

The Post and Courier

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize

Letter: Anti-bullying programs work

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The Oct. 9 column by Charles Krauthammer denigrates any efforts at gun control and hints that it's a mental health issue while dismissing even that as an effective target. He offers no plan, no direction, nothing but "whatever you want to suggest won't work." Except, of course, the straw man challenging President Obama to abolish the Second Amendment. Why is he wasting his breath?

On the other hand, there are effective evidence-based practices for preventing bullying and violence; practices which, if more broadly implemented, have an impact on both bullying in schools and violence years later.

When bullying programs include the following, they are effective:

- A comprehensive multi-tiered behavioral framework such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.
- Providing active adult supervision.
- Training and ongoing support for staff and students.
- Implementing policies to address bullying and monitor bullying behaviors.

Specific violence and risk prevention programs that have proven effective include:

- Functional Family Therapy.
- Multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care.
- Multi-systemic Therapy.
- Seattle Social Development Project.
- LifeSkills Training.
- The Midwestern Prevention Project.
- AI's Pals (Wingspan).

These are programs that congressional leaders, editorial writers, educational leaders and all of us common citizens should be promoting. These are programs that can lead to the cultural changes making all the difference in how we settle disputes. As Steve Chapman said in his Aug. 31 column, "Where citizens are sober and peaceable, they rarely kill each other — with guns or anything else."

We have solid research telling us what works. Our future must include these. Our future depends on it.

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