Journal of School Violence

Journal of School Violence®

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- ***CINAHL (Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature), in print, EBSCO, and SilverPlatter, Data-Star, and PaperChase. (Support materials include Subject Heading List, Database Search Guide, and instructional video). <http://www.cinahl.com>*** . . **2003**
- ***Contents Pages in Education*** **2002**
- ***Criminal Justice Abstracts*** . . . . . *
- ***e-psyche, LLC <http://www.e-psyche.net>*** **2002**
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- *Family Violence & Sexual Assault Bulletin* 2002
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- *Haworth Document Delivery Center <http://www.HaworthPress.com/journals/dds.asp>* 2002
- *Index to Periodical Articles Related to Law <http://www.law.utexas.edu>* . . . . . *
- *Injury Prevention Web <http://www.injurypreventionweb.org>* 2002
- *Linguistics & Language Behavior Abstracts (LLBA) <http://www.csa.com>* 2003
- *Links@Ovid (via CrossRef targeted DOI links) <http://www.ovid.com>*. 2005
- *National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse & Neglect Information Documents Database <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov>* 2003
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- *Peace Research Abstracts Journal* 2005
- *Prevention Evaluation Research Registry for Youth (PERRY)*. . . . . *
- *ProQuest Research Library. Contents of this publication are indexed and abstracted in the ProQuest Research Library database (includes only abstracts . . . not full-text), available on ProQuest Information & Learning <http://www.proquest.com>* 2004
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- *Research into Higher Education Abstracts* 2002
- *SafetyLit <http://www.safetylit.org>* 2004
- *Sexual Diversity Studies: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Abstracts (Formerly Gay & Lesbian Abstracts) provides comprehensive & in-depth coverage of the world's GLBT literature compiled by NISC & published on the Internet & CD-ROM <http://www.nisc.com>* 2002
- *Social Services Abstracts <http://www.csa.com>* 2003
- *Social Work Abstracts <http://www.silverplatter.com/catalog/swab.htm>* 2002
- *Sociological Abstracts (SA) <http://www.csa.com>* 2003

(continued)

- ***Violence and Abuse Abstracts: A Review of Current Literature on Interpersonal Violence (VAA)*** **2002**
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ABOUT THE EDITOR

Edwin R. Gerler, Jr. is Professor in the College of Education at North Carolina State University. He has been a teacher, counselor, and consultant in schools throughout the United States. He is the past Associate Dean for Research and External Affairs in the College of Education at NC State.

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Dr. Gerler's books include *Counseling the Young Learner, Elementary School Counseling in a Changing World*, and *The Challenge of Counseling in Middle Schools*. His most recent book, *How the Naked Ape Got to the Land of Nod,* reflects his interest in using psychology, theology, and humor to examine human difficulties creatively. More information about his latest book is available at: <*http://www.genesislight.com*>.

In addition to these books, he has the forthcoming books, *School Counseling for the 21st Century* (with Baker) and the *Handbook of School Violence*. More information about these books is available at: <*www.scan21st.com*> and <*http://genesislight.com/hsv%20files/index.html*>.

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CONTENTS

Serious incidents at school have profound consequences for many people–the direct or indirect victims–and often cause major tensions within the school. The school board has few or no means at its disposal for giving a constructive response. The positive results of restorative group conferencing in a judicial framework created the expectation that restorative measures might produce favourable results in education as well. Between 2002 and 2004, an experiment in restorative group conferencing at school was monitored scientifically in Flanders. On the basis of the observation of the sessions, interviews with the offenders, the victims, the supporters and the facilitators, and group discussions, it may be concluded that restorative group conferencing at school works. However, a number of aspects need to be investigated further.

KEYWORDS. Conflict management, victimisation, counselling, restorative measures, violence at school

The present study evaluated the impact of Urban Improv (UI), a theater-based youth violence prevention (YVP) program developed for inner-city youth, on three behavioral and psychological outcome domains: aggressive behaviors, prosocial behaviors, and scholastic attention and engagement. This study compared outcomes for 77 elementary school students in classrooms designated to receive UI with those of 63 students from matched control classrooms. Findings revealed that students who received UI were superior to matched controls on all outcome domains. Findings support UI as a promising practice for YVP with urban elementary school students and suggest that greater attention should be focused on application of theater-based programs in YVP.

KEYWORDS. Youth violence, prevention, theater, elementary school, outcome evaluation

In this study, data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY 97) were used to examine early adolescent functioning as a result of being bullied. The NLSY 97 asked 4807 youths from age 12 to 14 whether they had been the victims of repeated bullying before the age of 12. In this study, 19.1% of the youths responded that they had experienced this repeated violence. It was found that the youth who have been bullied are exhibiting behaviors that are very different than their non-bullied peers. In every instance those individuals that admit to being repeatedly bullied before the age of 12 were less successful in negotiating various aspects of their life as a teenager. This underscores the need for programs that address bully prevention. Some programmatic initiatives aimed at reducing this victimized population are discussed.

KEYWORDS. Bullying, residual effects, adolescent mental health, gender

In the past, juvenile gang researchers have focused primarily on the characteristics of gangs and the prevalence of gangs in communities and schools. One of the greatest limitations of this research, however, surrounds the lack of agreement on the definition of a gang and, consequently, the prevalence of gangs in the community and in schools. In this paper, we attempt to provide a new method to (1) define a gang, from a triangulation of the perspectives of law enforcement, school principals, and gang researchers and (2) estimate the prevalence of gangs in schools in a three-state region. We determine that the type of definition used dramatically impacts estimates of the prevalence of gangs in schools. The limitations and implications of this finding for school administrators and law enforcement are also discussed.

KEYWORDS. Aggression, school violence, gangs, gang violence, peer groups

The paper appraises the phenomenon of campus secret cults in Nigeria. Specifically, the paper sets off by exploring various definitions of secret cults before tracing the history of campus cults in Nigerian higher institutions. The paper identifies various reasons for the emergence of secret cults and discusses the consequences of cult activities on the Nigerian educational system. For a lasting solution to the problem, the paper recommends the establishment of a structure which will recognize the existence and operation of fraternities on campuses with the main objective of re-structuring, monitoring and regulating their activities.

KEYWORDS. Cultism, secret cults, school violence, vandalism

Over the past decade researchers have begun to explore the prevalence, incidence, short and long term effects, and prevention of sexual violence. The purpose of this article was to provide a review of the literature related to the efficacy of sexual

violence prevention programs. The review showed that there are many prevention programs yet few that have been formally evaluated and little empirical evidence to show that knowledge gained in these programs leads to prevention. This review highlighted criteria that are essential for prevention programs, recommendations for future programmatic directions and research, and implications for school personnel are presented.

KEYWORDS. Sexual assault, sexual abuse, sexual violence, incest, sexual assault prevention, prevention, school, evaluated prevention programs

FORTHCOMING

JOURNAL OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

Involving Students in School Violence Prevention: Are They Willing to Help?

Residual Effects of Repeated Bully Victimization Before the Age of 12 on Adolescent Functioning

Secret Cults in Nigerian Institutions of Higher Learning: Need for a Radical Intervention Programme

Assessing Student Perceptions of School Victimization and School Safety: A Psychometric Assessment of Relevant Instruments

Perceiving the Enemy Within: Optimistic Bias and School Violence

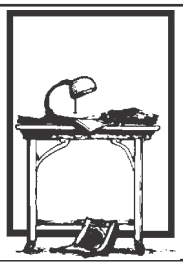
What Can Student Bystanders Do to Prevent School Violence? Perceptions of Students and School Staff

Safe Schools Through Strategic Alliances: How Assessment of Collaboration Enhances School Violence Prevention and Response

Adolescent Females' Attraction to Male Adolescent Bullies and Victims of Bullying

E-SITES FOR SAFE SCHOOLS

EDITORIAL



ANOTHER KIND OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

The rash of natural disasters across the world, including the tsunami in Asia and the hurricanes (particularly Katrina and Rita) that have struck populations in various parts of the world, point to another kind of violence that effects children's lives at school. Children in many areas of Sri Lanka and the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, for example, were separated from school for a significant period of time following the tsunami disaster. The sense of powerlessness in these natural disasters often leaves children facing physical and emotional challenges brought about by the deaths of teachers, classmates, and family members, by the destruction of school buildings, houses, and other familiar community buildings, and by the reshaping of the natural environment.

