

Evaluation of the effectiveness and satisfaction of the Learning to Forgive program for the prevention of bullying

**Óscar Sánchez-Hernández¹, Ana Canales², Ana Peinado³
and Robert D. Enright⁴**

¹ Department of Evolutionary and Educational Psychology,
University of Murcia, Murcia (Spain)

² Sander Psychologists: Well-being & Science, Murcia (Spain)

³ Department of Psychiatry and Social Psychology, University of Murcia,
Murcia (Spain)

⁴ Department of Educational Psychology, University of Wisconsin–Madison
(United States) and International Forgiveness Institute, Inc.

Spain

Correspondence: Óscar Sánchez Hernández. Faculty of Psychology. Espinardo University Campus, (Murcia).
CP: 30100. Spain. E-mail: oscarsh@um.es

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Abstract

Introduction. Two pioneering studies in Spain are presented on the Learning to Forgive program inspired by the research of Robert Enright and his team, pioneers in the education of forgiveness. Study 1 aims to analyze whether teacher training in the Learning to Forgive Program increases their knowledge of forgiveness and Study 2 evaluates the satisfaction of the program for teenagers.

Method. In Study 1, the sample consisted of 88 primary and secondary school teachers, distributed in an experimental group ($n = 63$) and a control group ($n = 25$), belonging to 11 educational centers, and in Study 2 the sample consisted of 153 students belonging to 4 educational centers.

Results. In Study 1, statistically significant improvements were found in the forgiveness group regarding their knowledge of forgiveness and marginally significant in emotional forgiveness compared to the control group. In Study 2 participants noted, among other data, high satisfaction with the program and that it had helped them forgive in a remarkable way.

Discussion and Conclusion. In line with other studies, it is recommended to incorporate education in forgiveness into bullying prevention programs.

Keywords: bullying; education; forgiveness; teenagers; teachers

Resumen

Introducción. Se presentan dos estudios pioneros en España sobre el programa Aprendiendo a Perdonar inspirado en las investigaciones de Robert Enright y su equipo, pioneros en la educación del perdón. El estudio 1 tiene por objetivo analizar si la formación a profesores aumenta su conocimiento del perdón y el estudio 2 evalúa la satisfacción del programa en adolescentes.

Método. La muestra del estudio 1 estuvo formada por 88 profesores de educación primaria y secundaria, repartidos en grupo experimental (n=63) y grupo control (n=25), pertenecientes a 11 centros educativos, y el estudio 2 contó con 153 estudiantes pertenecientes a 4 centros educativos.

Resultados. En el estudio 1 se hallaron mejoras estadísticamente significativas en el grupo perdón respecto a su conocimiento del perdón y marginalmente significativas en perdón emocional en comparación con el grupo control. Los participantes del estudio 2 señalaron, entre otros datos, una alta satisfacción con el programa y que les había ayudado a perdonar de forma notable.

Discusión y Conclusión: En consonancia con otros estudios se recomienda incorporar la educación en el perdón en los programas de prevención del acoso escolar.

Palabras clave: acoso escolar; educación; perdón; adolescentes; profesores

Introduction

According to the III Study on Bullying and Cyberbullying, between 89% and 94% of victims have specific psychological problems caused by bullying (see <https://www.anar.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/III-Estudio-sobre-acoso-escolar-y-ciberbullying-seg%C3%BAAn-los-afectados.pdf>). The persistence of bullying involves psychological stress and behavioral problems for the victims (Machimbarrena et al., 2018) as well as anxiety, depression, fear, irritability, somatization, sleep problems, and difficulties in concentration (Pham & Adesman, 2015). Victims also are more likely to have ideation and suicide attempts (Iranzo, Buelga, Cava & Ortega-Barón, 2019).

