



Expert Team Activity Report

Therapeutic Interventions for Children with Behavioral Difficulties and Disorders

Executive Summary

Coordinated and edited by: Oded Busharian



The Initiative for Applied Education Research
The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities

Therapeutic Interventions for Children
with Behavioral Difficulties and Disorders:
**Prevention and Coping, in Israel and Worldwide,
Theory and Practice**

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Coordinated and edited by: Oded Busharian

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The Initiative for Applied Education Research
The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities

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The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities was established by law in 1961. Its membership is currently comprised of 94 top Israeli scientists and scholars.

The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities Law declares that the Academy's principal objectives and tasks are to: assemble, under its umbrella, the finest Israeli scientists; foster and promote scientific activity; advise the government on research activities and scientific planning of national importance; maintain ties with similar institutions abroad; represent Israeli science at international institutes and conferences; and, publish articles that can further science.

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The Initiative for Applied Education Research (the Initiative) places up-to-date, scientific, critically-appraised knowledge and information at the disposal of decision-makers in the field of education. Such information is crucial for the intelligent formulation of policy and optimal planning of interventions to improve achievements in the sphere of education in Israel.

The Initiative's vision: Research knowledge is an essential component in planning public policy or large-scale interventions. In the planning stages, critically-appraised research knowledge supports the formulation of policy that has a better chance of success and is more apt to promote rational public discourse. The Initiative puts this vision into practice in the field of education.

The Initiative's *modi operandi*: The Initiative addresses issues raised by decision-makers and consults with senior Ministry of Education officials and other stakeholders. The Initiative's steering committee, appointed by the president of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, is charged with creating a work plan and is responsible for implementing the peer-review processes of the reports it produces.

The Initiative operates through expert committees and by convening joint learning sessions held for researchers, education professionals and decision-makers. It publishes reports of its work and makes them readily available to the public. Those serving on its expert committees do so without remuneration.

History of the Initiative: The Initiative was established in late 2003 as a joint venture of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, the Ministry of Education, and Yad Hanadiv (the Rothschild Foundation). The Initiative has been operating as a unit of the Israel Academy since the beginning of 2010.

In the summer of 2010, the Israeli Knesset amended the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities Law, regulating the Academy's advisory role vis-à-vis government ministries seeking its consulting services. The Initiative directs the consulting activities on education-related issues which the Israel Academy provides to the government and various authorities.

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The report underwent the customary process of independent peer review. The report authors thank the reviewers, who helped ensure its clarity, its quality and its independence. Responsibility for the report's contents rests entirely with the expert team.

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Introduction

Background Leading to the Establishment of the Expert Team

An atmosphere which enables learning and cooperation among students and between students and teachers is crucial for strengthening the educational process. Students who find it difficult to maintain the level of behavior expected of them, and display disruptive and problematic behavior, harm their own and their peers' learning processes and present a difficult challenge to the education staff. If not treated appropriately, in the future such children frequently have confrontations with the establishment and may become involved in criminal behavior. Dealing with these children takes up a significant amount of teachers' and principals' human and economic resources. There is much evidence showing that early and appropriate treatment of behavioral problems in school-age children in cooperation with the educational staff and the family can significantly improve the quality of life of children suffering from these problems and also improve the academic achievements of all students. This document reports on the work of the expert team which was established for the purpose of formulating a body of up-to-date knowledge about the phenomenon and treatment of disruptive children and making it available so that it can contribute to promoting parents' and professionals' coping processes with the phenomenon and shape professional policy on this issue.

The expert team was established at the behest of the Ministry of Education's Psychological Counseling Service Division (PCS), Division A of the Pedagogic Administration, which is charged with providing psychological services and educational counseling services for educational institutions, students, their parents and to education systems in the regional authorities. The educational psychologists, educational counselors and the administration at PCS headquarters are a major target audience for this report. These professionals provide support and aid services to individuals and groups, diagnostic services, and treatment and counseling to students and their parents. They are also those who provide guidance and mentoring in the areas of mental health to educational staffs, preschool and school administrations and to the directors of regional authority education systems. Thus, the PCS administration and professionals are charged with a significant portion of the responsibility involved in handling behavioral problems in particular, in helping foster the student's effective learning and social functioning, and in helping achieve an atmosphere that encourages academic and social growth in the school.

According to the PCS, they are guided by the systems approach which holds that the student is a part of various social systems (family, grade, school, and surrounding community). In line with this approach, the PCS develops and operates many programs to promote student mental well-being (such as the "Life Skills" program) and to prevent and treat of a variety of conditions and risk behaviors for children of all ages. It directs a system-wide program whose chief goals are to reduce violence, to prevent situations of vulnerability and bullying and promote a sense of belonging, an optimal school climate, and meaningful connections between teachers and students.

The PCS believes that the changes that have taken place in Israel in recent years - the waves of immigration and social changes including a decline in employment security and in the stability of the family framework, a rise in violence including harm to children and by children, exposure to risk behaviors, etc. - all present the PCS Division with increasingly growing challenges in the areas of prevention as well as treatment. It is this appraisal of the situation which led to the PCS administration's request of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, made via the Ministry of Education's Office of the Chief Scientist, to acquire knowledge and information that will enable intelligent and up-to-date policy on the issue of students with behavioral difficulties and disorders.

The Expert Team's Scope of Work

In response to the request by the Ministry of Education, the Initiative for Applied Education Research convened a team of experts from the fields of psychology, criminology, welfare and education. The team's objective was to examine the existing knowledge on attributes of behavior disorders and behavior problems in schools, and on prevention and treatment interventions for which there is empirical evidence of their efficacy. The team commissioned scientific literature reviews, discussed them and held a learning session – a seminar in which some of the results of their work was presented. The team worked cooperatively with the PCS as well as senior officials from other Ministry of Education units, while also giving their attention to issues arising from the field. Working with the expert team was an Initiative coordinator whose role was to assist in organizing the team's work and to summarize the knowledge the team gathered for the purpose of making it available to the public.

