

Becoming A Man

Review: November 2019

Note on provider involvement: This provider has agreed to EIF's terms of reference, and the assessment has been conducted and published with the full cooperation of the programme provider.

Becoming A Man (BAM) is a school based social and emotional learning programme. It is a targeted selective group intervention programme for pupils between the age of 12 and 18. It typically works with pupils that reside in deprived areas and come from lower socio-economic backgrounds. It is delivered in secondary schools and aims to improve school engagement and completion and reduce interactions with the criminal justice system.

The programme aims to help adolescents and young men develop skills surrounding a positive identity, resilience, and a sense of belonging through group sessions led by a 'pro-social' male counsellor.

Furthermore, the programme aims to reduce the likelihood of adolescents turning to aggressive or defensive behaviours when confronted with circumstances in which such behaviours could be counterproductive or damaging to themselves and others.

This programme is targeted towards young, adolescent, males who are deemed most at risk of failing to attain good academic outcomes and most likely to come into contact with the criminal justice system. The programme typically works with pupils that reside in deprived, racially segregated, areas and come from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

It is a two-year intervention ran over a total of 50 sessions. A typical session sees a BAM counsellor lead a group of participants through a range of stories, roleplaying, and practical activities.

Evidence
rating: 4

Cost rating: 5

EIF Programme Assessment

Becoming A Man has **evidence of a long-term positive impact** on child outcomes through multiple rigorous evaluations.

**Evidence
rating: 4**

What does the evidence rating mean?

Level 4 indicates **evidence of effectiveness**. This means the programme can be described as evidence-based: it has evidence from at least two rigorously conducted evaluations (RCT/QED) demonstrating positive impacts across populations and environments lasting a year or longer.

The best evidence for the Becoming A Man programme 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 programme. It is possible that this additional provision contributed to the effects observed in the studies, or otherwise helped to drive engagement with the programme 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 one-year follow-up finding.

Cost rating

A rating of 5 indicates that a programme has a high cost to set up and deliver, compared with other interventions reviewed by EIF. This is equivalent to an estimated unit cost of more than £2,000.

Cost rating: 5

Child outcomes

According to the best available evidence for this programme's impact, it can achieve the following positive outcomes for children:

Enhancing school achievement & employment

Increased school performance

Based on study 1

Increased school performance (GPA, days present, enrolment status) - (measured using the Chicago Public Schools administrative data)

Immediately after the intervention

Based on study 1

Increased school performance (GPA, days present, enrolment status) - (measured using the Chicago Public Schools administrative data)

Long-term A year later

Preventing crime, violence and antisocial behaviour

Reduced arrests for violent crime

Based on study 1

Reduced arrests for violent crime (measured using Illinois State Police arrest records)

Immediately after the intervention

Reduced arrests for all crime

Based on study 2

Reduced arrests for all crimes (measured using Illinois State Police arrest records)

Immediately after the intervention

Key programme characteristics

Who is it for?

The best available evidence for this programme relates to the following age-groups:

- Preadolescents
- Adolescents

How is it delivered?

The best available evidence for this programme relates to implementation through these delivery models:

- Individual
- Group

Where is it delivered?

The best available evidence for this programme relates to its implementation in these settings:

- Secondary school

The programme may also be delivered in these settings:

How is it targeted?

The best available evidence for this programme relates to its implementation as:

- Targeted selective
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Where has it been implemented?

United States

UK provision

This programme has not been implemented in the UK.

UK evaluation

This programme's best evidence does not include evaluation conducted in the UK.

Spotlight sets

EIF includes this programme in the following Spotlight sets:

- school based social emotional learning
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About the programme

What happens during delivery?

How is it delivered?

- Becoming A Man is delivered in 25 weekly group sessions of 1-hour duration, and 30 weekly individual sessions lasting 15 minutes each led by 1 practitioner, over the course of a school year, to groups of between 10-12 participants.

What happens during the intervention?