Following the Katrina disaster along the gulf coast of the United States, a colleague and I launched a joint effort to counsel some of the children and adults whose lives were devastated by the hurricane. We used this effort also to teach our graduate students something about the roles of power, poverty, class, and culture in coping with these violent natural events. For more information about this effort see the following Internet site: http://www.genesislight.com/katrina/.

Among the exercises we devised for our students was the following:

Students put their names on one side of a blank piece of paper and on the other side they identified three items that were precious to them in

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life. The students one by one discussed what was precious to them and asked questions of one other. The instructor participated in this exercise as well. At the conclusion of the discussion the instructor asked the students to rip their papers into ten pieces and to throw them into the center of the classroom. The instructor then asked the students to find their own pieces (from the large pile of pieces in the center of the room) and to reconstruct their papers. The instructor wished students good luck, added that he empathized with the difficulty of the task, and coldly left the room with his paper intact.

Here are some of the student responses to the exercise:

Example 1:

> Luckily I was able to find my pieces and with the help of another student who had some tape, I stuck them together. I noticed that many students had problems. There was a desk of "spare parts" that people kept coming to and I noticed some frustration. After some of us had put our pieces back together, we started to help others. I couldn't help noticing that this was probably the way it was for the Katrina survivors. Helping others put their lives back together, even though there were no material things to speak of to put back. Family and friends were the first things most people put on their papers as being most precious, and I'm sure there was a lot of help from others in trying to find their loved ones in that region, just as we did in class. I felt relieved to have my pieces of my life put back together to give to my instructor even though they were ragged and didn't quite fit, but in a real life catastrophe, I am sure many of the victims may not have been able to put the pieces back as I am sure some of the students had difficulty finding their pieces. I felt it was up to me to do this job because I knew the instructor was not going to help or be concerned with my pieces of life.

Example 2:

> I realized that it was simply an exercise, so my feelings were minimal. Rather than jumping in enthusiastically, I decided against escalating the mayhem that seemed to result from all the students looking for their lost pieces. Confusion and overcrowding immediately took place. I wanted no part of either. Although I didn't feel a lot of anxiety toward the task, it was obvious that many of my classmates seemed to be very anxious indeed. I realized that a point of the exercise might have been to have us realize, in a small

way, what so many of the Katrina victims had to experience. Victims of the flood are going to have to deal with Insurance issues, rebuilding their homes, replacing the irreplaceable and mourning the loss of things that would never be found. I felt humbled to see how the class members, myself included, reacted to such a small exercise–and our responses gave me a fright to think how we might all react in a serious situation.

Example 3:

The process of putting the pieces was interesting. The class had sort of a mixed view of how to accomplish the task. Some of the individuals took what pieces they thought were theirs and they just left almost right away. Other people walked around and actually took from other people's pile while they were searching elsewhere. Some people got angry, feeling like someone must have taken their piece. Some of the people in the room were disappointed that they hadn't ripped their paper a certain way. Others got very upset when some people seemed to just get it, they were able to put theirs together and just go home. I was very frustrated trying to put my page back together. I asked for the assistance of the people around me. They were very nice and were able to help me. There were three of us that sort of threw our sheets in one area so we took all the sheets in that area and just started dividing them up. I felt really frustrated that some people were just leaving. After I had all of my pieces I had to stay, because someone found one that fit with mine and they weren't finished yet. I went upstairs and borrowed some tape. I didn't want to leave without putting mine together. I actually taped it all together once, but I did a lousy job; so, I had to start over. After I was finished, I stayed to help some of the people who had helped me earlier. Everyone actually left except four of us. We ended up with A LOT of extra pieces. We decided to put them all together because they were just lost, lonely, and had no matches. The four of us went together to turn our sheets in. We wanted to prove that we had accomplished our task. We knew that the instructor was not there, but we still wanted to do what we knew we needed to.

Example 4:

There was definitely a lot of understanding of power, poverty, class, and culture within this exercise. The different dynamics of

> people roaming around and looking to steal, or those who just took what they assumed was theirs as a result they had much more power. I know that they didn't take pieces that were always theirs, and that created a lot of problems for the rest of us. There were obvious differences by how people accomplished this task, ones that could relate back to the culture of individuals. Some, like myself, wanted the help of others, and then to help. Other people wanted to do it all on their own without the help of anyone, and were not at all concerned with helping others. You could tell that some people just weren't going to be helped and that they just ended up folding because of the lack of support, and just went home.

The graduate students' reactions to this simple exercise demonstrated to all of us how important it is for professional educators in schools around the world to have a genuine sense of empathy, compassion, and high regard for the children who return to school following the trauma of a natural disaster. Violence in any form that endangers children's well-being and effective functioning at school is an important matter for researchers and scholars to pursue. While natural disasters are not typically in the mind of those who consider the topic of school violence, those of us associated with the journal welcome thought-provoking studies of violence in nature and how this violence effects children's lives at school.

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ARTICLES

Restorative Group Conferencing at School: A Constructive Response to Serious Incidents

Dieter Burssens
Nicole Vettenburg

ABSTRACT. Serious incidents at school have profound consequences for many people–the direct or indirect victims–and often cause major tensions within the school. The school board has few or no means at its disposal for giving a constructive response. The positive results of restorative group conferencing in a judicial framework created the expectation that restorative measures might produce favourable results in education as well. Between 2002 and 2004, an experiment in restorative group conferencing at school was monitored scientifically in Flanders.

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On the basis of the observation of the sessions, interviews with the offenders, the victims, the supporters and the facilitators, and group discussions, it may be concluded that restorative group conferencing at school works. However, a number of aspects need to be investigated further.

KEYWORDS. Conflict management, victimisation, counselling, restorative measures, violence at school

Almost all schools are confronted regularly with disturbing or transgressive behaviour that may have a negative effect on life at school. It may hamper order and peace at school, the positive climate and the prescribed curriculum. School staff generally possess an arsenal of pedagogical measures for remedial action vis-à-vis misbehaving pupils. If large groups of young people are to live and work together day by day, a well-founded punishment policy is indispensable within the broader framework of school rules and regulations. How and when sanctions are to be administered is a theme that generates much discussion and in-depth debate. What sanctions are pedagogically warranted? Which sanctions are most effective? How many chances should a juvenile be given? To what extent can a difficult background or history be considered an attenuating circumstance?

However, besides regular, "normal" disturbances, every school is occasionally, but almost inevitably, confronted with serious to very serious incidents. Heavy fights, vandalism, drugs dealing, physical threats, serious theft or escalated bullying can have serious consequences for the persons concerned and may cause considerable tension within a school team. Not only the direct victims of the incident, but also their environment, classmates, teachers, school administrators are affected by these events. The victims as well as their family and friends suddenly become aware that school is not as safe a place as they believed it to be; they feel let down and are angry about what has happened. Teachers find their trust in a pupil shaken; they are personally affected by the victim's distress and face the difficult task of continuing their classes in a tense atmosphere. The school administrators will have to answer critical questions about how this could possibly have happened and will be

pressured by the criticism from the teaching staff, negative media attention and angry phone calls from parents. The juveniles causing disturbances will of course have to face the consequences of their deeds. Their career at school is at risk, they are frequently isolated from their classmates or fellow pupils and often risk expulsion from school. In short, serious incidents may disrupt life at school for an extended period of time. Incidents generally affect numerous direct and indirect victims, and this severely hampers the functioning of the school.