Different studies indicate that the negative consequences for the aggressors continue in their adult life with more depressive symptoms, a tendency not to follow the rules, greater consumption of drugs, problems with authority figures, and greater participation in violent and criminal behaviors (Ortega-Baron, Buelga, Cava & Torralba, 2017). Bullying prevention programs have achieved positive results (Ortega-Barón, Buelga, Ayllón, Martínez-Ferrer & Cava, 2019) although the reviews indicate small effect sizes (Gaffney, Farrington, Espelage & Ttofi, 2018). Other recent studies by Quintana-Orts and Rey (2018a) in a sample of 1650 Spanish teenagers and Barcaccia and collaborators (2018) in a sample of 2015 Italian teenagers point out that the strength of forgiveness is a protective factor against emotional problems (depression, pathological anger, anxiety, maladjustment) and helps victims of bullying to not become future bullies. Thus, both research groups advise education in forgiveness in schools as it promote well-being and the prevention of emotional and social problems including bullying. In a study by León-Moreno and collaborators (2019), the researchers analyzed the link between school victimization and school violence, studying the role of revenge motivation, avoidance, and benevolence. 671 adolescents from six public centers of Primary and Secondary Education participated. It was found that victimization was positively related to school violence directly and indirectly, through the motivation for revenge. Also, victimization was related to avoidance and benevolence motivations, although these were not associated with school violence.

Professor Robert Enright and his team pioneered the creation of programs for the education of forgiveness (Al-Mabuk, Enright and Cardis, 1995). Research on forgiveness programs conducted in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and in Belfast, Northern Ireland schools shows a

significant reduction in anger, which is related to reductions in depression and anxiety and leads to better academic performance and more peaceful social behavior (Enright, Gassin & Knutson, 2003; Enright, Knutson, Holter, Baskin & Knutson, 2007; Enright, Rhody, Litts, & Klatt, 2014; Gassin, Enright & Knutson, 2005; Gambaro, Enright, Baskin, & Klatt, 2008; Holter, Magnuson, Knutson, Knutson-Enright & Enright, 2008). A recent study of adolescents in Iran showed similar positive results (Ghobari Bonab, Khodayarifard, Geshnigani, Khoei, Nosrati, Song, & Enright, 2020). The results found in various research studies on education in forgiveness show that it increases hope, self-esteem and emotional intelligence (Hui & Chau, 2009). The benefit of education in forgiveness goes beyond psychological well-being. The youth within forgiveness groups can show improvement in academic performance and reduce behavioral problems, measured by punishments and expulsions (Gambaro, Enright, Baskin & Klatt, 2008; see also Park, Enright, Essex, Zahn-Waxler., & Klatt, 2013, in South Korea).

The “Learning to Forgive” program is based on the principles and scientific evidence provided by Robert Enright, professor at the University of Wisconsin and creator of the International Institute of Forgiveness, who has developed in recent decades very important work for the development of forgiveness. This program tries to change the typical understanding, often incomplete, that we usually have about forgiveness. With a deeper understanding about what forgiveness is, then the students may show less resentment, fewer relationship breaks, and less unpleasant emotions over time. Teaching young people this more complete view of forgiveness might avoid, in the words of Enright himself, many sufferings in adulthood. The forgiveness program consists of one hour sessions, usually once a week, that can be from about 8 to 17 sessions, which can aid young people in gradually acquiring the strength of forgiveness when treated unjustly by others. The anti-bullying program has a minimum of four lessons which are recommended to be given over at least 8 weeks (Enright, 2012). Some studies indicate that victims of bullying do not perceive teachers as a source of authority who help them with their problems (Houndoumadi & Pateraki, 2001; Ortega-Baron, Buelga, Cava & Torralba, 2017). For this reason, it is essential that teachers who accompany young people in forgiveness education have made their own "trip of forgiveness" working the program from an "adult" vision and verifying the important benefits it brings to emotional well-being. This will allow them to connect with victims, observers, and aggressors who participate in bullying by helping them resolve their conflict.

The “Learning to Forgive” program is inspired by The Anti-Bullying Forgiveness Program developed by Robert Enright (2012) based on his more than 30 years of research into forgiveness. Its program has been tested and used for more than 17 years in schools located in places such as Belfast, Northern Ireland, and more recently in Monrovia, Liberia (West Africa), and Iran (Ghobari Bonab, Khodayarifard, Geshnigani, Khoei, Nosrati, Song, & Enright, 2020) and Pakistan (Rahman, Iftikhar, Kim, & Enright, 2018). The purpose of the anti-bullying forgiveness program is to help students, who bully others, to forgive those who have deeply hurt them. It is based on the understand that bullying behavior does not occur in a vacuum, but instead often results from a deep internal rage that is not originally targeted toward their victims, those who are intimidated. Instead, bullying often emerges after others have been unjust to them, hurting those who bully in the family, school, or neighborhood. To help those who bully to forgive is to reduce the excessive anger that can be a direct motivation for hurting others. In this way forgiveness can be a powerful way to reduce repressed anger and eliminate bullying behavior.