- Each weekly group counselling session, or BAM Circle, sees a group of participants learn, practice, and internalize 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 get participants to reflect on themselves, their responsibilities and decision making, and their relationships with others.
- Through individual one-to-one check-in's 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.

What are the implementation requirements?

Who can deliver it?

- The practitioner who delivers this programme is a BAM Counsellor with QCF-6 level qualifications.

What are the training requirements?

- The practitioners have 300 hours of programme training. Booster training of practitioners is not required.

How are the practitioners supervised?

Practitioner supervision is provided through the following processes:

- It is recommended that practitioners are supervised by 1 external programme developer supervisor (qualified to QCF-7/8 level), with 494 hours of programme training.
- Furthermore, it is recommended that practitioners are supervised by 1 host-agency supervisor (qualified to QCF-7/8 level), with 350 hours of programme training.

What are the systems for maintaining fidelity?

Programme fidelity is maintained through the following processes:

- Training manual
- Other printed material
- Other online material
- Video or DVD training
- Face-to-face training
- Fidelity monitoring

Is there a licensing requirement?

Yes, there is a licence required to run this programme.

How does it work? (Theory of Change)

How does it work?

- The programme works through the development of social-emotional skills, positive identity, resiliencies and sense of belonging, and bolsters youth engagement in their education and protects youth from engaging in aggressive and criminal behaviour
- The BAM programme builds positive identity, self-efficacy and future orientation by developing a safe space for youth to explore their feelings, be acknowledged for their experiences, be held accountable for their actions, and stay in integrity on their path to their future goals.
- In the short term, youth will develop resiliencies such as emotional regulation, empathy, self-awareness and trust, decrease aggressive behaviours in school, and increase their academic engagement and achievement.
- In the long term, youth will stay in school to graduate and avoid or reduce their involvement with the justice system.

Intended outcomes

Enhancing school achievement & employment Preventing crime, violence and antisocial behaviour

Contact details

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

About the evidence

Becoming A Man's most rigorous evidence comes from two RCT's conducted in the United States.

These studies identified statistically significant positive impact on a number of child outcomes.

This programme has evidence from two rigorously conducted RCTs, with at least one study demonstrating long-term impact, as well as demonstrating impact on assessment measures independent of study participants (not self-reports). Consequently, the programme receives a 4 rating overall.

Study 1

Citation: Heller et al., 2013

Design: RCT

Country: United States

Sample: 2740 pupils, between Grades 7 and 10 with a mean age of 15 with pupils originating predominantly from racially segregated and deprived communities in Chicago's South and West Side.

Timing: Post-test; 1-year follow-up

Child outcomes:

- Increased school performance
- Increased school performance
- Reduced arrests for violent crime

Other outcomes:

- None measured

Study rating: 3

Heller, S., Pollack, H. A., Ander, R., & Ludwig, J. (2013) "Preventing youth violence and dropout: A randomized field experiment" (No. w19014). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Available at: <https://www.nber.org/papers/w19014>

Study design and sample

The first study is a rigorously conducted RCT.

This study involved random assignment of participants to one of three treatment arms 'In-school BAM-only', 'After-school Sports', 'Both', or a control group.

This study was conducted in the United States, with a sample of pupils with a mean age of around 15. These pupils were drawn from Chicago's disadvantaged South and West Side neighbourhoods where violent crime is disproportionately concentrated and are a low socio-economic status sample. Over a third of participants had been previously arrested prior to the start of the intervention. All participants in the study are from ethnic minority backgrounds with around 70% African American and the remainder Hispanic.

Measures

Increased school performance was measured using Chicago Public Schools administrative data (administrative data).

Reduced arrests for violent crime was measured using Illinois State Police arrests records (administrative data).

Findings

This study identified statistically significant positive impact on a number of child outcomes.

This includes:

Reduced arrests for violent crime, immediately after completion of the programme

Increased school performance (GPA, days present, enrolment status) immediately after completion of the programme, and one year after completion of the programme.

Study 2

Citation: Heller et al., 2017

Design: RCT

Country: United States

Sample: 2064 pupils in Grades 9 and 10 who were between 14 and 16 years old with a mean age of 14.78. The sample was drawn from pupils living in racially segregated and deprived communities in Chicago's South and West Side.