In such crisis situations, the board have few or even no means at their disposal for giving a constructive response to the harmful consequences of the incident. Familiar measures or sanctions no longer suffice to cope with these consequences. By necessity, the only alternative–after intensive consultation within the school–turns out to be the expulsion of the pupil concerned. Although the board apply this measure in order to restore calm at school, they are fully aware that this measure is far from ideal. In the first place, it seldom offers a solution for the juvenile who caused the incident. On the contrary: at the new school, they will have to start a totally new trajectory and they will almost inevitably be "branded" for what happened in the first school; they will have to try and make new friends, catch up with the other pupils, etc. In this way the problem is to a certain extent shifted to another school. In addition, expulsion does not resolve other needs that have arisen within the school as a result of the incident. Direct and indirect victims may for a long time experience feelings of unsafety and insecurity. Many questions facing the victim are left unanswered: *Why did it happen? Why did they pick me as a victim? What did they do to my things?* Finally, the school's image may remain tarnished for a long time afterwards.

Since 2000, the Flemish youth protection system has been applying "restorative group conferencing" in response to serious juvenile delinquency (Vanfraechem, 2003). This method was first applied on a large scale in New Zealand; it was subsequently adopted in Australia, Canada, North America and England, and is now becoming increasingly popular in Belgium (Walgrave, 2000). The promising results obtained by this method (Vanfraechem, 2005) suggested the idea of applying it in education as well. As well as focusing on the offender and his behaviour, this method makes it possible to address the different needs of all stakeholders that have arisen as a result of serious offences.

When the method of restorative group conferencing is opted for, this is done because the incident is deemed to be so serious that it is felt necessary to pay close attention to its consequences for the victims, the offenders, their environment and the school team alike. This is vital for

getting school life on the right track again; at the same time, it shows respect for the distress and the misery caused to the victims and assists them in recovering from these emotions. Moreover, the explicit aim of restorative group conferencing is *not* to exclude the offenders. On the contrary, they will be held accountable for their behaviour and responsibility, but in a respectful manner, and with the clear message that they will continue being accepted as a person.

This broad approach to the consequences of serious offences inspired the decision to launch an experiment in education. From October 2002 to March 2004, 14 restorative group conferencing sessions were organised in the wake of serious incidents, in 9 different schools. For this purpose, 12 pupil counsellors and staff members from the CLB (Centre for Pupil Guidance)[1] were trained as facilitators by the Dutch organisation *Echt Recht*. The experiment was monitored scientifically by the *Onderzoeksgroep Jeugdcriminologie* (Research Group on Juvenile Criminology) of the K.U.Leuven (Burssens and Vettenburg, 2004).

The experiment is one of the policy options taken by the Education Department of the Flemish Community Ministry. In 1999, this department developed an action plan on "Antisocial Behaviour at School." This action plan included and stimulated various initiatives geared towards tackling antisocial behaviour at school, both preventively (for example, creating a favourable school climate, competent and satisfied teachers and school administrators, pupil guidance, value education) and curatively (for example, the school's punishment policy, cooperation with external partners). This action plan already devoted considerable attention to the restorative approach (Scheys, Dupont and Huylebroeck, 1999/2000).

WHAT IS RESTORATIVE GROUP CONFERENCING?

Restorative group conferencing is a guided encounter between the offender and his or her supporters on the one hand, and the victim and his or her supporters on the other. The supporters may be parents, friends, colleagues, etc. A facilitator conducts the conference strictly on the basis of a script.[2] The aim of group conferencing is "to repair the consequences of the incident to the extent possible." This refers not only to the material damage but also to the psychological, relational and/or emotional damage.

In the days preceding the restorative group conference, all participants have an initial individual contact with the facilitator. During this contact, the aims of the conference are clarified, the rules are discussed and the willingness to participate is assessed. This initial contact is of cardinal importance in creating a secure conferencing framework for participants.

The session itself starts with an introduction during which all the participants are presented and the aims and rules of the conference are repeated. In the first round, every participant is asked to describe the consequences of the incident for him or her. So, every individual participant is asked to express how they felt about the incident, in what way they were harmed, how they've been feeling ever since, etc. The victim is also given the opportunity to put questions about the incident directly to the offender.

When everyone–including the offender–has been able to express the consequences at the time of the incident and in the subsequent period, the facilitator initiates the second round. During this phase, participants try to seek possibilities for repairing the harm suffered. The offender is given the opportunity to take his or her responsibility in this process, but often others–sometimes even including the victim–will assume certain tasks as well. The proposals that are adopted by the groups are integrated into the restorative plan by the facilitator(s).

This second round concludes the formal part of the session; this is followed by an informal meeting in which participants are offered a drink and can talk things over. This enables them to recover from the–often tense, sometimes emotional–session. During this informal moment, the restorative plan is signed by all participants.

CRITERIA FOR RESTORATIVE GROUP CONFERENCING

Restorative group conferencing is not suitable for any type of incident. A first criterion is that a serious incident should be involved. Indeed, restorative group conferencing is a drastic measure and its organisation requires intensive preparation and a substantial time investment by the facilitator and the participants. Moreover, it is a highly emotional event. Such a drastic measure should therefore be reserved for serious problems. After all, it is no use cracking a walnut with a sledgehammer. In other words, the effort should be commensurate with the desired outcome.

In addition, restorative group conferencing is a voluntary and transparent process. Everyone is informed in advance of the aims and the process of the group conference. There is no hidden agenda. After the

initial contact, everyone is free to decide whether or not they wish to participate. Both the offender and the victim can decide which supporters they will invite to attend the conference.

Offenders are free to decide whether they will seize group conferencing as an opportunity for repairing their wrongdoing. Restorative group conferencing is only organised for offenders who are aware of what they have done wrong and who are prepared to take their responsibility. This voluntary basis is not absolute, of course, since the young offenders are aware that if they do not participate in group conferencing, a sanction is likely to follow. However, it is notable that if given the opportunity, most juveniles appear to be intrinsically motivated to help repair the harm they have caused.

THE AIMS OF RESTORATIVE GROUP CONFERENCING

As described above, the compensation of material damage is not the primary aim of restorative group conferencing. The method integrates various ideas which are well known in some schools (for instance, the accountability of the juvenile, the creation of a broad platform for dealing with problems, empowering the stakeholders, etc.) and which are in some cases applied already. However, what makes restorative group conferencing different is that it devotes explicit attention to the needs of all the stakeholders: the victim, the offender as well as the community.

The confrontation with the offender, during which the victim is given the opportunity to ask the offender pertinent questions, can to a large extent repair the psychological and emotional consequences of serious offences. It helps to restore the victims' feeling of security and their self-assurance. It has often been demonstrated that mediatory processes are powerful instruments for meeting the needs of victims, offenders as well as people from their environment. And this is not so much achieved by the eventual agreement but by the process itself. In other words, the mediatory process itself is of capital importance in achieving full restoration, irrespective of the final agreement reached (Aertsen and Peters, 1998).

However, restorative group conferencing not only focuses on the needs of the victims but also on the needs of the offenders. On the one hand, it keeps the young delinquent's accountability central, on the other hand it aims to counter stigmatisation and all the ensuing problems. In a restorative group conference, young offenders are confronted directly with the consequences of their behaviour. Hearing the story of

their victims and their environment enables juveniles to better grasp the consequences of their acts. Indeed, young people are not always fully aware of the far-reaching consequences of what they do. Restorative group conferencing aims to achieve this confrontation in a non-stigmatising way. That is why clear-cut rules are formulated, and the presence of supporters who really care about the young offender is of capital importance. It is made very clear that censuring behaviour does not equal censuring the person. In addition, offenders are given the opportunity to make up for their mistakes and to apologise, if they wish. Restorative group conferencing thus aims to achieve "reintegrative shaming." This term was introduced by Braithwaite in 1989 (Braithwaite, 1989). Offenders can be shamed in various ways. For instance, you can shame people by running them down publicly, humiliating them or disgracing them. However, this has an extremely stigmatising and exclusive effect. Braithwaite claims that a totally different and much more useful type of shaming is possible. He refers to the very "normal" shame induced in people when confronted with the suffering or the problems they have caused to others. Offenders should not be disparaged, but their behaviour and its consequences should be discussed. In a restorative group conference, it is stated explicitly that an offence does not necessarily make a person bad, and the offender often receives the permanent support of his environment. At this moment, shame will occur as well, but it is of a much stronger reintegrative nature. Offenders will not feel excluded from the group and tend to develop a delinquent identity less easily. "Reintegrative shaming" is often associated with restorative group conferences and is frequently cited as a major factor in reducing recidivism (Maxwell and Morris, 2002).