To begin exploring the theme of forgiveness education in Spain, two innovative pilot studies are presented. This is the first time in Spain that a program on education in forgiveness is evaluated, inspired by the works of Robert Enright (see <https://youtu.be/jaWXYtcxDKI>) and, according to scientific literature, the first time that the effects of education on forgiveness are studied in teachers. The fundamental objective of study 1 is to analyze whether teacher training in a forgiveness education program increases their knowledge of forgiveness and then their going forward to teach it to their students.

It has been found that the motivation for benevolence that involves not only avoiding conflicts but also forgiving the aggressor and striving to maintain a positive relationship can enhance the fear of revictimization (Watson, Rapee & Todorov, 2017). That is why the knowledge of forgiveness is evaluated to differentiate a "weak" or inappropriate forgiveness from a "strong" or healthy forgiveness. It is crucial to indicate that forgiving and asking for forgiveness does not imply ceasing to be assertive or stop defending one's rights properly. It is essential to prevent forgiveness (in its false form) from leading to a non-voluntary or desired transfer of one's rights and to others abusing those rights. Forgiveness by denying the offense, its seriousness, the pain caused or the responsibility of the offender is what some authors have called false forgiveness (Sell & Hardgrave, 1998), bad forgiveness (Berecz, 2001) or pseudo-forgiveness (Lawler- Row et al., 2007) in which the aggressor maintains dominance and in

which the maintenance of the damage is inadvertently promoted (Prieto, 2017). Forgiveness does not equate to weakness (Pallarés, 2016). The main objective of the program is that teachers will internalize, from the scientific field, what is true and therefore healthy forgiveness.

According to the American Psychological Association (APA, 2007), "Forgiveness is the willingness to leave aside feelings of resentment towards an individual who has done something wrong, has been unfair, or has harmed one in some way. Forgiveness does not amount to reconciliation or to excuse the other, and it is not merely accepting what happens or ceasing anger. It implies, rather, the voluntary transformation of one's own feelings, attitudes and behavior towards the individual, so that one is no longer dominated by resentment and can express compassion, generosity or pleasure towards the individual. Forgiveness is considered as an important process in psychotherapy or psychological counseling".

Objectives and Hypotheses

The fundamental objective of study 1 is to analyze whether teacher training in a forgiveness education program increases their knowledge of forgiveness and then their going forward to teach it to their students. Because of the definition above, the purpose of Study 1 was to examine the emotional transformation in the teachers as they, too, worked on forgiving someone, as their students would do through the forgiveness curriculum. Study 2 aims to make a first evaluation of the satisfaction of the forgiveness program in a sample of young people (see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9ohrXn_E4E).

Method

Participants

In Study 1, the sample consisted of 88 primary and secondary school teachers, using a convenience sample, divided into a non-randomized experimental group ($n = 63$) and a control group ($n = 25$), belonging to 11 educational centers in the Region of Murcia and with an average age of 43.38 years ($SD = 10.13$), of which 84.1% were women and 15.9% men. 97.7% reported average social status and 2.3% high social status. In study 2, the sample consisted of 153 students, using a convenience sample, belonging to the 6th grade (55.6%) and 1st ESO (44.4%) courses of 4 educational centers in the Region of Murcia with an average age of 11, 9 years ($SD = 0.8$), 57.6% girls and 42.4% boys.