It is important to mention that the plan for the expert team, established in coordination with the PCS, was short-term. Within this scope, the team worked for a relatively short period of time (one and a half years) during which it learned from stakeholders, commissioned scientific literature reviews and organized a learning event – a seminar. The discussants at the seminar – lecturers and commentators composed of locally and internationally renowned experts – presented different aspects of the issue. The team's objective was to expand and deepen the professionals' knowledge through an evidence-based research examination of (in our case) the degree of effectiveness of various interventions and strategies for prevention and treatment. In contrast with other activity timelines in which the Initiative is involved, the team working in this scope did not conclude its work with recommendations or authoritative conclusions, as its goal was expanding and extending the knowledge the PCS administration and professionals have at their disposal. Therefore, at each place in this document where a team member states a position or makes a recommendation, it is theirs alone, made at their discretion, and expressed on the basis of their personal-professional knowledge.

Major Issues that Arose in Team's Work

At the first meeting of the expert team, they met with the relevant PCS administration representatives with the goal of precisely defining the team's purview in line with the system's needs. It was decided that the team would deal exclusively with externalizing behavior problems (a very broad area in and of itself) and not with internalizing problems, although these too certainly warrant the education system's consideration. The psychological literature offers a rather clear definition of the term "behavioral disorders," though the definition is not necessarily the most fitting for the sphere of problems with which teachers and school counselors deal. A significant portion of the children with behavioral problems or disorders are not diagnosed as such, whether due to lack of resources for diagnosis, or because their behavior is not severe enough, or does not last for an extended period.

As a result, the team defined its activity as focused on behavioral "problems or disorders," in order to acknowledge the fact that the team's work would also address those children who were not diagnosed as suffering from behavioral disorders according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). Within the population of disruptive children, which represents (according to different estimates) between 25% to 30% of the student population, the team made the decision to concentrate on those children whose behavior had not reached the level of severity that required the involvement of the law enforcement system¹, though they demonstrated disruptive behavior.

1. It is estimated that 4% to 5% of children are in this most severe category.

Following the meeting, and based on their knowledge of the topic, the team members conducted an initial analysis of the main issues which the research literature in the field addresses:

- > What factors lead to the development of behavioral problems and disorders and what types of difficulties exist in the general sphere of “disruptive children?” These questions relate to the entire range of ages, from preschool through twelfth grade.
- > What is the relationship between behavioral problems and psychological or other developmental problems (such as ADHD) and what is the significance of the relationship in terms of coping with these problems?
- > Focus of the treatment: In order for the intervention to be effective, must it take place with the child her/himself, with the parents, with the entire class, with the teacher, or perhaps with a combination of these different parties? Must interventions take place in a group, individually, or a combination of the two?
- > The therapeutic approach: Are there treatment approaches that are significantly more useful or effective when compared to other treatment approaches? Are there approaches that are more effective for treating children at certain ages?
- > At what stage should treatment take place? Is there a difference in effectiveness and efficacy of approaches that concentrate on preventing behavioral problems, in treating them, or in coping only with serious cases of children diagnosed as suffering from behavioral disorders?

During the course of the team’s work, the limitations of the existing knowledge became clear as well as the challenge of adapting interventions to different cultural groups in the Israeli education system.

The Course of the Team’s Activity

Commissioning Scientific Reviews

In order to gather and coordinate the existing knowledge in the literature with respect to the questions being deliberated, the team commissioned four scientific reviews on topics connected to its area of activity. Two of the reviews commissioned were comprehensive in nature, and two were more limited in scope. The difference between a limited and a comprehensive review is not in its length but rather in the scope of material the reviewer is expected to include, the level of critical analysis demanded from the reviewer and the judgment needed regarding which articles to include and which to omit. The review abstracts appear later in this document, though it is important to note that in the reviews themselves there is a great deal of material not included here but that is available to the public on the Initiative for Applied Education Research’s website, in the “Background Materials” section.

The first comprehensive review, entitled “Existing Knowledge on Disruptive Behavior of Students in the Education System,” was commissioned with the aim of presenting existing scientific knowledge on the development of disruptive behaviors and disruptive disorders of children and youth in school, including disorders such as Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Conduct Disorder. The second review, also comprehensive, focused on the existing knowledge in the area of effective and efficacious programs for the prevention and treatment of disruptive behavior of students in the education system. Its goal was to provide a critical summary of research findings on prevention programs and interventions demonstrated to be effective and efficacious in treating disruptive behaviors of children and youth in the education system, including for children diagnosed as suffering from Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Conduct Disorder. The review concentrated on systematic and comprehensive reviews of effective programs published in scientific journals and on sites that summarize existing knowledge on the effectiveness of interventions.

The limited reviews included topics that interface with the comprehensive reviews and in the opinion of the team members, are crucial for understanding the relevant aspects for forming policy in the area of treatment for disruptive behaviors. The first limited review dealt with the existing knowledge on the interface between the education system and families of students suffering from behavioral problems and disorders. Its objective was to describe and examine research, models and methods of intervention that address the junctures and interaction between the education system (preschool through grade 12) and families of children with behavioral problems and disorders. The rationale for this was the perception that the family can be a risk factor or a resilience factor with respect to disruptive behaviors, and the understanding that there are diverse methods of intervention that involve families.

The second limited review was commissioned in light of the data regarding the strong connection between attention deficit hyperactivity disorders and behavioral problems among children. Its goal was to examine models and programs designed to utilize the existing knowledge on ADHD in prevention and treatment programs for disruptive behavior. All the literature reviews were subject to the peer-review of the expert team members, and the review authors prepared revised versions following the remarks they received. The final versions of the reviews are available to the public on the Initiative for Applied Education Research’s website in the “Background Materials” section; they appear under the authors’ names, who are responsible for their contents.