Finally, restorative group conferencing addresses the needs of the school and of the community as well. A restorative plan should also include actions that address the feelings of insecurity caused by the incident, the school's tarnished reputation, parents' worries, etc. Furthermore, it should meet the needs of the people from both the victim's and the offender's environment, who often suffer hard times as well.

THE FINDINGS

The experiment applied restorative group conferencing to incidents of divergent natures: serious thefts, a case of prolonged extortion, the physical intimidation of a teacher, escalated bullying among pupils (including one incident involving vandalism against the victim's possessions), the

bullying of a teacher and a serious fight in which a group of juveniles injured several pupils.

For the scientific monitoring of the experiment, 11 conferences were observed and 62 participants were interviewed, among them 14 victims and 9 offenders. In addition, supporters of the victims (20), parents of the offenders (9), other supporters of the offenders (8) and 2 absent victims were interviewed.

The facilitators completed a preparatory questionnaire for each session and also took part in intervisions and a focus-group discussion.

On average 10 persons took part in a restorative group conference at school, with the number of participants varying from 4 to 17. Conferences lasted on average 69 minutes, with 40 minutes as the shortest and 145 minutes as the longest.

In general, the restorative group conference was judged as highly positive by respondents. The results obtained correspond to similar national and international research (Strang, 2001; Marshall et al., 2002; Vanfraechem, 2003; Vanfraechem, 2005). Satisfaction among the participants–offenders, victims, supporters and school staff–appeared to be high. When offered the choice between restorative group conferencing or a more traditional punishment, 57 of the 60 interviewees said they would prefer restorative group conferencing.

All the restorative group conferences eased or even eliminated tensions within a class or school and normalised the school situation.

The 14 victims interviewed claimed unanimously that their expectations had been met and that they viewed restorative group conferencing as an appropriate and just response to the incident. Restorative group conferencing prevented expulsion for several, though not all, offenders.

The victims and their supporters were also asked whether they found the confrontation with the offender a positive experience. Of 34 respondents, 30 answered "very positive" or "extremely positive," whilst 4 respondents described the encounter as "moderately positive."

In the interviews, the offenders said that they did in no way feel humiliated during the group conference. Of the 9 offenders interviewed, 4 said that they felt bad when hearing how their acts had harmed others, and 5 said they felt moderate compassion to great compassion for those they had harmed.

The respondents said that they were well informed during the initial contact, although this did not automatically imply that they felt well prepared for the restorative group conference. This finding suggests that a group conference remains a very tense and emotional event for most of them, in spite of the initial contacts. Bringing together the offender,

victim, their respective networks and representatives of the school following a serious incident is no obvious choice. It takes courage to take this step. However, if all the stakeholders are given adequate information and if a secure environment can be guaranteed, the degree of participation is relatively high; this finding is confirmed by international research (Umbreit, 1999).

Most respondents strongly felt that they had been able to say most of what they had to say during the restorative group conference and that they were given a fair opportunity to talk about what had happened. They felt treated politely and respectfully throughout the conference.

The victims said they felt well supported, not only by their own supporters, but also by the school administrators and teachers, and in some cases even by the offender's supporters.

During the group conference, the juveniles causing the incident also discovered that there were people who supported them and that positive things were said about them as well. They indicated that they did not experience the restorative group conference as humiliating or stigmatising. Still, two juveniles interviewed were less positive than the others. We will discuss this below, under *Some Focus Points*.

The facilitators had been trained to remain neutral throughout the restorative group conference and not to express a point of view. However, since some of the facilitators were already guiding the offender or the victim as pupil counsellor or as CLB staff member, it was feared that they might not be viewed as neutral facilitators. Still, 48 out of 51 respondents said that they had the impression the facilitator was impartial. During our observations, we occasionally found that participants tried to involve the facilitator in the discussion. This certainly did not hamper the process of the restorative group conferences, but facilitators who did not know any of the participants felt they enjoyed greater authority and were thus better able to facilitate the restorative group conference.

The restorative plans include restorative sanctions on the one hand and agreements in view of preventing future incidents and problems on the other. At the end of the restorative group conferences, it had become clear that participants were not out to punish the offender via heavy retributive sanctions: they primarily seek to have the harm repaired, to hear apologies and to find ways of continuing life together within the school. This is also confirmed by research on restorative group conferencing outside school (Vanfraechem, 2005).

The majority of respondents accepted the measures included in the restorative plan and were satisfied with the outcome. However, a few

offenders felt they had less influence on the elaboration of the restorative plan than the other participants. Empowerment of the juveniles appears to be of crucial importance and will need to be controlled adequately by facilitators in the future. Research shows that the agreements that are part of the restorative plan are largely complied with (Umbreit, 1999). According to McCold and Wachtel, this is mainly related to the fact that the juveniles have a say in the elaboration of the plan (McCold and Wachtel, 2002).

Of the 60 respondents, 50 believe that the offender will not reoffend against the same victim. However, opinions differ on possible recidivism against other victims: about half of the respondents think that the juvenile will not reoffend against other victims, the other half are less sure. In follow-up research in New Zealand, ex-delinquents and family members were interviewed six years after the restorative group conference. It was found that 51% do not reoffend at all or commit substantially fewer registered offences than before. Since it was impossible to compose a correct control group,[3] the cautious conclusion of the study is "certainly no worse and maybe better" (Maxwell and Morris, 1999).

Yet, we must not forget that the prevention of recidivism is not the primary objective of restorative group conferencing. Indeed, this would negate the main *raison d'être* of this method, namely the integration of the needs of the victims, the community and the offenders. Restoration remains the first priority. However, it goes without saying that reducing recidivism is an important side-effect, but the prevention of recidivism requires other programmes to be implemented as well. As far as recidivism is concerned, juveniles with a long history of problem behaviour and/or psychic disorders cannot be helped by a single restorative group conference. Still, their participation remains necessary in view of achieving the largest possible degree of restoration.

SOME FOCUS POINTS

To conclude, we would like to present some focus points that emerged from the experiment. Indeed, although the restorative group conferencing experiment at school proved very positive on the whole, there are a few focus points or learning points that deserve special attention.

Two offenders said during the interview that they were not really satisfied with restorative group conferencing and the resulting restorative plan. However, even during the initial contact these two offenders had shown that they were not aware of their offence and consequently

were not really prepared to take their responsibility. In such cases, restoration cannot be sought via restorative group conferencing: since one of the criteria of restorative group conferencing is not met, other measures will have to be considered. In most incidents, it is sufficiently clear who committed the offence, so this criterion is rarely a real obstacle.

A second focus point is the time aspect. Restorative group conferences are highly time-intensive. The initial contacts and the conference itself have to be organised at short notice and as quickly as possible after the incident. It is not always easy for facilitators to allocate ample time for this within their busy schedule. Yet, the amount of time invested is relative. Serious crisis situations need to be addressed thoroughly, and this inevitably takes time. Otherwise, the school may face tensions for a long time, whilst the accompanying problems will keep cropping up regularly. This often costs pupil counsellors, teachers, governors and CLB staff more time than restorative group conferencing.

The explicit aim of restorative group conferencing is to serve not only the offender's and the victim's needs, but also the school as an institute. It is obvious that serious incidents have major repercussions on the image of the school, the climate at school, life at school. In order to address these needs during the conference, a member of the board or a representative was generally invited to participate. All too often, however, this person confined his or her input to supporting the victim and/or the offender, so that the resulting restorative plan contained no actions meeting the needs described above. During restorative group conferencing, the facilitator should make sure that such actions *are* developed.