Instruments

Regarding study 1 the evaluation measures are:

1. Knowledge Questionnaire of Forgiveness (Sánchez-Hernández, Canales y Peinado, 2017). The purpose of this scale is to evaluate the knowledge of what is and what is not forgiveness according to science. It consists of two main dimensions. The Scientific Forgiveness (SF) dimension is composed of five items (e. g. “To forgive is to overcome resentment towards the offender, not denying our right to resentment”) that represent what forgiveness is from science. The Inappropriate Colloquial Forgiveness (ICF) dimension consists of 10 items (e. g. “Forgiving means denying harm and giving permission for them to continue to harm us.”) that reflect an inappropriate and unhealthy forgiveness. A total Knowledge of Forgiveness (KF) score can be calculated by subtracting the previous dimensions (SF - ICF). The Knowledge of the Forgiveness questionnaire was developed by studying various manuals on forgiveness to determine the items of the variables Scientific Forgiveness and Inappropriate Colloquial Forgiveness (Enright, 2017; Luskin, 2006; Pallares, 2016; Prieto, 2017) as well as scientific articles on measures of forgiveness evaluation (Fernández-Capo, Recoder, Gámiz, Gómez and Worthington, 2017) and according to the American Psychological Association (APA, 2007). In the study of Canales, García, Peinado and Sánchez-Hernández (2018), Cronbach's Alpha of 0.67 for SF, for ICF of 0.68, and 0.65 for KF were reported. For each item, participants score from 0 (no agreement) to 5 (totally agree) depending on what is, in their opinion, the concept of forgiveness. The KF ranges from -50 to 25 with a high score representing an accurate understanding of forgiveness.

2. Decisional Forgiveness and Emotional Forgiveness (Worthington et al., 2012), with the Spanish adaptation by Pallares (2016). Scales to evaluate decisional and emotional forgiveness have been used in various investigations about forgiveness regarding a specific offense. Each dimension is defined and the participants are asked to rate their willingness to forgive from 0 (the participant will not forgive) to 5 (totally forgive) with respect to the person who offended them and the situation. The item used to measure Forgiveness Decisional is defined as: << Forgiveness is making the decision - it is not necessary to express it verbally - of not opting for revenge or avoiding the perpetrator of the offense and returning to the relationship as before the offense. Having understood the decision to forgive, express on the following scale what decision you intend to make>>. The item used to measure Emotional For-

giveness is: << Emotional forgiveness is defined as the degree to which emotions towards the perpetrator of the offense are currently less negative and may even be replaced by more positive ones. Score from 0 to 5, depending on the degree to which you have experienced that change>>.

In Study 2, a program satisfaction questionnaire was applied with the following questions: 1. How much did you like the program on a scale of 0 to 10?; 2. How much has the program helped you to forgive on a scale of 0 to 10 ?; 3. Whom have you committed to forgive?; 4. What did you like most about the program?; 5. Aspects to improve the program; 6. Which module did you find most complicated ?; 7. Which module was easiest for you?

Procedure

For both studies, the advice of the International Forgiveness Institute, Inc. (internationalforgiveness.com), in general, and Dr. Robert Enright, in particular, was taken into account in the initial phase. In previous research we conducted bibliographic reviews of the interventions of forgiveness (Canales and Sánchez-Hernández, 2017a) and education in forgiveness (Canales and Sánchez-Hernández, 2017b). In Study 1 we proposed to the Teachers Resource Center of the Region of Murcia to offer the Learning to Forgive Program to the various teachers' centers and seek collaboration for those who would act as a control group. For Study 2 we had the EducAcción association to carry out the program with students of their educational centers. In this case, the program was applied to all students without inclusion criteria (universal prevention). The EducaAcción association was in charge of informing parents and collecting informed consent. In both studies, the sessions were conducted by two clinical psychologists with experience in applying psychoeducational interventions for the prevention of emotional problems and the promotion of well-being in educational centers and with the advice of international expert on Forgiveness Education, Robert Enright. They clearly informed the teachers which dynamics they could apply to their students in the future and which techniques should be performed by clinical psychologists. They also explained the need for early detection and referral for psychological treatment when necessary, as well as to implement the protocols established for signs of bullying.