A Sampling of Interventions Taking Place in the Field

In parallel to commissioning the reviews whose goal was to coordinate academic knowledge, the team attached great importance to learning from programs taking place in the field in Israel, especially in order to understand the significance of universal scientific knowledge when it is implemented at the local level. For this purpose, the team turned twice to practitioners who developed or conduct treatment interventions, with a request to report on a prevention program or intervention carried out in Israel for the benefit of children with behavioral problems or disorders, and which was evaluated in the accepted empirical-scientific manner. Initially, the request was made via a “call for reports” circulated in universities, colleges, and the various research authorities, and afterwards via an advertisement in the “Ha’aretz” newspaper. Those submitting the programs were asked to include the target audience and intervention objectives, the intervention content and activities, the intervention’s duration and degree of intensiveness, what was required of the intervention implementer and the education system in order to put the intervention into operation, the scope of the intervention currently in operation and research evidence regarding its effectiveness. As mentioned, the team examined only interventions that were tested, even partially, using scientific research methods. Operators running a worthwhile and interesting program that met the requirements were invited to present their program in a poster exhibition that took place as part of the seminar. In order to prevent the appearance of seeming to recommend one program or another, we avoided inclusion of program details in this report, although the insights the team members drew from the poster exhibition are integrated throughout the report, and the posters themselves were uploaded to the Initiative for Applied Education Research’s website.

Organization of the Seminar

In the summer of 2013, the expert team organized a seminar in which the knowledge amassed to that point was presented by the team for the purpose of informing the public and stimulating a discussion about the team’s activity and the import of the knowledge gathered. The conclusions resulting from the two comprehensive scientific literature reviews commissioned by the team were presented, one about the existing knowledge on disruptive behavior of students in the education system, and the second on existing knowledge about effective and useful programs for the prevention of disruptive behavior of students in the education system, and their treatment.

In addition, videotaped lectures by internationally recognized experts were shown: Professor Thomas Dishion from Arizona State University, who shared his experience in the areas of research and implementation of principles of intervention for behavioral problems and disorders of school children, and Prof. Marc Atkins from the University of Illinois at Chicago, who presented an evidence-based perspective and his experience of many years with respect to the way in which interventions for children with disruptive behavior and behavior problems should be adapted to the aims, resources and needs of the school. These lectures were developed on the basis of a preliminary two-way conference call between the lecturers and expert team members. Also presented were the expert team members’ videotaped questions alongside the answers given by the expert from abroad and his elaborations.

During the course of the seminar, a poster exhibition took place on intervention programs operating in Israel, where the presenters responded to questions asked by the seminar attendees. Later on, two members of the expert team, Professor Zipora Schechtman and Professor Yoel Elizur, who actually developed and operate intervention programs, presented their research-based conclusions from their experience operating the programs in Israel. It is important to again emphasize that the posters and lectures of these two team members represent their opinions alone and do not constitute a recommendation by the

team of experts. At the end of the seminar, a panel discussion was held in which members of the expert team and PCS representatives took part in an effort to better understand the possible implications of the information presented on future Ministry of Education policy.

Report Structure

As mentioned earlier, this document is a summarizing report describing the expert team's work which includes two parts: In the first part, the scientific literature review abstracts are presented, these being abstracts submitted by the review authors which were examined by the expert team and revised following the team members' comments (with the reviewers' authorization). In the second part, the report on the seminar is presented, including the summaries of the lectures and the panel discussion. It is important to note that the reviews and their abstracts as well as the seminar lecture summaries represent the views of their authors who take responsibility for them.

This report's main target audience is the Psychological Counseling Service's administration. At the same time, it is our intention to make the knowledge available to other professionals, to parents, students and researchers in this field, and to the public at large who may find interest in the existing knowledge on disruptive behaviors and behavior problems in educational frameworks and on effective ways of treating them. In the final part of the report, the team members present their individual opinions with respect to the lessons that were drawn as a result of their work and their own recommendations for the future, etc. Likewise, the report features a summary by the expert team chair, Professor Rami Benbenishty, which provides an overview of the team's work.

Chapter A: Abstracts of the Scientific Literature Reviews

Existing Knowledge on Disruptive Behavior of Students in the Education System

> Gabriel Bukobza

Review objective: To improve understanding of behavioral difficulties and disorders (BDD) of children and youth in light of the most up-to-date scientific knowledge in the field. The review focused on the clinical disorders of Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and Conduct Disorder (CD), displays of BDD in education frameworks and on their chronological-developmental aspects.

Search method: Locating the empirical studies and systematic reviews was conducted by using the following search engines: Campbell Collaboration, What Works Clearinghouse, Best Evidence Encyclopedia EBSCOhost, PsycNET, Education Source, Google Scholar, and PsychNET.

The main search terms used were: disruptive behavior disorders; disruptive behavior in classroom; oppositional defiant disorder; conduct disorder; callous unemotional.

Results: The review findings showed that behavioral disorders are a serious phenomenon characterized by a refusal to comply, opposition to authority, as well as a tendency toward temper tantrums, aggressive acts, violence, and violations of law and order. It is a common disorder: The estimate is that between 2% to 16% of the population of children suffer from this disorder, which constitutes the main reason for referring children to psychological treatment. In Israel, as of 2012, at least 3.3% of children in preschool, 9.6% of children in elementary school, and 4.7% of children in secondary school are officially diagnosed as suffering from behavioral problems (Bukobza, 2012). Joint morbidity data indicate close proximity and overlap between behavioral problems and ADHD and as such, there is a definite difficulty in rendering a distinct diagnosis. It is thus likely that the phenomenon is actually even more widespread. Research in the field has identified three different BDD development paths, paths that depend on a combination of disorder characteristics and time of outbreak. The basic distinction is between outbreak during childhood and outbreak in adolescence. The childhood onset path can be divided into two development tracks: the callous unemotional track and the absence of self-regulation track. The prognosis for onset before age 10 is much more severe than for onset during adolescence and is related to the development of anti-social disorders, combined with criminality and psychopathology.

Regarding the etiology, it was found that from a biological perspective, activity along the HPA axis is deficient (Hypothalamus – Hypophysis – Adrenal) and this is related to the emotional callousness typical of those suffering from the disorder. Low heart rate and low skin conductivity are related to activity along this axis and constitute variables that are predictive of an early tendency to BDD. From a psychological perspective, the child's difficulty in processing information in social situations alongside a difficulty in self-regulation of emotions and temper control all increase the risk of BDD. Moreover: the home environment to which the child is exposed comprises a key background factor in the outbreak of the disorders. Specifically, there is a link between the harshest parenting styles - aggressive and coercive, highly punitive and inconsistent - and BDD among children. These styles may lead to damaging the child's communication patterns and making him vulnerable to BDD. It was also found that a parent's mental illness is a predictive variable for BDD. The question of whether the child will ultimately suffer from the disorder depends on complex interactions between the aspects of the family's background, parenting style, the child's personal characteristics, and various protective mechanisms.