Finally, we should mention that the introduction of restorative group conferencing is not evident in schools, which per se constitute a pedagogical environment. The important but very difficult mission of schools is not only to transfer knowledge but also to educate pupils into becoming good citizens. However, any serious incident creates new needs which extend beyond the (re)education of the offenders. After such an incident, schools often confine themselves to developing ways of instructing the offender. This not infrequently includes restorative group conferencing, since the confrontation with the consequences of the act is deemed to be instructive for the juvenile. However, this should not be the primary or only aim. Restorative group conferencing must not be used as a pedagogical instrument but should seek fair repair of the harm for the victim, the offender as well as the school. The pedagogical effect on the offender is of course welcome, but after incidents that have a strong impact on many people, it is only of secondary importance. Nor is this pedagogical effect achieved automatically. Schools

will therefore have to learn to shift the focus in these crisis situations to include the interests of the victim and of the community.

CONCLUSION

Schools are often powerless when a serious incident occurs within the school premises. Whatever measure is taken, the board and the teachers have the feeling that they fail. If the student is expelled from school, they risk hearing the reproach that they have chosen the easy way, saddling other schools with their problems; conversely, if the offender is kept on and counselled at school, they may be criticised for being too lax.

The experiment with restorative group conferencing demonstrates that there *is* a possibility for tackling these problems radically and constructively. The offenders have to take their responsibility, but without being stigmatised. The needs of the victims are acknowledged and the harm they have suffered will be repaired to the extent possible. Finally, a restorative plan is developed that commands broad support both inside and outside school.

In light of the positive outcome of this experiment, the Flemish Education Department are currently taking steps towards a broader implementation–probably from September 2005 onwards-of restorative group conferencing in Flemish schools.

NOTES

1. Pupil counsellors are part of the school team. They are teachers who are partially or fully relieved of their teaching task in order to guide and support pupils. The "Centre for Pupil Guidance" (CLB) is a service that can be called upon by pupils, parents teachers and school administrators for information, assistance and guidance.

In this experiment, 6 duos–each consisting of one CLB staff member and one pupil counsellor active in a secondary school belonging to the field of operation of the CLB staff member concerned–were trained to be facilitators.

2. The present experiment used the Australian model, whilst the experiment conducted by Special Youth Care uses the New Zealand model. The latter model runs a somewhat different course and makes no use of a script.

3. Since 1989, *all* young delinquents are to participate in restorative group conferencing in New Zealand.

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Evaluation of a Theater-Based Youth Violence Prevention Program for Elementary School Children

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ABSTRACT. The present study evaluated the impact of Urban Improv (UI), a theater-based youth violence prevention (YVP) program developed for inner-city youth, on three behavioral and psychological outcome domains: aggressive behaviors, prosocial behaviors, and scholastic

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attention and engagement. This study compared outcomes for 77 elementary school students in classrooms designated to receive UI with those of 63 students from matched control classrooms. Findings revealed that students who received UI were superior to matched controls on all outcome domains. Findings support UI as a promising practice for YVP with urban elementary school students and suggest that greater attention should be focused on application of theater-based programs in YVP.

KEYWORDS. Youth violence, prevention, theater, elementary school, outcome evaluation

Youth violence is a widespread problem and significant public health issue in the United States (Dahlberg, 1998; Prevention, 2004). Children exposed to violence often experience a range of emotional and behavioral problems and obstacles to normal development, including aggressiveness, depression, and failure to develop appropriate social skills (DuRant, Cadenhead, Pendergast, Slavens, & Linder, 1994; DuRant et al., 2000; O'Keefe, 1997). Numerous youth violence prevention (YVP) programs have been developed to address this problem in a variety of settings. However, relatively few violence prevention programs have been systematically evaluated (Embry, Flannery, Vazsonyi, Powell, & Atha, 1996; Farrell & Meyer, 1997; Tolan & Guerra, 1994; Twemlow, Fonagy, & Sacco, 2001; Zigler et al., 1992).

A growing research base points to school as an important setting for YVP programs (e.g., Greenberg et al., 2003; Twemlow et al., 2001). This research has demonstrated the efficacy of a number of school-based programs in attaining two primary outcomes of YVP: increased prosocial behaviors and decreased aggressive and disruptive behaviors (DuRant et al., 1994; Grossman et al., 1997; Twemlow et al., 2001). Moreover, incorporation of violence prevention programming into existing school structures allows for more integrated and ongoing learning within a safe and structured environment (Twemlow et al., 2001). The majority of these programs, however, have focused on violence prevention with middle- and high-school students.

To date, few YVP programs have been designed and tested with elementary school children (Flannery et al., 2003; Johnson, Johnson, &

Dudley, 1992; McArthur & Law, 1996; Tolan, Gorman-Smith, & Henry, 2004; Twemlow et al., 2001). Evidence suggests the importance of incorporating a developmental perspective into YVP programs. Studies have indicated that violent behaviors tend to manifest differently by age and may occur along a developmental trajectory associated with severity (e.g., Flannery et al., 2003; Tolan, Guerra, & Kendall, 1995). The competencies that are emphasized in prevention programs need to consider these developmental differences (Durlak, Weissberg, Quintana, & Perez, 2004). Therefore, the focus of YVP programs will likely differ for school-aged children compared to adolescents, given both the different peer-related issues and triggers that youth may face (Lochman & Dodge, 1994; Tremblay, Masse, & Perron, 1992) and competencies that should be emphasized (Durlak et al., 2004) at these different developmental periods.

Both the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the *American Psychologist* (AP) recently published reports on "best practices" for YVP programs (Greenberg et al., 2003; Thornton, Craft, Dahlberg, Lynch, & Baer, 2002). These reports identified several crucial components of school-based YVP programs: interactive participation to teach students the application of skills and values in daily life situations; fostering of relationships between students, staff, and families; reward for positive behaviors; and total school involvement. Additional developmentally tailored components recommended for prevention programs designed for elementary school children included: use of a group program structure; active participation in story-based or narrative learning; opportunity to practice negotiation skills with peers and authority figures; and a permissive attitude toward humor and playfulness.

The CDC and AP best practice recommendations are consistent with a social-cognitive theoretical approach to YVP (DuRant, Treiber, & Getts, 1996; Twemlow et al., 2001). This approach contends that interventions geared toward the reduction of youth violence should focus on four components: (1) increase in knowledge and awareness; (2) development of self-regulation skills; (3) opportunities for practice, application, and feedback; and (4) ongoing social support for desired changes in behavior (DuRant & Hergenroeder, 1994). A social-cognitive framework for YVP lends itself to application of strategies and techniques that tap into multiple domains of learning (e.g., cognitive, affective, interpersonal, action-oriented).

Certain YVP programs, including theater- or arts-based programs, closely adhere to a social-cognitive framework and incorporate many of these best practice recommendations. Arts-based programs have been

associated with several prosocial outcomes, including increased social well-being, improved motivation and learning, and enhanced individual and community development, as well as reduction in aggression, violence, and crime (McArthur & Law, 1996). Studies of the impact of arts-based programs on reduction of social problems including violence suggest that flexibility in program structure, mentorship, opportunities for ongoing program involvement, and links to other community organizations are keys to program success (Stone, Bikson, Moini, & McArthur, 1998; Stone, McArthur, Law, & Moini, 1997). Similarly, research on experiential education suggests that theater-based techniques represent an alternative learning approach that integrates multiple modalities for learning, allowing for acquisition of knowledge and skills as well as opportunities to practice, apply, and enhance learned information (Helmeke & Prouty, 2001; Kevelighan, Duffy, & Walker, 1998).

Leaders in the field have acknowledged the promising future of theater-based strategies for youth violence prevention (OJJDP, 1995). One notable advantage of theater-based approaches to YVP is their provision of engaging forums (e.g., skits, improvisational scenes) and mechanisms (e.g., role play, perspective taking) for students to act out, break down, and analyze the stages of a violent event in an experientially vivid manner within a safe and contained setting. Such approaches provide unique opportunities to help students illuminate, examine, and address important aspects of youth violence, including cognitive attributions, peer pressures, sociocultural assumptions, and emotional sequelae (Elliott, Williams, & Hamburg, 1998).

