

Last reviewed: November 2019

Intervention website: <https://www.youth-guidance.org/bam/>

GUIDEBOOK INTERVENTION INFORMATION SHEET

Becoming A Man

Please note that in the ‘Intervention summary’ table below, ‘child age’, ‘level of need’, and ‘race and ethnicities’ information is **as evaluated in studies**. Information in other fields describes the intervention as **offered/supported by the intervention provider**.

Intervention summary	
Description	Becoming A Man is a school-based social and emotional learning intervention for children aged between 12 and 18 years old from lower socioeconomic backgrounds deemed at risk of failing to attain good academic outcomes and most likely to come into contact with the criminal justice system. It is delivered by counsellors to individuals and groups of adolescents for two years.
Evidence rating	4
Cost rating	5
Child outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing school achievement and employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved school engagement. • Preventing crime, violence and anti-social behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced violence - Reduced involvement in crime.
Child age (population characteristic)	12 to 16 years old
Level of need (population characteristic)	Targeted Selected

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Intervention summary	
Race and ethnicities (population characteristic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Black• Hispanic.
Type (model characteristic)	Individual/Group
Setting (model characteristic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Secondary school• Sixth-form or FE college.
Workforce (model characteristic)	Counsellors
UK available?	No
UK tested?	No

Model description

Becoming A Man (BAM) is a school-based social and emotional learning intervention. It is a targeted selective group intervention for children between the ages of 12 and 18 years old. The intervention is delivered by a BAM counsellor over the course of a school year through 25 weekly group sessions to groups of between 10 to 12 participants, and 30 weekly individual one-to-one sessions lasting 15 minutes each. It is typically delivered in secondary schools to pupils that reside in deprived areas and come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

The intervention aims to improve school engagement and completion and reduce interactions with the criminal justice system by supporting male youth to develop skills surrounding a positive identity, resilience, and a sense of belonging through group sessions led by a 'pro-social' male counsellor, and one-to-one sessions to address personal challenges.

Each weekly group counselling session, or BAM Circle, sees a group of participants learn, practise, and internalise social-emotional skills that align with six core values: Integrity, Accountability, Self-Determination, Positive Anger Expression, Respect for Womanhood, and Visionary Goal Setting.

A BAM counsellor will lead the group session using activities and learning material to develop these skills and foster a sense of belonging and positive identity among the group, as well as getting

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participants to reflect on themselves, their responsibilities and decision-making, and their relationships with others.

Through individual one-to-one check-ins, BAM counsellors foster a positive relationship with participants to address personal challenges that stand in the way of participants' goals and aspirations, and to reinforce values and competencies from the BAM curriculum.

Target population

Age of child	12 to 18 years old
Target population	Young adolescent males who are deemed at risk of failing to attain good academic outcomes and most likely to encounter the criminal justice system.

Please note that the information in this section on target population is as **offered/supported by the intervention provider**.



Theory of change

Why		Who	How	What		
Science-based assumption	Science-based assumption	Science-based assumption	Intervention	Short-term outcomes	Medium-term outcomes	Long-term outcomes
Living in disadvantaged, high-crime areas exposes youth to chronic stress, instability, and limited access to positive role models, which negatively impacts their engagement in education and increases the risk of involvement in crime.	Cognitive-behavioural interventions can help youth improve decision-making by addressing their automatic, impulsive responses to reduce risky behaviours and improve emotional regulation.	Economically disadvantaged male students, primarily African American and Hispanic, in high-crime, low-income neighbourhoods, considered at risk of poor educational outcomes and involvement in criminal activities.	The intervention uses activities like role-playing and group discussions to foster self-reflection, helping young people manage conflicts better in both school and street environments.	Young people develop resiliencies such as emotional regulation, empathy, self-awareness, and trust.	Young people decrease aggressive behaviours in school and increase their academic engagement and achievement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved graduation rates • Reduced involvement in the criminal justice system.