A finding for which it is important to make a determination is that factors related to the school environment may hasten the outbreak of BDD and contribute to it, or may mitigate and prevent it. Included among these is the school environment itself – from the perspective of the security and protection it provides, the relationship with the teaching staff, the interactions between the children themselves and the nature of the relationships between the family and the staff. The education framework can make it easier on children who have the potential to develop BDD by giving them and their families support beginning at a young age, in order to teach them methods of self-control, emotional regulation, and thought and action alternatives. Likewise, it is important to ensure professional support to increase the educational staff's skills in treating children with BDD effectively and efficiently, when reacting to them and relating to difficult manifestations of their behavior.

Conclusions: The review showed that BDD is a product resulting from a combination of multiple factors: the most influential among them are the child's characteristics and the family relationships, followed by the larger environment. The timing of onset of the disorder is a factor predictive of the disorder's severity. The educational framework holds great importance vis à vis the disorder, both because in the preschool and school there are many manifestations of the disorder alongside reasons for its onset or its worsening, and also because the framework is a life context with the power of moderating the disorder, and thus meaningfully contribute to the child and his family's mental well-being. These conclusions do not indicate a single causal model that leads to the onset of BDD, and there is a need for further research in the field and a general refinement of the diagnostic measures in order to promote increased knowledge. It is reasonable to expect that these research findings will make a contribution towards identifying children who may, under certain circumstances, develop BDD, as well as in finding methods to prevent manifestations of BDD and to treat children with BDD.

The Existing Knowledge on Effective and Useful Preventive and Treatment Programs for Students with Behavioral Disorders in the Education System

> Gabriel Bukobza

Review objective: To present a comprehensive mapping of options for prevention, intervention and treatment of BDD and to highlight interventions identified in studies as effective and efficient.

Background: As was described in detail in the review on the existing knowledge on disruptive behavior among children in the education system, disruptive behaviors (BDD) among children and youth are common phenomena; in Israel, as of 2012, no less than 3.3% of preschool children, 9.6% of elementary school children, and 4.7% of secondary school children were diagnosed with behavioral problems. The implications of BDD are most significant both from the perspective of the emotional price paid by the child him/herself and the price extracted in different ways from society. The two main clinically diagnosed behavioral disorders are Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and Conduct Disorder (CD). A number of BDD risk factors were identified in the research, including harsh and problematic parenting patterns, the child's biological or neuro-developmental factors, emotional and mental factors, and a difficult or meager background environment.

Data-gathering method and article search strategy: The search for relevant research studies included identifying sources of diverse types and the use of six leading search engines: What Works Clearinghouse, Psycnet, Education Source, EBSCOhost, Campbell Collaboration and Google Scholar. Sixteen keywords were used; the five main ones were: disruptive behavior disorders; opposing defiant disorder; conduct disorder; intervention programs; risk behaviors.

Criteria for inclusion in the review: The review included empirical studies of diverse types that related to children with a clinical diagnosis of CD, ODD and anti-social disorder. Also included were studies on interventions conducted among children with no clinical diagnosis but who were identified mainly by their teachers and parents as rebellious toward authority figures, with an emphasis on behavioral problems in the educational setting.

Defining criteria for categorizing the interventions reviewed and examining the quality of the research: The review sought to stress those interventions shown to have a statistically significant effect. As a result, criteria were used to assess the quality of the research which examined the interventions. As is accepted in the literature, the review distinguished between interventions with demonstrated efficaciousness in studies that were well-established, and interventions found to be effective in research studies that were probably efficacious.

Results: The review showed that there are effective interventions of different types: interventions with parents, directly with the child, and with the educational framework. The results demonstrate that certain interventions with BDD children have positive effects and that it is important to begin implementing them at as early an age as possible. The highest degree of effectiveness was found for interventions that included components of parent training. The improvement in parenting skills reduced the severity of BDD symptoms and also improved the mental well-being of the parents themselves. These interventions are generally based on behavioral, cognitive and social learning theories. Along with interventions for parents, it was found that a few methods for managing the classroom on the part of teachers have

a mitigating influence on disruptive behavior. Finally, methods that concentrate on direct individual intervention with the child were also reviewed and found to be effective.

Conclusions: Evidence showing the effectiveness of treating BDD was repeatedly and consistently found throughout the review. These results are encouraging since they reflect the fact that effective and efficacious treatment of these children is possible. Beyond the different types of interventions, a significant commonality is that they all engage in rebuilding the executive capacities of the object of the intervention (parent, teacher or child), in one way or another. By enhancing executive capacities, these interventions help individuals to better regulate behaviors such as anger management, delay gratification, reduce enraged reactions and the like, and enhance the child's well-being.

The reviewer expressed hope that the results of the present review, with its strengths and limitations, together with additional professional knowledge, will influence the education system's prevention and treatment arrangements for children suffering from behavioral difficulties and disorders.

Implementing Existing Knowledge on the Development of Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Relevant Treatment Methods in the Education System

> Michal Ziperfal

Review objective: In light of the existing relationship between Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and behavioral problems and disorders, to examine major programs for coping with these disorders.

Method: A search was conducted using four leading search engines: Google Scholar, EBSCOhost, PsycINFO, and ERIC.

The search was conducted using the following keywords: Attention-deficit/ hyperactivity disorder; ADHD; preschool children; school-age children; adolescents; adolescence; comorbidity; clinical trial; medication; behavioral therapy; behavioral treatment; behavioral parent training; classroom interventions; cognitive behavior therapy; social skills training; early intervention; parent training; psychosocial treatments; psychotherapy.

The evidence gathered was categorized according to their level of reliability, using the following structure:

- > Evidence from meta-analyses of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) or evidence from at least a single randomized controlled trial
- > Evidence from at least one controlled study without randomization or evidence from at least one quasi-experimental study
- > Evidence from non-experimental descriptive studies, such as comparative research, correlation studies or case-control studies
- > Evidence from expert committee reports or opinions and/or clinical experience of respected authors

Background: Due to their difficulty in regulating emotions and their expression, children suffering from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) frequently react with externalized negative and inappropriate behavior, find it difficult to manage conflict, and many develop behavioral problems of varying levels of severity. Actual behavioral problems (Conduct Disorder and Oppositional Defiant Disorder) appear with a frequency of 40% to 60% in children suffering from ADHD, while 50% to 70% of these children also suffer from learning disabilities. These children develop cognitive-learning dysfunction and are forced to cope with more emotional, social and behavioral problems than their peers without disorders. These children are at greater than average risk for dropping out of school.