Theater-based strategies for YVP may be particularly effective for engagement and learning among urban youth who are often regularly faced with violent scenarios. For instance, performance-based and collaborative experiences with peers and adults have been associated with enhanced learning among urban youth (Mikalsen, Vincent, & Harris, 2002). Significant reductions in disciplinary problems and improved academic functioning were associated with a program that emphasized cognitive skills, awareness of social roles, self-regulation skills, and mentoring relationships in inner-city elementary schools (Twemlow et al., 2001). In addition, a number of benefits have been associated with experiential learning across diverse populations, including increased confidence in skills (Helmeke & Prouty, 2001; Kevelighan et al., 1998), opportunity to address ethical dilemmas in a safe environment (Rabinowitz, 1997; Twemlow et al., 2001), and improved clinical outcomes (Gask & Goldberg, 1993).

Although several arts-based YVP programs have been developed, few programs have been systematically evaluated (McArthur & Law, 1996; O'Donnell, Hawkins, Catalano, Abbott, & Day, 1995). Existing research on arts-based programs has been primarily qualitative in nature (Costello, 1995; Long & Soble, 1999; Stone et al., 1998). Given the increased interest in arts-based programs, the efficacy and effectiveness of theater-based programs for YVP need to be evaluated through methodologically rigorous empirical research (Stone et al., 1997).

Notably, research on YVP to date has focused almost exclusively on aggressive and prosocial behavioral outcomes, with little attention to evaluation of other youth outcome domains likely to be associated with risk of violence exposure, perpetration, or impact. Potentially relevant domains to be targeted in future research include attentional processes, scholastic engagement, hyperactivity and impulsivity (Twemlow et al., 2001).

The present study consisted of an independent evaluation of Urban Improv (UI), a school-based YVP program that has been in operation in the Boston Public Schools for the past 14 years, and that utilizes structured theater improvisation to address youth decision-making, impulse control, and conflict resolution skills. This evaluation examined the impact of UI on three outcome domains: aggressive and externalizing behaviors; prosocial behaviors, including cooperation, assertiveness, and self-control; and scholastic attention and engagement. It was hypothesized that participation in UI would be associated with: (1) prevention of new-onset or increased aggressive behaviors; (2) increased prosocial behaviors; and (3) decreased hyperactivity and withdrawal, processes which interfere with attention and engagement.

METHOD

Procedure

The evaluation of UI consisted of a quasi-experimental, matched control, multi-outcome evaluation with elementary school students in the fourth grade. Classrooms identified a prior by the school district to receive UI were matched for school setting, grade, gender, race, learning level, first language and socioeconomic characteristics with comparison classrooms. All study classrooms were fourth grade, mainstreamed, with English as first language. The protocol consisted of classroom-based observation and student- and teacher-report questionnaires. Assessment domains and measure selection were informed by pilot evaluation con-

ducted with same-aged cohorts during the prior two years. Evaluation measures were administered at baseline and immediately following program completion.

Participants

Participants were fourth-grade students drawn from five inner-city schools within one school district. Intervention schools were chosen by the school district based on prior collaborations and at-risk demographic factors primarily related to school location (e.g., urban, high-crime location of school system). Control classrooms were drawn from the same schools as intervention classrooms when available; additional control classrooms were selected from nearby schools to reflect the demographics of intervention classes.

Inclusion criteria for the study included: (1) enrollment in the fourth grade at a Boston Public School, within a single district; (2) enrollment in an UI class or a selected control classroom; (3) consent from legal guardian; (4) agreement to participate and ability to provide assent; and (5) English language proficiency. Recruitment was sought from all students in a given class unless a teacher indicated a compelling reason not to involve a particular student in the evaluation (e.g., significant learning disability).

Participants were 140 students from eight fourth-grade classrooms; four classes (n=77) received the intervention, and four classes (n=63) acted as controls. Participants ranged in age from 8 to 11 years (M=9.83, SD=.67). Gender was evenly distributed (47.9% female, 52.1% male). Ethnic/racial distribution was predominantly ethnic minority: African-American (44.5%), Hispanic (27.7%), Bi-racial (13.1%), Asian (5.8%), Other (5.8%), Caucasian (2.2%), and Native American (0.7%). Demographic variables by intervention group are reported in Table 1. Baseline analyses revealed that groups did not differ significantly on any demographic variable.

Prevention Program: Urban Improv

Urban Improv (UI) is an interactive theater and educational program designed to serve racially and ethnically diverse inner-city youth in the Boston Public Schools, including elementary, middle, and high school settings, and throughout New England (Freelance Players, 2004; Magis, 2004). UI has been run in the Boston Public School system for the past 14 years. UI is an action-oriented, violence prevention program that ad-

TABLE 1. Descriptive Variables by Intervention Group

Demographic Variable	Urban Improv	Control
Total n	77	63
Mean Age (*SD*)	9.89 (0.70)	9.77 (0.62)
Gender		
%Male	58.7	46.8
%Female	41.3	53.2
Ethnicity		
African-American	44.7	44.3
Caucasian	2.6	1.6
Hispanic/Latino	19.7	37.7
Asian	7.9	3.3
Native American	1.3	0.0
Biracial	17.1	8.2
Other	6.6	4.9

Note: Groups did not differ significantly on any reported variable.

dresses a variety of themes related to violence and conflict resolution. UI conforms to a social-cognitive framework of YVP. Its premise is that providing children with interactive opportunities to rehearse youth conflict scenarios will enhance their real-life ability to solve problems in a non-violent manner. A particular strength of this program is its emphasis on many of the components of best practices for YVP, including group format, behavioral rehearsal, adult involvement, mentoring and feedback, use of humor, cultivation of self-regulation skills, and reliance upon strategies and techniques tapping multiple domains of learning. UI is intended to provide a safe forum to critically examine and experience the consequences of personal actions and choices in youth conflict situations, and to develop and practice new and more effective ways of responding. This program utilizes structured theater improvisation to improve decision making, problem solving, leadership, cooperation, assertiveness, and impulse control and values clarification. Its interactive program design enables children to practice in a proactive manner options to a variety of complex social situations that often are the precursors of violence.

The UI curriculum is organized into three distinct nine-week units, tailored to provide developmentally appropriate content for three distinct

age/grade cohorts: elementary, middle, and high school. The fourth-grade curriculum addresses the following themes: friendship, self-esteem, imagination, peer pressure, fairness, violence/conflict resolution, sharing, and family.

Program structure consists of nine weekly sessions that are 75 minutes in length, taking place during the school day in a local theater space (to which students are bussed and accompanied by their teacher). Each session begins with an original song on the topic of the week and is followed by a prepared scene that relates to the particular theme. At a critical point in the initial scene, the director freezes the action and invites a student to replace one of the actors. This process allows students to make the pivotal decisions affecting the outcome of the scene, take control of the drama, and imagine different alternatives to social or violent scenarios. Subsequently, students are divided into groups, each creating and performing their own scene on the same topic. Sessions end with group discussion of the choices made and the consequences that followed, which provides a forum for both values clarification and processing of personal experiences and reactions. The UI intervention staff includes a director and four actors, all of who have extensive training in improvisational theater, expressive arts, and youth education.

Measures

Social Skills Rating System–Elementary Level (SSRS) (Gresham & Elliot, 1990). The SSRS was used to measure participants' social skills, problem behaviors, and academic competence. Both the student-(SSRS-S) and teacher-(SSRS-T) report versions were used. The SSRS-S is a 34-item, self-report measure scored on a 3-point Likert scale. Items load onto four subscales: Cooperation, Assertion, Empathy, and Self-control. The SSRS-T consists of 57 questions on 3 content scales: Social Skills (3 subscales: Cooperation, Assertion, Self-Control), Problem Behaviors (3 subscales: Internalizing, Externalizing, Hyperactivity), and Academic Competence. The SSRS-T Externalizing Scale consists of teacher report of student aggressive and disruptive behaviors and was used as an index of teacher report of student aggression in the present study. The SSRS-T has demonstrated good internal consistency, with coefficient alphas of .93 (females) and .94 (males) for the Social Skills scale, .87 (females) and .88 (males) for the Problem Behaviors scale, and .96 (females) and .95 (males) for the Academic Competence scale (Gresham & Elliot, 1990). The internal consistency of the SSRS-S Social Skills scale was also adequate (alpha = .80 and .84 for females and

males, respectively). Test-retest reliability was good for the SSRS-T (r = .84 to .93), but lower for the SSRS-S (r = .68). Studies have also supported the criterion and construct validity of both SSRS forms (Gresham & Elliot, 1990).