Implementation requirements

Who is eligible?	Male youth aged 12 to 18 years old from disadvantaged backgrounds.
How is it delivered?	Becoming A Man is delivered in 25 weekly sessions of one hour's duration by BAM counsellors, to groups of adolescents of between 10 to 12 participants, and 30 weekly individual one-to-one sessions lasting 15 minutes each.
What happens during the intervention?	<p>Each weekly group counselling session, or BAM Circle, sees a group of participants learn, practise, and internalise social-emotional skills that align with six core values: Integrity, Accountability, Self-Determination, Positive Anger Expression, Respect for Womanhood, and Visionary Goal Setting.</p> <p>A BAM counsellor will lead the group session using activities and learning material to develop these skills and foster a sense of belonging and positive identify among the group, as well as getting participants to reflect on themselves, their responsibilities and decision-making, and their relationships with others.</p> <p>Through individual one-to-one check-ins, BAM counsellors foster a positive relationship with participants to address personal challenges that stand in the way of participants' goals and aspirations, and to reinforce values and competencies from the BAM curriculum.</p>
Who can deliver it?	The practitioner who delivers this intervention is a BAM counsellor.
What are the training requirements?	The practitioners have 300 hours of intervention training. Booster training of practitioners is not required.
How are practitioners supervised?	<p>It is recommended that practitioners are supervised by one external intervention developer supervisor, with 494 hours of intervention training.</p> <p>Furthermore, it is recommended that practitioners are supervised by one host-agency supervisor, with 350 hours of intervention training.</p>
What are the systems for maintaining fidelity?	<p>Intervention fidelity is maintained through the following processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training manual • Other printed material • Other online material • Video or DVD training • Face-to-face training • Fidelity monitoring.



Implementation requirements (Cont.)

Is there a licensing requirement?	Yes
*Contact details	Contact person: Michael Bergstrom Organisation: Youth Guidance Email address: Info@youth-guidance.org Website: https://www.youth-guidance.org/bam/ *Please note that this information may not be up to date. In this case, please visit the listed intervention website for up to date contact details.

Evidence summary

Becoming A Man’s most rigorous evidence comes from two RCTs which were conducted in the United States consistent with Foundations’ Level 3 threshold. As one of these evaluations includes evidence showing that child benefits persist past one year, BAM receives a rating of Level 4 overall.

These studies observed statistically significant improvements in school performance and reductions in arrests for violent crime and for all crime.

Becoming A Man can be described as evidence-based: it has evidence from at least one rigorously conducted RCT demonstrating a statistically significant positive impact on a child outcome and also has evidence of a long-term effect.

The best evidence for the Becoming A Man intervention reviewed by EIF examined implementations of Becoming A Man accompanied by a supplementary sports component. The sports component involved a range of sports such as archery and boxing designed to facilitate teachable moments in which the ethos of Becoming A Man (i.e. controlling aggressive or impulsive behaviours) can be applied, and was delivered by coaches trained in some aspects of the Becoming A Man approach. It is worth noting that this sports component is not featured as part of the standard Becoming A Man intervention. It is possible that this additional provision contributed to the effects observed in the studies, or otherwise helped to drive engagement with the intervention and reinforce the learning from it. However, participation in the sports component was low, and additional analyses provided by Youth Guidance generally suggest that Becoming A Man had an impact independent of the sports component, particularly in terms of violent arrests. The evidence that Becoming A Man has an impact independent of the sports component is weaker for school engagement outcomes (school improvement index/GPA), including the 12-month follow-up finding.



Child outcomes			
Outcome	Improvement index	Interpretation	Study
Improved school engagement	N/A	Increased school performance (GPA, days present, enrolment status) – (measured using the Chicago Public Schools administrative data) –post-intervention	1
Improved school engagement	N/A	Increased school performance (GPA, days present, enrolment status) – (measured using the Chicago Public Schools administrative data) –a year later	1,2
Reduced arrests for violent crime	N/A	Reduced arrests for violent crime (measured using Illinois State Police arrest records) –post-intervention	1
Reduced arrests for all crime	N/A	Reduced arrests for all crimes (measured using Illinois State Police arrest records) – post-intervention	2

Search and review

	Number of studies
Identified in search	4
Studies reviewed	2
Meeting the L2 threshold	0
Meeting the L3 threshold	2
Contributing to the L4 threshold	0
Ineligible	2



Individual study summary: Study 1

Study 1	
Study design	RCT
Country	United States
Sample characteristics	2,740 highest risk male students in grades 7 to 10 (aged 12 to 16 years old) in 18 elementary and high schools in the Chicago Public School system.
Race, ethnicities, and nationalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% Black • 30% Hispanic.
Population risk factors	The intervention focused on disadvantaged male youth from high-crime Chicago neighbourhoods, selected due to risk factors such as prior arrests, low academic performance, and poor school attendance. Many participants came from economically struggling families with limited educational and employment opportunities, and over one-third of the sample had been previously arrested.
Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline (pre-programme year) • Post-intervention (programme year) • 12-month follow-up (follow-up year).
Child outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved school engagement (GPA, days present, and still in school) (administrative data, post-intervention, and 12-month follow-up) • Reduced violent crime arrests (administrative data, post-intervention).
Other outcomes	None
Study Rating	3
Citation	Heller, S., Pollack, H. A., Ander, R. & Ludwig, J. (2013) <i>Preventing youth violence and dropout: A randomized field experiment</i> . National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper No. 19014.