On the emotional plane, according to the Israel Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Association, 15% to 75% of children with ADHD also suffer from mood disorder. Furthermore, 50% of children with ADHD also exhibit social difficulties. As a result, many have difficulties in relationships with their peers and with authority figures, have difficulties with the family framework and experience greater rejection and loneliness.

The family and the school environments have an impact on ADHD. Many teachers report that as compared to children without the disorder, ADHD children have greater discipline and behavioral problems and often have a sense of frustration owing to their disruptive and problematic behavior. In

the family, parents of children with ADHD often feel fatigue, irritability, frustration and lack of support because they are in a constant state of vigilance and preparedness for dealing with the child and his/her demands. Relative to parents with children who do not suffer from the disorder, they have a low quality of life and report on characteristics of hostile and inconsistent parenting.

Results: The scientific literature review, based on controlled studies, indicates that the main methods of treatment for children and adolescents with ADHD are pharmacological treatment and psycho-educational interventions using the behavioral approach.

Pharmacological treatment was demonstrated to significantly diminish ADHD symptoms, affecting behavior and overt aggression and effective in improving learning and academic achievement on the part of children suffering from ADHD.

Interventions using the behavioral approach were found to be effective for this population on parameters of behavior and learning performance and have wrought learning and behavioral achievements. Behavioral interventions can be classified into three groups: behavioral training for parents, behavior management in the classroom, and behavioral interventions in groups of peers. Most children with ADHD and their families need intensive, comprehensive and long-term treatment, although evidence shows that in most cases, children with ADHD do not receive all three kinds of behavioral intervention.

Interventions combining pharmacological treatment and behavioral interventions that include parents, classroom interventions by teachers and direct intervention with the child (mainly adolescents and adults) were demonstrated to be more effective for treating ADHD as compared to behavioral intervention alone (without pharmacological treatment) or pharmacological treatment alone (with no additional intervention). For school-age children, there is no consistent and unequivocal recommendation for a first line of treatment (medication, behavioral or both), though for young children (preschool age), the recommendation is behavioral treatment as the first step.

Integrative interventions (which include tools taken from various theoretical approaches) are directed toward treating diverse phenomena that accompany the disability or disorder; it was found that they are beneficial to this population on the emotional, social and academic dimensions. For example, the Compound Herbal Preparation (CHP) program targets adolescents with ADHD in middle school and includes developmental and behavioral approaches and programs for improving academic and social skills. The program's aim is to improve abilities and skills in the social and academic spheres in which adolescents are deficient; it was found that the program is effective on these dimensions.

In addition, it was found that intervention programs for parents are effective: The review presents a number of programs focusing on parents and their relationships with their children that were shown to be effective: the Positive Parenting Program (Triple P), the New Forest Parenting Programme (NFPP), and the Incredible Years (IY) program.

Group counseling intervention using an integrative approach was carried out in Israel and examined as an intervention for parents of children with learning disabilities and ADHD. The intervention was found to be effective in reducing the level of parental stress and in improving parents' methods of coping with their children's emotions and behavior.

In conclusion, the main interventions for children and adolescents with ADHD are pharmacological treatment and psycho-educational interventions using the behavioral approach, which research studies proved were effective for this population. In addition to these interventions, there are also effective programs for the child and his/her family that provide a solution for the emotional, social and academic difficulties of the child and for the needs of the parent.

Chapter B: The Seminar

Therapeutic Interventions for Children with Behavioral Difficulties and Disorders: Prevention and Coping, in Israel and Worldwide, Theory and Practice

A major part of the expert team's work was, as mentioned, devoted to organizing and planning a seminar for professionals, PCS administration and the public at large. The goals of the seminar were to share the knowledge assembled by the team's work with attendees, to raise awareness of this information and to stimulate discourse on the topic. The seminar's structure was planned from the "general to the particular." General theoretical knowledge was presented first, followed by the general conclusions of the experts who had themselves planned and operated the interventions; afterwards, specific interventions operating in Israel were presented, and at the close of the event, there was a panel discussion in which members of the expert team and representatives of the PCS administration participated.²

The theoretical knowledge on behavioral disorders, their development, causality and treatment was presented by Dr. Gabriel Bukobza, who wrote two scientific literature reviews in response to the "call for proposals" issued by the team, with the rationale that the knowledge presented in the reviews will serve as the background to understanding the lectures which followed. The lecture presented questions regarding the essence of behavioral disorders and its causes, and provided a brief description of the attributes common to interventions which, in the presenter's opinion, were found to be effective.

Ahead of the seminar, the team contacted experts from abroad so that they may contribute of their knowledge to the audience in Israel. From their familiarity with the field, the team members suggested names of experts who combined a high level of research together with practical experience in the field of program development and in working with children with behavioral difficulties or disorders. To our delight, two of these experts, Professor Dishion and Professor Atkins, responded in the affirmative to the team's invitation. The team believed it was important that these two experts represent very different approaches to the seminar's topic. Their lectures were transmitted via two-way videoconferencing with the participation of representatives of the local expert team members and the experts from abroad. The lectures were recorded prior to the seminar in the videoconferencing rooms at the University of Haifa.

The session devoted to the conclusions of experts who operate programs was concluded by two members of the expert team, Professor Yoel Elizur and Professor Zipora Schechtman, both of whom have been operating intervention programs in Israel for many years. These programs were studied and met the highest standards of academic research, with articles published in leading academic journals. Nonetheless, we reiterate that despite the fact that they were presented at the seminar, this does not constitute the team's recommendation in support of any particular program.

As mentioned during the lunch recess, there was a poster exhibition by program operators presenting some of the intervention programs submitted to the team in response to their call. The selection criteria and process for the intervention programs were described in the report's introduction.