Youth Coping Inventory (YCI) (McCubbin, Thompson, & Elver, 1996). The YCI is a self-report measure of coping style. Youth are asked to rate the frequency of their use of various strategies on 31 items, scored on a 5-point Likert scale. Responses are categorized into three broad coping strategies. For purposes of this study, the subscale targeting coping strategies suggestive of aggression was utilized. Overall internal consistency for the YCI is high (Cronbach's alpha = .86) (McCubbin et al., 1996). Short-term test-retest reliabilities for the YCI are not available, and long-term (6-15-months) test-retest reliability is low (r = .43). The predictive validity of the YCI has been established (McCubbin et al., 1996).

Normative Beliefs About Aggression (NBA) (Huesmann, Guerra, Zelli, & Miller, 1992). The NBA is a 20-item, self-report measure designed to measure youth attitudes and beliefs toward violence and aggression in various scenarios. Responses load onto two subscales: General Approval of Aggression and Approval of Retaliation Aggression scale. Internal consistency of the two scales ranges from .65 to .85 and test-retest values from .06 to .44 (Violence Institute of New Jersey at UMDNJ). No other psychometric data are available.

STATISTICAL DESIGN

The study was designed to assess the effectiveness of UI as a violence prevention initiative for at-risk youth. Specifically, youth exposed to UI were compared to controls on aggressive and prosocial behaviors, as well as on scholastic attention and engagement.

The study utilized a quasi-experimental design. Youth participating in the UI program were drawn from pre-existing, intact classrooms previously selected to participate in the program. Control classrooms were selected from within the same schools when possible, or from different schools with similar demographic profiles to intervention schools.

Multilevel modeling (HLM) was used to account for the clustering of students in classrooms. Baseline group differences on outcome domains were assessed using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), followed by univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA). To control for any baseline differences in study variables, study outcomes were evaluated

using either multilevel analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) or, as appropriate (i.e., more than one outcome measure available for a given domain being assessed), multilevel multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA), with baseline score serving as covariate for all outcome measures. Significant multivariate results were followed by multilevel univariate analysis.

Data collection occurred in intact classroom settings during scheduled school times. Although efforts were made to administer study measures to students absent on the date(s) of data collection, a number of participants had missing data, ranging from single, unanswered items within a measure to missing several full measures due to school absence on the date of measure administration. The total number of participants was 140. Missing data was accounted for as follows. Within a discrete measure, missing data was accounted for using the rules established for that measure. To maximize power, participants with excessive incomplete data on any given measure were dropped from analyses requiring that measure, but were included in all analyses for which they had complete data available. As a result, students who were excluded from multivariate analyses due to missing listwise data may have been included in a follow-up univariate analysis when data for that measure was available.

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

School differences. In order to account for the potential impact of school-specific effects, baseline comparisons of key study variables by school were conducted using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with school as the grouping variable. Where significant differences were revealed, these were followed by univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) to identify specific measures that differed, followed by the Tukey HSD test to evaluate specific school differences.

Results indicated significant differences by school on teacher ratings of key study variables; post-hoc analyses indicated that ratings of both aggression and prosocial behaviors were significantly different, with three of the five analyses indicative of group difference due to higher scores for one control classroom at baseline. In order to account for potential bias, participants from this classroom were removed from pri-

mary study analyses and all multivariate analyses were re-run. Results for all analyses remained at previous levels of significance; therefore, data from these participants was retained.

Baseline group comparison. Descriptive statistics are reported in Tables 2 and 3. At baseline, multivariate analyses indicated that treatment groups did not differ on teacher- or student-reported aggression or student-reported prosocial behavior. Groups were found to differ on teacher-reported prosocial behaviors ($F(3,129)=4.179$, $p<.01$); follow-up univariate analyses indicated that control students were rated as having higher levels of assertion at baseline.

TABLE 2. Descriptive Information for Teacher-Report Measures

Cluster	Measure	Urban Improv			Control		
		n	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Aggression	Reactive Aggression						
	Pretreatment	53	2.57	1.39	61	2.62	1.51
	Posttreatment	55	2.67	1.32	63	2.71	1.44
	Proactive Aggression						
	Pretreatment	54	1.58	0.88	61	1.67	1.16
	Posttreatment	55	1.76	1.03	63	1.82	1.03
	Externalizing Behaviors						
	Pretreatment	72	3.94	3.87	62	3.33	3.77
	Posttreatment	75	3.88	3.92	53	4.43	4.38
Prosocial	Cooperation						
	Pretreatment	72	13.18	4.62	61	13.18	5.26
	Posttreatment	75	14.44	4.42	51	11.76	6.17
	Assertion						
	Pretreatment	72	10.82	3.88	61	13.03	4.84
	Posttreatment	75	12.81	4.38	51	11.53	5.00
	Self-Control						
	Pretreatment	72	12.11	5.32	61	13.02	5.84
	Posttreatment	75	13.08	5.18	51	11.39	6.36
Attention/	Hyperactivity						
Engagement	Pretreatment	72	4.86	3.77	62	4.06	4.09
	Posttreatment	75	4.33	3.88	53	4.79	4.3
	Internalizing						
	Pretreatment	72	4.92	2.99	62	3.69	3.03
	Posttreatment	75	4.05	3.02	53	4.96	3.23

TABLE 3. Descriptive Information for Student-Report Measures

Cluster	Measure	Urban Improv			Control		
		n	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Aggression	General Approval						
	Pretreatment	70	1.49	0.56	58	1.74	0.74
	Posttreatment	64	1.63	0.72	52	1.45	0.53
	Retaliation Aggression						
	Pretreatment	68	2.04	0.66	55	2.08	0.81
	Posttreatment	66	2.17	0.64	52	1.99	0.75
	Aggressive Coping						
	Pretreatment	65	18.21	4.41	57	19.07	4.72
	Posttreatment	57	18.76	3.74	49	19.14	4.79
	Conduct Problems						
	Pretreatment	70	0.24	0.22	56	0.25	0.28
	Posttreatment	62	0.22	0.25	54	0.23	0.24
Prosocial	Cooperation						
	Pretreatment	71	14.55	3.00	57	13.23	3.50
	Posttreatment	67	14.42	2.98	50	14.88	3.65
	Assertion						
	Pretreatment	70	13.93	2.85	57	13.23	3.5
	Posttreatment	67	13.72	2.53	50	13.52	3.45
	Self-Control						
	Pretreatment	70	11.69	3.91	58	11.22	4.48
	Posttreatment	67	11.21	3.66	50	12.2	4.64
	Empathy						
	Pretreatment	71	15.75	3.32	58	15.31	3.93
	Posttreatment	67	14.76	3.49	50	15.98	3.50

Primary Analyses

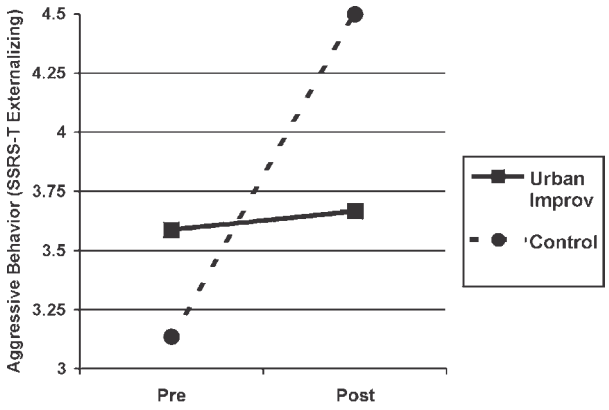
Aggressive/disruptive behaviors. Primary study hypotheses focused on the impact of the UI program on youth violence and prosocial behaviors. To test the first study hypothesis that participation in the UI program would act as a preventative measure for the development of aggressive or violent behaviors, one multilevel univariate analysis and one multilevel MANCOVA was conducted examining teacher- and student-report of aggression, respectively. Analyses indicated significant effects for teacher-, but not student-reported youth aggressive and

disruptive behaviors ($F(1,114)=5.41$, p=.022). Direction of findings revealed that at post-assessment, participants in the UI program maintained baseline levels of externalizing behaviors; in contrast, controls were found to increase levels of externalizing behaviors over time (see Figure 1).