Brief summary

Population characteristics

2,740 disadvantaged male youth aged 12 to 16 years old (mean age 15) from high-crime neighbourhoods who were at high risk for violent behaviour and academic failure. 70% of participants were Black and 30% were Hispanic.

Study design

This study used a randomised controlled trial design, block-randomised by school. 1,473 high-risk male students were randomised into one of three intervention conditions (in-school programming, after-school sports programming, or both) and 1,267 into a control group; data from the three treatment arms were pooled for the main analyses.

Measurement

Assessments took place at baseline, post-intervention, and 12-month follow-up.

- **Administrative records** included arrest records from the Illinois State Police, GPA, days present at school and school enrolment status. School outcomes were amalgamated into a schools index.

Study retention

Retention was not reported. Authors report that due to the use of administrative data from the police force and school network attrition is not possible.

Results

Data-analytic strategy

Regression models were used to estimate the intervention's effects on both criminal behaviour and academic outcomes, using an intent-to-treat approach. Missing data (for individuals with valid information for at least one component) was accounted for by assigning the group mean for the missing elements.

Findings

Youth in the intervention group showed statistically significant improvements in academic outcomes at post-intervention and at 12-month follow up, and reductions in violent crime arrests at post-intervention.



Study 1: Outcomes table

Outcome	Measure	Effect size	Statistical significance	Number of participants	Measurement time point
Child outcomes					
Total arrests per youth per year	Illinois State Police arrests records (administrative data)	N/A	No	2,740	Post-intervention
Total arrests per youth per year	Illinois State Police arrests records (administrative data)	N/A	No	2,740	12-month follow-up
Violent crime arrests	Illinois State Police arrests records (administrative data)	N/A	Yes	2,740	Post-intervention
Violent crime arrests	Illinois State Police arrests records (administrative data)	N/A	No	2,740	12-month follow-up
Property crime arrests	Illinois State Police arrests records (administrative data)	N/A	No	2,740	Post-intervention
Property crime arrests	Illinois State Police arrests records (administrative data)	N/A	No	2,740	12-month follow-up



Outcome	Measure	Effect size	Statistical significance	Number of participants	Measurement time point
Drug crime arrests	Illinois State Police arrests records (administrative data)	N/A	No	2,740	Post-intervention
Drug crime arrests	Illinois State Police arrests records (administrative data)	N/A	No	2,740	12-month follow-up
Other crime arrests	Illinois State Police arrests records (administrative data)	N/A	No	2,740	Post-intervention
Other crime arrests	Illinois State Police arrests records (administrative data)	N/A	No	2,740	12-month follow-up
School engagement	Summary Index of Chicago Public Schools records (administrative data)	N/A	Yes	2,740	Post-intervention
School engagement	Summary Index of Chicago Public Schools records (administrative data)	N/A	Yes	2,740	12-month follow-up



Individual study summary: Study 2

Study 2	
Study design	RCT
Country	United States
Sample characteristics	The study involved 2,064 disadvantaged male youth in Chicago, aged between 14 and 16 years old, attending Chicago Public Schools in high-crime neighbourhoods
Race, ethnicities, and nationalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 69% Black • 29% Hispanic.
Population risk factors	The intervention focused on disadvantaged male youth from high-crime Chicago neighbourhoods, selected due to risk factors such as prior arrests, low academic performance, and poor school attendance. Many participants came from economically struggling families with limited educational and employment opportunities, and over one-third of the sample had been previously arrested.
Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline • Post-intervention • 12-month follow up.
Child outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved school engagement (GPA, days present, enrolment status at the end of the year) (Administrative data, 12-month follow-up) • Reduced arrests for all crime (Administrative data, 12-month follow-up).
Other outcomes	None
Study Rating	3
Citation	Heller, S. B., Shah, A. K., Guryan, J., Ludwig, J., Mullainathan, S. & Pollack, H. A. (2017) Thinking, Fast and Slow? Some field experiments to reduce crime and dropout in Chicago. <i>The Quarterly Journal of Economics</i> . 132 (1), 1–54.