In this part, we include the summaries of the lectures presented at the seminar. The speakers take responsibility for the information appearing in this chapter on the lectures which express their own opinions; the summaries are their authorized versions. The complete videotaped lectures can be found on the Initiative for Applied Education Research's website by clicking on the "Videotaped Lectures" tab.

2. There was however, a certain overlap between the second and third parts since the poster exhibition was presented during the recess between the second and third sessions. For the seminar agenda, see Appendix A of this report.

Summary by the Expert Team Chairperson: The Team's Work in the Broader Context

It is important to understand the team's work against the historical background of the development of the interest in empirical evidence-based interventions. Although the search for research evidence regarding the effectiveness and efficacy of interventions already began in a systemized fashion in the 1950s, the current interest in the topic can be linked to developments in evidence-based medicine (Sackett, Richardson, Rosenberg & Haynes, 1997 – Evidence-based Medicine). There has been a dramatic rise in recent years in the scientific and professional interest in the concepts of evidence-based or evidence-informed programs, interventions, services and policies. During this period, there has been significant progress in developing myriad tools such as meta-analyses, systematic reviews, and websites that gather empirical information on the effectiveness and efficacy of interventions (such as Campbell Collaboration and What Works Clearinghouse). Likewise, in light of the requirement for accountability, expectations and demands have increased for public investment in intervention programs to be made on the basis of the most up-to-date information regarding its effectiveness.

With this background in mind, we can understand the request made by the Psychological Counseling Service of the **Initiative for Applied Education Research** to provide knowledge and information needed in order to change the intervention policy and the various programs that take place in school settings for children with behavioral disorders so as to base them on stable scientific ground. The PCS leadership and administration's willingness to examine their professional work and even change it on the basis of the accumulated scientific knowledge from around the world is admirable. Would that professional entities seeking to base their work on the best, most up-to-date scientific knowledge grow and increase. As academicians, we were delighted to be recruited for the purpose of using the knowledge and tools we have acquired in order to assist the PCS in this important mission.

While the team members agree with the important idea of basing policy and interventions on empirical knowledge, we all apparently have a realistic understanding of the limitations to which this process is subject. This is not the place to discuss the many and varied issues which evidence-based practices (EBP) engender (see, for example, Shlonsky & Benbenishty, 2013). I will stress here only the fact that the effectiveness of intervention depends on the social, cultural and professional context in which it operates. An intervention developed in a specific context will not necessarily lead to similar results in other contexts in which these interventions are conducted. This has implications for the attempt to apply the knowledge from around the world to interventions in Israel. Since most of the systematic knowledge refers to results of interventions conducted abroad (mainly in the U.S.), it would be mistaken to accept this as an unequivocal sign that such interventions can also be operated in the Israeli education system with similar results. As such, we aimed to rely on the best available knowledge worldwide, to examine it thoroughly and to identify "what works." Not in the sense of identifying a structured program whose implementation here would be a "faithful" replication of the original, but rather in the more profound sense of identifying a deep structure whose validity goes beyond the different variations of implementation and putting our finger on principles and techniques proven to be effective in the broad sense that traverses many different contexts. In parallel, we wished to examine interventions in Israel for which empirical evidence exists in order to help us identify if and when it would be possible to adapt interventions to the Israeli context.

To foster this learning process, we must change the administration's patterns of operation, to provide it with tools and resources and to guide it in a more intelligent use of the means which the latest developments place at our disposal – meta-analyses and systematic reviews and databases that amass and evaluate existing knowledge. In this respect, I see the convening of the team, as laudable as it may be, as a sign of the past and not the future. The preferred alternative would be a PCS administrative entity that would, on an ongoing basis, consistently address the continually updating information reviews from around the world in the area of practice. This is not because all the system's methods of intervention can be changed by introducing new ones every time a new research study is publicized but rather in order to systematically and continually examine the information from around the world relative to the knowledge being gathered in Israel. It would be appropriate to seek the proper resources and accommodation for such a step, which should be expanded to many other aspects of the professional work conducted by various parties in the Ministry of Education and other ministries that care for children and youth – for example, the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services. Perhaps the Initiative for Applied Education Research, which served as the main partner and contributor to the present process, would be able to expand its operations and create an ongoing and sustainable basis for promoting the use of scientific knowledge in professional work with children and youth? I stress, the expert team's input should be understood as the first step in a learning process. Firstly, we are embarking on the path with an intervention, or elements of intervention for which there is persuasive evidence of it being a good point of departure. Unlike in the past, however, we can no longer be satisfied with an all-encompassing theory to guide all our intervention activities by virtue of theoretical assumptions or by virtue of research findings from the past. We must continue to empirically investigate and learn through various means: Is the direction we chose indeed proving itself? Are the interventions adopted by the PCS (at least some of which, it is hoped, are based on the knowledge received from the team's work) proving themselves in the field? Can conditions and populations be identified where the interventions are more effective? Are there changes over time in the effectiveness of the different interventions?

In order to meet the demands of this mission, the PCS must be provided with the resources and tools to systematically track interventions being conducted and to monitor their results. Where it is appropriate and possible, it would be fitting to examine research methods such as randomized controlled studies, and in all cases, it would be appropriate to examine means of quantitative and qualitative systematic documentation and monitoring so as to receive ongoing feedback with respect to the challenges of implementing interventions and their results. An important challenge that must be addressed is multi-year longitudinal research which would be able to provide a thorough picture of the developmental changes among children in the Israeli education system while giving special attention to the effect of different interventions on the individual development path of children, particularly those coping with emotional difficulties and with behavioral disorders.

On the personal level, I felt a sense of mission and satisfaction in that our academic work may assist in the professional practice that contributes to children, their parents and their teachers. I encountered colleagues who, along with their impressive scientific expertise, are possessed of a great commitment to contribute to children, their families and to professionals working in the field. Clearly, these are partners who are not sitting snug in their ivory tower but rather, academicians who seek to contribute to society. This sense intensified the aspiration to create a common ground for the PCS administration, the field and academia where a fitting connection can be formed between the administration and practitioners' specialized knowledge and needs and the academicians' knowledge (and needs). To a certain extent, we had a taste of this common ground in the few meetings the expert team held with the PCS administration. These however, are the type of encounters which only whet the appetite and increase the need to design permanent and stable forums focused on collaborative work for the benefit of the children, their parents and their teachers.