The Learning to Forgive program consists of four sessions (Canales, Peinado and Sánchez-Hernández, 2019). Because this was a pilot study, and because of time-constraints for the teachers, it was thought necessary to shorten the number of sessions for the program

from the recommended 8 sessions (2 sessions for each of the 4 lesson in the curriculum guide) to a total of 4 sessions. Yet, to give sufficient time for the learning about forgiveness, each session was 3 hours long, in contrast to the typical one-hour for each session when there are 8 sessions:

Session 1. This focuses on explaining what forgiveness is and is not. Forgiveness is presented as a human strength that protects us from the excesses of revenge, anger, and resentment. On the other hand, talking about what forgiveness is not also is very important. This is the case so that there is no confusion about what the definition of forgiveness is and what the steps are within the forgiveness process. The second part of this session is dedicated to the recognition of anger. Through the story of a boy named Joseph, the intention is to address the injustice this young man faces and how he manages to heal his psychological challenges through the process of forgiveness. The story is presented in parts in the different sessions.

Session 2. It aims to work on personal strengths and the inherent value of the human being. The four strengths we address in the path of forgiveness are justice, temperance, wisdom and courage. The part related to the inherent value focuses on those qualities that unite us as members of the same human family.

Session 3. Compassion is addressed in the story of Joseph, with visualizations and the use of empathy. Once students have been able to identify these sensations in the heart related to compassion, an activity is carried out that aims to allow the students to feel that "soft heart" when thinking about the person who hurt them. For this exercise, the students are asked to think about that person and try to be aware of the pain that person may be carrying inside. The student should be aware that this unresolved storm in the offending person is probably not related to the student and therefore the damage that the person has caused has been nothing personal. The second ability requiring work in this session is "Pain resistance" defined as not responding to violence with violence. We resist pain from compassion, from empathy, and from understanding why the offending person does what he does, what he is trying to do to defend himself, and what burdens the offending person carries. In this sense, to resist pain does not mean to tolerate injustice. Instead, it is to respond in an assertive and courageous way with *social skills*: identification of passive, assertive, and aggressive styles; training for expressing disagreement and/or dislike; defend personal rights and other skills. Students are

told that when faced with abuse, it is important to ask adults for help and to help report abuse other students receive.

Session 4. A recap of the previous sessions is made and the forgiveness is explained as a restorative practice that can be carried out by the educational organization.

As stated above, Study 1 was applied in four sessions of three hours each session. This length of time actually is more than the recommended 8 sessions of one hour each. In Study 2, four sessions of one hour each were applied. The planning was to hold one session per week.

For Study 1, a 2 x 2 mixed factorial quasi-experimental (non-randomized) design was used, with an inter factor (forgiveness program, control group) and an intra factor (pretest, posttest). In Study 2, the forgiveness program was applied to the entire sample with a measure of satisfaction at the post-test.

Data Analysis

For Study 1, covariance analyzes were carried out taking as a covariant the score obtained in the pretest in line with the statistical analyzes applied in other prevention studies. The *t* test of independent samples was applied in the pretest to study the equality of the groups. For the effect size analysis, the most appropriate *d* index is to compare the change that occurs from pretest to posttest in one group with the change that occurs in the other (Morris, 2000; Morris and DeShon, 2002). Interpretations of the effect size calculations were made according to Cohen (1988). For the index *d* a score equal to or greater than 0.20 is considered low, equal to or greater than 0.50 average and equal to or greater than 0.80 high. In Study 2 descriptive analyzes of the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and frequency of the questions of the satisfaction questionnaire were applied.

Results

Study 1

Baseline

The *t* test of independent samples was performed in the pretest that indicated that there were no differences between the groups in any variable.

Comparison between groups in the posttest

Knowledge of Forgiveness

In the ANCOVA analyzes, the forgiveness group, in comparison with the control group, obtained a statistically significant improvement in the Knowledge of Forgiveness with a magnitude of the effect size interpreted as high (see table 1). Statistically significant differences also were obtained in the dimensions of Scientific Forgiveness, $F(1,81) = 17.9$, $p = .000$, $n = 82$, $d = .89$ and Inappropriate Colloquial Forgiveness $F(1,81) = 6.6$, $p = .012$, $n = 82$, $d = 1.14$ in favor of the forgiveness group pointing out that participants in this group increased their knowledge of scientific forgiveness and decreased in their inadequate conception of forgiveness compared to the control group.

