a way that is inconsistent with the protocol.
- Allen, J. P., Philliber, S., and Herrling, S. & Kuperminc, G. (1997). Preventing teen pregnancy and academic failure: Experimental evaluation of a developmentally based approach. *Child Development, 68*(4), 729–742. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because it only includes outcomes that are overaligned with the intervention or measured in a way that is inconsistent with the protocol.
- Allen, J. P., and Philliber, S. (2001). Who benefits most from a broadly targeted prevention program? Differential efficacy across populations in the Teen Outreach Program. *Journal of Community Psychology, 29*(6), 637–655. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because it only includes outcomes that are overaligned with the intervention or measured in a way that is inconsistent with the protocol.
- Allen, J. P., Philliber, S., and Association of Junior Leagues, Inc. (1991). Evaluating why and how the Teen Outreach Program works: Years 3–5 of the Teen Outreach national replication (1986/87–1988/89). New York, NY. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.

- Allen, J., Kuperminc, G., Philliber, S., and Herre, K. (1994). Programmatic prevention of adolescent problem behaviors: The role of autonomy, relatedness, and volunteer service in the Teen Outreach Program. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 22*(5), 617–638. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because it only includes outcomes that are overaligned with the intervention or measured in a way that is inconsistent with the protocol.
- Isaacs, J. Budgeting for National Priorities. (2007). Cost-effective investments in children. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention.
- Moore, C., Allen, J.P., Herre, K.H., Philliber, S. and Kuperminc, G. (1994). Teen Outreach: A successful program to prevent school failure, school dropout and teen pregnancy. In R.C. Morris (Ed). Using what we know about at-risk Youth: Lessons from the Field, 117–128. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.
- Moore, C. W., and Allen, J. P. (1996). The effects of volunteering on the young volunteer. *Journal of Primary Prevention, 17*(2), 231–258. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention.
- Philliber, S., and Allen, J. P. (1992). Life options and community service: Teen Outreach Program. In B. C. Miller, J. J. Card, R. L. Paikoff, and J. L. Peterson, (Eds.) Preventing adolescent pregnancy: Model programs and evaluations, 139–155. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.