Appendix A: Seminar Agenda

Therapeutic Interventions for Children with Behavioral Difficulties and Disorders – Prevention and Coping, in Israel and Abroad, Theory and Practice

All links to background materials, presentations, etc. are to the Hebrew-language versions and can be found on the Initiative's website.

First session

Principles and Evidence-based Methods for Treating Behavioral Difficulties and Disorders

Chair: Prof. Rami Benbenishty, Expert team chair

Greeting: Ministry of Education representative (to be announced)
Opening remarks, presentation of the topic and the team's work

Ms. Hannah Shadmi, Director, Psychological Counseling Service (PCS)

Prof. Rami Benbenishty, Bar-Ilan University

The Interventions Continuum: An Analysis Based on Scientific Literature Reviews in the Fields of Psychopathology and of Treatment Methods for Disruptive Behavior of Students in the Education System – Conclusions from the Literature Review.

Dr. Gabriel Bukobza, Tel Aviv University

The Family Check-up Model: An Evidence-based Approach to Intervening with Conduct Disorder

Prof. Thomas Dishion, Arizona State University (filmed lecture)

Second session

Evidence-based Programs in Israel: Research-based Conclusions

Chair: Prof. Zipora Schechtman, Expert team member

The Integrative Approach to Group Treatment: Overview and Conclusions

Prof. Zipora Schechtman, University of Haifa

Intervention in Preschool in Light of the Research and Experience from the “Hitkashrut” Program (a co-parent training program for early intervention with preschoolers at risk for conduct problems): Methods, Conclusions and Lessons

Prof. Yoel Elizur, School of Education, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Break (light lunch will be served)

Posters describing intervention programs operated in Israel will be displayed in the lobby during the break.

Third session:

The Interventions Continuum from a Systems Perspective

Chair: Prof. Yoel Elizur, Expert team member

Mental Health in Schools: What Works Best?

Prof. Marc Atkins, University at Illinois at Chicago (filmed lecture)

Intervention and Prevention of Behavioral Problems: Summarizing Overview of the Information Presented and its Implications for Policy

Panel featuring expert team members and Ministry of Education representatives

Appendix B

Brief Biographical Sketches of Team Members and Symposium Participants

Expert Team Members

Prof. Rami Benbenishty, chair

Professor in the School of Social Work at Bar-Ilan University where he heads the research team on Children and Youth at Risk. He is involved in projects which monitor schools' climate at the school, district and state levels. His main research interests are child welfare, school climate, decision-making, and the effective use of information.

Prof. Benbenishty earned his Ph.D. in social work and psychology from the University of Michigan in 1981.

Was a member of the Initiative Guidelines for 'Revising the System of Education Indicators in Israel' Committee, and chair of the expert team on 'Therapeutic Interventions for Children with Behavioral Problems and Difficulties'.

Prof. Gary Diamond,

Associate Professor in the Psychology Department at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, a licensed clinical psychologist and approved family therapist and supervisor. He served as deputy director of the Center for Family Intervention Science at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania (US). Prof. Diamond was involved in the development of Multidimensional Family Therapy (Liddle, 1990) aimed at treating adolescents suffering from drug dependence and behavioral disorders and is one of the primary developers of Attachment-Based Family Therapy (ABFT), designed to treat depressed and suicidal teenagers. Prof. Diamond's research includes examining the efficacy of family based treatments and change mechanisms, emotional processing, and adapting attachment-based family therapy for the LGBT population. His research has been funded by the Israel Science Foundation, the United States-Israel Bi-National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Psychobiology in Israel, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and other organizations. He trains and supervises ABFT therapists in Israel and worldwide.

Prof. Diamond received his PhD in Counseling Psychology from Temple University, Philadelphia (US) in 1997 and completed his post-doctoral work in clinical psychology at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in 1998.

Prof. Yoel Elizur,

Associate Professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in the School of Education's Educational and Child Clinical Psychology Program. He also serves as the chair of the Israeli Council of Psychologists. His main areas of research are developmental psychopathology, behavioral disorders and internalized disorders among children and adolescents, family processes, empirically-based systems-integrative therapy, medical psychology, and, trauma and resilience.

Prof. Elizur holds a PhD degree in clinical psychology from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, received in 1981.

Prof. Moshe Israelashvili

Associate Professor in the School of Education at Tel Aviv University's Department of Special Education and School Counseling. His main areas of research are stress inoculation and prevention programs, adjustment processes or lack thereof to new social settings, coping and resilience under pressure, and optimal development.

Prof. Israelashvili holds a PhD degree in social psychology from Tel Aviv University, received in 1990.

Prof. Zipora Schechtman

Professor (Emerita) and until recently head of the Department of Counseling and Human Development in the Faculty of Education at University of Haifa. Prof. Schechtman is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association (APA), the American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA) and the International Society for Research on Aggression. Until 2012 she served as the deputy editor of the APA's professional journal, *Group Dynamics*, and is a member of editorial boards of prominent journals focusing on groups, including: *Psychotherapy – the International Journal of Group Psychotherapy* and *Group Dynamics Research*.

Prof. Schechtman's research focuses on the processes and results of group counseling and treatment of children and adults, group counseling and psychotherapy for children and adults suffering from social, emotional and behavioral difficulties, factors of and treatment methods for aggressiveness and violence in children, and on the bibliotherapeutic process and its results. Prof. Schechtman holds a PhD degree in education and educational counseling from Washington University (US), received in 1984.

Prof. David Weisburd

Walter E. Meyer Professor of Law and Criminal Justice and Director of the Institute of Criminology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is also Distinguished Professor of Criminology, Law and Society at George Mason University in the US state of Virginia. He is a member (and chair) currently and formerly of key criminology associations in the US and steering committees in the US and worldwide on topics of crime. Prof. Weisburd is a leading international researcher in the field of crime, law enforcement and the field of research methods and evaluation. He is also the founding editor of the *Journal of Experimental Criminology*. He was awarded the prestigious Stockholm Prize for Criminology, the The Klachky Prize for the Advancement of the Frontiers of Science (2012) and the Immigrant Absorption Minister's Prize for Distinguished Immigrant Scientists.