Timing: Interim measurement (1 year before the end of the 2-year programme); Post-test

Child outcomes:

- Reduced arrests for all crime

Other outcomes:

- None measured

Study rating: 3

Heller, S. B., Shah, A. K., Gurvan, J., Ludwig, J., Mullainathan, S., & Pollack, H. A. (2017). Thinking, fast and slow? Some field experiments to reduce crime and dropout in Chicago. the Quarterly Journal of Economics, 132(1), 1-54.

Available at: <https://academic.oup.com/qje/articleabstract/132/1/1/2724542>

Study design and sample

The second study is a rigorously conducted RCT.

This study involved random assignment of children to a BAM+Sports group and a control group. This study was conducted in the United States with a sample of children with a mean age of 14.78. As with study 1 these pupils were almost entirely drawn from deprived and racially segregated neighbourhoods in Chicago from an area of the city where violent crime is disproportionately concentrated. As with the sample from study 1 all participants were ethnic minorities with 70% of the sample African American and the remainder being Hispanic.

Measures

Improved School performance was measured using Chicago Public Schools pupil records (administrative data).

Reduced arrests for all crimes was measured using Illinois State Police arrests records (administrative data).

Findings

This study identified statistically significant positive impact on a number of child outcomes.

This includes:

Reduced arrests for all crime

Increased school performance (GPA, days present, enrolment status)

Other studies

The following studies were identified for this programme but did not count towards the programme's overall evidence rating. A programme 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 - **This reference refers to a randomised control trial, conducted in the USA.**

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. <http://www.ipr.northwestern.edu/publications/papers/2015/ipr-wp-15-01.html> - **This reference refers to a randomised control trial, conducted in the USA.**

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. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago - **This reference refers to a qualitative study, conducted in the USA.**

University of Chicago Crime Lab. (2018). Preventing Youth Violence: An Evaluation of Youth Guidance's Becoming a Man Program. Chicago, IL. Retrieved from https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/BAM_SIF_Final_Report_Revision_20181005_508.pdf - **This reference refers to an evaluation report brief, conducted in the USA.**

Walker, K., & Wilkinson, A. (2019) Building the Evidence for Impact and Expansion: Youth Guidance Strengthens Becoming A Man. Bethesda, MD: Child Trends. Retrieved October 2, 2019, from <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/building-evidence-for-impact-and-expansion-youth-guidance-strengthens-becoming-a-man> - **This reference refers to a case study design, conducted in the USA.**

Guidebook

The EIF Guidebook provides information about early intervention programmes that have at least preliminary evidence of achieving positive outcomes for children. It provides information based on EIF's assessment of the strength of evidence for a programme's effectiveness, and on detail about programmes shared with us by those who design, run and deliver them.

The Guidebook serves an important starting point for commissioners to find out more about effective early interventions, and for programme providers to find out more about what good evidence of impact looks like and how it can be captured. As just one of our key resources for commissioners and practitioners, the Guidebook is an essential part of EIF's work to support the development of and investment in effective early intervention programmes.

Our assessment of the evidence for a programme's effectiveness can inform and support certain parts of a commissioning decision, but it is not a substitute for professional judgment. Evidence about what has worked in the past offers no guarantee that an approach will work in all circumstances. Crucially, the Guidebook is not a market comparison website: ratings and other information should not be interpreted as a specific recommendation, kite mark or endorsement for any programme.

[How to read the Guidebook](#)

[EIF evidence standards](#)

[About the EIF Guidebook](#)

EIF

The Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) is an independent charity and a member of the What Works network. We support the use of effective early intervention for children, young people and their families: identifying signals of risk, and responding with effective interventions to improve outcomes, reduce hardship and save the public money in the long term.

We work by generating evidence and knowledge of what works in our field, putting this information in the hands of commissioners, practitioners and policymakers, and supporting the adoption of the evidence in local areas and relevant sectors.

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