Emotional Forgiveness and Decisional Forgiveness

In the ANCOVA analyzes, the forgiveness group, in comparison with the control group, obtained marginally significant improvement in emotional forgiveness with a magnitude of the effect size interpreted as low (see Table 1).

Table 1. *Descriptives (means and standard deviations) and ANCOVAS for Knowledge of Forgiveness, Decisional Forgiveness and Emotional Forgiveness at baseline (pre) and post-intervention evaluations.*

Variable	Control			Group			F (df)	p	Effect size
	Mean	n	s.d.	Mean	n	s.d.			
Knowledge of Forgiveness									
Pre-intervention	1.32	22	7.3	-0.48	60	7.5	--		
Post-intervention	-0.09	22	7.6	8.79	60	9.1	25.0(1, 81)	.000	1.49
Decisional Forgiveness									
Pre-intervention	3.7	21	1.1	3.8	60	1.2	--		
Post-intervention	4.0	21	1.1	4.0	60	1.1	.1(1, 80)	.705	.10
Emotional Forgiveness									
Pre-intervention	3.4	21	1.2	3.6	60	1.0	--		
Post-intervention	3.7	21	.9	4.2	60	.7	3.1(1, 80)	.084	.18

Notes: Results of the total scores of the measures are presented. All ANCOVAs included the pre-intervention scores as a covariate in the analyses

s.d. = standard deviation; df = degrees of freedom

Study 2

Regarding satisfaction with the program (How much did you like the program on a scale of 0 to 10?), the students scored an average of 8.10 (*SD* = 1.966). Regarding "How much has the program helped you to forgive on a scale of 0 to 10?" they scored an average of 7.21 (*DT* = 2.405). They pointed out that they had especially forgiven their peers (partners and friends 47.7% and siblings 20.3%) and what they liked most about the program was José's Story (46.4%) and the visualizations (19.6%). As aspects to improve, they indicated mainly more sessions (30.1%) and more fun games (10.5%). The most complicated module was "Resist pain" with 32.8% and the simplest "Accept anger" with 35.4%.

Discussion and conclusion

The main objective of Study 1 was to analyze whether teacher training in a forgiveness education program increases their knowledge of forgiveness. The results indicate that the teachers of the forgiveness group improved statistically significantly and with a magnitude of the effect size high in their knowledge of true, and therefore healthy, forgiveness and moved away from an inadequate conceptions of forgiveness. As mentioned before, studies indicate that forgiveness is a protective factor against emotional problems and prevents victims of harassment from now demonstrating bullying behavior toward others (Barcaccia et al., 2018; Quintana-Orts & Rey, 2018a; Quintana-Orts & Rey, 2018b; Quintana-Orts, Rey, & Worthington, 2019). On the other hand, it has been found that the motivation for benevolence that involves not only avoiding conflicts but also forgiving (in its false sense) the aggressor and striving to maintain a positive relationship can enhance the fear of revictimization (Watson, Rapee & Todorov, 2017). This is why Study 1 mainly aims to evaluate the knowledge of forgiveness to differentiate a "weak" or inappropriate forgiveness from a "strong" or healthy forgiveness. It is crucial to indicate that forgiving and asking for forgiveness does not imply ceasing to be assertive, or stop defending one's rights properly. That is why the main objective of this study is that teachers will internalize what is true and therefore healthy forgiveness from the scientific field as another tool to use wisely for conflict resolution in combination with others (assertiveness, social awareness of bullying, courage to report abuse, negotiation, restorative practices, and so forth).

For an increased knowledge of forgiveness an experiential methodology was applied in which teachers pass the dynamics just as students would do, including working on forgiveness toward a person who offended them. The research assessed whether the program had an effect on their actual forgiving of a person who was unjust to each participant. Because of the lack of statistically significant findings here, it is recommended that teachers take much more time to forgive others than several sessions. Meta-analyses suggest at least 12 (see, for example, Baskin & Enright, 2004; Lundahl, Taylor, Stevenson, & Daniel, 2008) or at least 6 or more (Canales y Sánchez-Hernández, 2017a) sessions of forgiveness with a valid process model of forgiveness if effective results are to be obtained. A marginally significant improvement in emotional forgiveness is encouraging in this regard with a magnitude of the effect size interpreted as low. Studies suggest that it is emotional forgiveness that relates, rather than decision forgiveness, in particular to mental health (Worthington, Witvliet, Pietrini