Brief summary

Population characteristics

2,064 disadvantaged male youth aged 14 to 16 years old from high-crime neighbourhoods who were at high risk for violent behaviour and academic failure. Participants were 69% Black and 29% Hispanic.

Study design

This study used a randomised controlled trial design with block randomisation. 1,048 participants were randomly assigned to the BAM intervention and 1,048 to a control group.

Assessments took place at baseline, post-intervention, and 12-month follow-up.

Measurement

Administrative records included arrest records from the Chicago Police Department, GPA, days present at school, and school enrolment status. School outcomes were amalgamated into a school's index.

Study retention

Retention was not reported. Authors report that due to the use of administrative data from the police force and school network attrition is not possible.

Results

Data-analytic strategy

Regression models were used to estimate the intervention's effects on both criminal behaviour and academic outcomes, using an intent-to-treat approach. Missing data (for individuals with valid information for at least one component) was accounted for by assigning the group mean for the missing elements.

Findings

Youth in the intervention group showed statistically significant reduction in arrests for all crimes at 12-month follow-up, and statistically significant improvements in school engagement at 12-month follow-up.



Study 2: Outcomes table

Outcome	Measure	Effect size	Statistical significance	Number of participants	Measurement time point
Child outcomes					
Total arrests per youth per year	Chicago Police Department arrests records (administrative data)	N/A	No	2,064	Post-intervention
Total arrests per youth per year	Chicago Police Department arrests records (administrative data)	N/A	Yes	2,064	12-month follow-up
Violent Crime Arrests	Chicago Police Department arrests records (administrative data)	N/A	No	2,064	Post-intervention
Violent Crime Arrests	Chicago Police Department arrests records (administrative data)	N/A	No	2,064	12-month follow-up
Property Crime Arrests	Chicago Police Department arrests records (administrative data)	N/A	No	2,064	Post-intervention



Outcome	Measure	Effect size	Statistical significance	Number of participants	Measurement time point
Property Crime Arrests	Chicago Police Department arrests records (administrative data)	N/A	No	2,064	12-month follow-up
Drug Crime Arrests	Chicago Police Department arrests records (administrative data)	N/A	No	2,064	Post-intervention
Drug Crime Arrests	Chicago Police Department arrests records (administrative data)	N/A	No	2,064	12-month follow-up
Other Crime Arrests	Chicago Police Department arrests records (administrative data)	N/A	No	2,064	Post-intervention
Other Crime Arrests	Chicago Police Department arrests records (administrative data)	N/A	No	2,064	12-month follow-up
School Engagement	Summary Index of Chicago Public Schools records (administrative data)	N/A	No	2,064	Post-intervention



Outcome	Measure	Effect size	Statistical significance	Number of participants	Measurement time point
School Engagement	Summary Index of Chicago Public Schools records (administrative data)	N/A	Yes	2,064	12-month follow-up

Other studies

The following studies were identified for this intervention but did not count towards the intervention’s overall evidence rating. An intervention receives the same rating as its most robust study or studies.

Cook, P. J., Dodge, K., Farkas, G., Fryer Jr, R. G., Guryan, J., Ludwig, J., ... & Steinberg, L. (2014) *The (surprising) efficacy of academic and behavioral intervention with disadvantaged youth: Results from a randomized experiment in Chicago* (No. w19862). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Cook, P. J., Dodge, K., Farkas, G., Fryer, R. G., Guryan, J., Ludwig, J. & Mayer, S. (2015) *Not too late: Improving academic outcomes for disadvantaged youth*. Institute for Policy Research Northwestern University Working Paper WP-15-01.

Lansing, J. & Rapoport, E. (2016) *Bolstering belonging in B.A.M. and beyond: Youth Guidance’s Becoming a Man (B.A.M.) program components, experiential processes, and mechanisms. A report to Youth Guidance*. Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

University of Chicago Crime Lab. (2018) *Preventing youth violence: An evaluation of Youth Guidance’s Becoming a Man Program*.

Walker, K. & Wilkinson, A. (2019) *Building the evidence for impact and expansion: Youth Guidance strengthens Becoming A Man*. Child Trends.

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Note on provider involvement: This provider has agreed to Foundations’ terms of reference (or the Early Intervention Foundation's terms of reference), and the assessment has been conducted and published with the full cooperation of the intervention provider.