Prof. Weisburd holds a PhD degree in sociology from Yale University in New Haven Connecticut, received in 1985.

Oded Busharian

Received his Bachelor's degree in the combined program in philosophy, economics and political science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (2007); holds an MA in political science from the Hebrew University, received in 2011. He is a recipient of the Dean's Fellowship and the Rector's Prize for Excellence in Master's studies. He has served as a research assistant and teaching assistant in the Department of Political Science at the Hebrew University. Following the completion of his studies, he served as a tutor in a course on funding in the Executive Master's program in the School of Public Policy at the Hebrew University and in a course entitled Statistics For Social Science Students at the Open

University (within the framework of the Ultra-Orthodox College), while also working as an analyst and economist for the district marketer of Mifal HaPais (the Lottery) in the Jerusalem area. Currently with the Initiative for Applied Education Research, Mr. Busharian is also the coordinator of the expert committee on “School and Family in a Changing World,” as well as of the steering committee for the workshop on “Inequality and Education.”

Lecturers

Gabriel Bukobza

Lecturer in the School of Education at Tel Aviv University; lecturer in the School of Education at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and senior lecturer in the Department of Psychology at the Peres Academic Center in Rehovot. An educational psychologist by training, Dr. Bukobza works on both the systems and individual levels, treating both children and staff of the educational framework.

In the past, he coordinated the committee to “Revise the System of Indicators for Education in Israel” at the Initiative for Applied Education Research, and together with Prof. Moshe Justman edited the book entitled, “Guidelines for Revising the System of Indicators for Education in Israel” (2010). He was a member of the “Intellectual Eros” research group at the Van Leer Institute, a team that addressed the topic of “Arousing the Desire to Learn among Teachers and Ways to Help Them Do So with their Students,” and edited a volume on the topic.

His main areas of research and writing include rebelliousness, coping with authority and behavioral disorders in adolescence; father-child relationships throughout the life cycle; development of self-perception in adulthood; individual identity in the late modern period; implementations of neuro-cognitive research in the field of education, treatment and prevention.

Dr. Bukobza holds a PhD degree in psychology from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, received in 2004.

Thomas J. Dishion

Professor of psychology at Arizona State University, and founding director of the Child and Family Center at the University of Oregon. Prof. Dishion is a longstanding member of a number of professional and scientific organizations including the American Psychological Association, the Association for the Advancement of Behavior Therapy, and the international Society for Research in Child and Adolescent Psychopathology, Society for Prevention Research and Society for Research on Child Development. He is a fellow of the American Psychological Science. Dr. Dishion serves on the editorial board of several scientific peer reviewed journals.

Professor Dishion has received numerous federal, university, and foundation grants and awards. His research focuses on peer, family and romantic relationship dynamics underlying the development of psychopathology and competence. His work uses various methods including longitudinal studies, observational and social neuroscience techniques such as high-density array EEG. His intervention research involves the design and testing of empirically supported interventions such as the Family Check-up, and identifying intervention strategies that are potentially iatrogenic to youth development. He has published over 200 scientific articles and chapters, and two books for professionals in intervention science, and 1 book for parents.

Prof. Dishion holds a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, from the University of Oregon, 1988

Marc S. Atkins

Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry and Director of Psychology Training in the Department of Psychiatry and in the Institute for Juvenile Research, University of Illinois at Chicago. Prof. Atkins is also a member of the American Psychological Association and a fellow of the American Association for Applied and Preventive Psychology, the Association for Psychological Science, the Association for Advancement of Behavior and Cognitive Therapies, the Society for Research in Child Development and the International Society for Research in Child and Adolescent Psychopathology. He is also the President of the Society for Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology (Division 53) of the American Psychological Association, the Secretary of the Academy of Psychological Clinical Science, and serves on a number of Editorial Boards for academic journals.

Professor Atkins has received numerous federal, university, and foundation grants to investigate (among other research interests) school-based mental health services for children in urban poverty; models for effective community mental health services; dissemination of evidence-based practices.

Prof. Atkins holds a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, from the Florida State University, 1985.

Panel Discussion Participants

Hana Shadmi

Director of Division A of the Psychological Counseling Service (PCS) in the Ministry of Education; previously directed the Assistance and Prevention Programs Division at the PCS and prior to that was involved in developing and managing the Life Skills Program. Ms. Shadmi has 35 years of experience in the field of educational counseling. Within the framework of her roles at the Ministry of Education, she took part in writing many policy papers including the standards for school climate, and the director-general's memorandum on the topic of "Promoting School Climate and Reducing Violence, An Outline for the Planning and Operation of a School Program for Preschool through 12th Grade."

Ms. Shadmi holds a Master's degree in educational counseling from Tel Aviv University, received in 1980.

Chava Friedman

Director of the Psychology Division of the Psychological Counseling Service (PCS) in the Ministry of Education; was previously the Division's deputy director and prior to that, directed the Educational Psychology Service. Ms. Friedman has 26 years of experience in the field of educational psychology. Within her professional capacities at the Ministry of Education, she played a central role in writing policy documents such as the director-general's memorandum on "Delineating the Educational Psychology Service" as well as the director-general's memorandum on "Suicide among Children and Youth: Prevention and Intervention." She writes a regular column in the journal, "Psychoactualia."

Ms. Friedman holds a Master's degree in educational psychology from Ben-Gurion University, received in 1988. She is studying toward a PhD degree at Tel Aviv University.

Einav Luk

Director of the unit to Promote a Safe Climate and Reduce Violence at the Psychological Counseling Service (PCS), Ministry of Education; was previously involved in coordinating training of counselors on the issue of climate for the Southern district. Ms. Luk has 20 years of experience in the field of educational psychology. Within the framework of her roles at the Ministry of Education, Ms. Luk took part in writing many policy papers including the director-general's memorandum on "Promoting a Safe Climate and Coping with Incidents of Violence in Educational Institutions 2010 1(a)" and "The Program to Promote a Safe Climate and to Reduce Violence, An Outline for Targeted Schools."

Ms. Luk holds an MA degree in educational counseling from Tel Aviv University, received in 1994.