& Miller, 2007). In fact, going through an entire forgiveness process that includes thinking, feeling, and behaving, has been shown to be statistically more effective than focusing on only one aspect of forgiveness such as decision-making about forgiving the other (Al-Mabuk, Enright, & Cardis, 1995). In this study, the program was applied to teachers as children and adolescents receive it. It would be advisable to add in-depth modules for adults, which would facilitate and increase significant changes in teachers emotionally and socially. See, for example, the forgiveness intervention by Reed and Enright (2006) that encompassed over 30 one-hour sessions of individual treatment for each experimental participant. The effect sizes for mental health improvement were large in this lengthy study.

Study 2 evaluated the satisfaction of the program in a sample of young people. Because the purpose of this study was not mental health change, which can take a long time, but instead was focused on program evaluation by the students, our intent here was to get a sense of the program prior to starting a more thorough, longer intervention in schools. Participants noted, among other data, high satisfaction with the program and that it had helped them to forgive in a meaningful way.

For the future we recommend the following: replicate the experiments with larger samples and with random assignment of the participants; use a placebo care group for the control condition; increase the number of sessions and hours as in other studies which will allow greater assimilation of the concepts and more work time between sessions with activities at home; it would be ideal to accompany participants with an intervention of organizational forgiveness within the strategic direction of the educational center; measure in students the variable of bullying among others; complement by applying the program to teachers, parents and students, leaving the strengthening sessions of the program to teachers and parents under the supervision of experts in forgiveness.

On the other hand, it would be appropriate to coordinate well-being promotion programs (education in strengths, emotional and social education, for example) of social awareness (prevention of bullying and cyberbullying) and prevention of emotional and social problems (cognitive behavioral prevention programs for excessive anger, depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem), along with educational programs in forgiveness and compassion. This would help to frame education in forgiveness, more clearly within the scientific field and coordinate it with other necessary techniques and tools. Education in forgiveness goes beyond

the benefits of bullying and can be an important element in other forms of violence (Garai-gordobil, 2010; Quintana-Orts, Rey, & Worthington, 2019).

Forgiveness-based education, as an empirically supported approach to reducing anger, may be one of the answers to peace within conflict zones and societies if we give emotionally hurting and angry people the opportunity to flourish. On the other hand, the education of children in forgiveness begins with the example of the parents and it is, mainly, in the relations between siblings where relations with other people are rehearsed. Thus, encouraging forgiveness in the home may be an important future consideration (Prieto, 2017; Worthington & Drinkard, 2000). Social networks, media, and society in general also can foster forgiveness and peace as opposed to even subtly fostering a motivation for revenge and aggressiveness in conflict resolution (Canales, Peinado and Sánchez-Hernández, 2019).

As Professor Steven Pinker (2015) of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology demonstrates, violence has been reduced in several areas of humanity, although there are still great challenges, such as gender violence and peer harassment. Our brain seems to have circuits for revenge, aggressiveness, and competitiveness designed more for survival in a wild context than for our current environment. No training is necessary for their use. On the other hand, it also seems that we have brain circuits for empathy, kindness, self-control, compassion, forgiveness, cooperation, and peace (Gilbert, 2015; McCullough, Kurzban & Tabak, 2012). The promotion of interventions based on empathy, compassion, and forgiveness contribute to sowing the path of peaceful coexistence.

In conclusion, the results of these two pioneering studies in Spain on the Learning to Forgive Program inspired by the research of Robert Enright and his team show positive results, both in teachers and students, which indicate a greater knowledge of forgiveness, satisfaction with the program, and perhaps even greater ability to forgive for the students in general. Because the results are encouraging, it is advisable to continue this new line of research in Spain with innovative studies with the goals indicated above. In line with other research, it is recommended to incorporate education in forgiveness into bullying prevention programs (Enright, 2012; Quintana-Orts, Rey, & Worthington, 2019).

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