Prosocial behaviors. The second study hypothesis postulated that participation in the UI program would lead to an increase in prosocial behaviors. Analyses indicated a significant multilevel multivariate effect for teacher-report, but not youth-report, of prosocial behaviors ($F(1,351)=5.23$, p=.023). Follow-up multilevel univariate analyses indicated significant effects for teacher report of youth cooperative behaviors ($F(1,111)=5.06$, p=.026) and self-control ($F(1,111)=4.55$, p=.035). In addition, a nonsignificant trend was observed for teacher report of youth assertive behaviors ($F(1,111)=3.59$, p=.061). Examination of group means revealed that, during the study time period, youth participating in the UI program demonstrated an increase in levels of all prosocial behaviors across domains. In contrast, during the same period, comparison youth demonstrated a decrease in level of prosocial behaviors.

Standardized scores and overall percentile rankings for total social skills were also examined, using analysis of covariance, and were consistent with multivariate findings. UI was found to have a positive impact on overall Social Skills, according to both standard score

FIGURE 1. Change in teacher-reported aggressive behavior for children exposed to Urban Improv versus controls.



($F(1,111)=5.46$, p=.021) and percentile rank ($F(1,111)=3.82$, p=.053). Youth receiving the prevention program, as a group, moved from the 36th to the 48th percentile for elementary school students; in contrast, comparison student demonstrated a decline in overall rating of social skills, dropping from the 48th percentile to the 37th percentile for children their age.

Scholastic attention and engagement. A significant multilevel multivariate effect was found for teacher report of attention/engagement ($F(1,237)=6.67$, p=.010). Multilevel univariate analyses revealed significant effects for both internalizing symptoms ($F(1,114)=6.95$, p=.010) and hyperactivity ($F(1,114)=4.69$, p=.033) on the SSRS. Youth receiving UI demonstrated a decrease in level of these behaviors over time whereas comparison youth demonstrated an increase in symptoms.

DISCUSSION

Results of this study support UI as a promising practice for YVP with inner-city elementary school children, lending support to the application of arts-based programs in YVP initiatives. Findings from this study indicated increased prosocial behaviors, prevention of new-onset aggression, and decreased hyperactivity and internalizing symptoms among students participating in UI. In contrast, youth in the comparison group exhibited an increase in aggression, hyperactivity, and internalizing symptoms, and a decrease in levels of prosocial behaviors during the same time period. Results indicate that for youth partaking in UI, the program not only halts the progression of aggressive behaviors, but supports the development of prosocial behaviors such as cooperation, assertion, and self-control. It is likely that these positive behaviors act as one mechanism through which aggressive behaviors are reduced, as youth are offered alternative strategies for coping in the face of conflict. These findings are consistent with the existing literature on the impact of school-based YVP programs.

These findings provide a unique perspective on the use of YVP programs with elementary school aged children. Evidence from this study indicates that the elementary school years may be an important time to intervene, as there is the potential for building new problem-solving skills among youth before aggressive behaviors and attitudes become entrenched. This may be particularly relevant given the developmental shift that occurs during middle school, around which time peers assume an increasingly influential role in youth decision-making.

Interestingly, significant findings in this study were based on teacher, but not student, report. There are several possible reasons for this discrepancy. Inconsistencies in adult- and child-report data are not uncommon in child research (e.g., Achenbach, McConaughy, & Howell, 1987; Kisiel & Lyons, 2001). It is also possible that children at this age may either be less aware of changes in their behavior or less able to accurately report these changes compared to adults who may be better observers of children's behaviors. Notably, the latter interpretation is consistent with the typically lower reliability of student- versus teacher- report measures.

This program evaluation represents an initial step in the establishment of UI as an evidence-based practice for YVP. Initiatives are currently underway to design and evaluate a teacher-led supplemental curriculum to UI to incorporate components of this program into naturalistic classroom environments on an ongoing basis. This supplement will enable better integration of the program across settings, as well as allow students more opportunities for assimilation of learning and practice of skills introduced in UI. Promising work has already been done in this regard with high school students (i.e., Stevahn, Johnson, & Johnson, 1996, 1997).

Future research should examine the efficacy of UI with middle school and high school cohorts to assess whether this violence prevention program works for older children who are more likely to have more extensive prior exposure to violence. Additionally, future research should assess the replicability of findings when implemented in other inner-city school systems by non-program originators, as well as the adaptability of this program to suburban and rural school systems. Finally, it will be important to consider the impact of UI on other YVP outcome indices, including objective indicators of behavioral changes (e.g., disciplinary actions, truancy).

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Residual Effects of Repeated Bully Victimization Before the Age of 12 on Adolescent Functioning

Julie Laser Haddow

ABSTRACT. In this study, data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY 97) were used to examine early adolescent functioning as a result of being bullied. The NLSY 97 asked 4807 youths from age 12 to 14 whether they had been the victims of repeated bullying before the age of 12. In this study, 19.1% of the youths responded that they had experienced this repeated violence. It was found that the youth who have been bullied are exhibiting behaviors that are very different than their non-bullied peers. In every instance those individuals that admit to being repeatedly bullied before the age of 12 were less successful in negotiating various aspects of their life as a teenager. This underscores the need for programs that address bully prevention. Some programmatic initiatives aimed at reducing this victimized population are discussed. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <http://www.HaworthPress.com>*

KEYWORDS. Bullying, residual effects, adolescent mental health, gender

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In many of the recent school tragedies, the media has reported that the perpetrators' rationale to commit school violence was in retaliation to a history of being chronically bullied. This research attempts to answer two questions: (1) Does repeated bullying in childhood have an impact on adolescent functioning, which includes both behaviors of the adolescent and their perceptions of the school environment? (2) If bullying does influence adolescent functioning, does a history of bullying victimization make it more likely to be a more violent student as an adolescent? This research explores the characteristics of young adolescents who were repeatedly bullied before the age of twelve in comparison to their non-bullied peers to elucidate if there is a quantitative difference in functioning.

DEFINING BULLYING

Bullying has been defined as the "repeated exposure over time of a student to negative actions on the part of one or more students" (Olweus, 2001, pp. 5-6). Interestingly, in Australia, Rigby, Cox and Black (1997) have understood bullying as the antithesis of cooperation. Students who scored highly on their cooperation index were less likely to report either bullying or being bullied.

FREQUENCY OF BULLYING VICTIMIZATION

In a 2001 study by the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) of nearly 16,000 students found that 16.9% of the respondents had been bullied (Nansel et al., 2001). Likewise, the National Center for Education Statistics polled 6500, sixth through twelfth grade, students. It was found that 56% of the students reported that bullying behavior happened in their school, 42% had witnessed bullying, 18% worried about being bullied, and 8% had been bullied (Nolin & Davies, 1996). Similarly, the school personnel where these youth attended school were also cognizant of violence perpetrated in the school environment. Twenty-five percent of public school teachers rated physical conflict between students to be a serious to a moderately serious problem in their schools (Nolin & Davies, 1996).

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN BULLYING VICTIMIZATION

The gender of victims of bullying has also been examined in a number of studies. Duncan (1999) found that American children of both genders were nearly equal in their becoming victims, unlike European and Asian children who were predominately male victims (Morita et al., 1998; Olweus, 1993; Smith, 1997).

Interestingly, Borg (1998) investigated the emotional reaction of being bullied for boys and girls. He found that sixth grade boys who were bullied most often felt vengeful after the victimization. Girls of the same age who had been bullied were most frequently having feelings of self-pity. Post the bullying event, sixth grade girls and younger students of both genders were more likely to confide in their parents regarding the event. Similarly, girls were more likely to share their feelings with their friends than boys were. The lack of reaching out to others after the bullying event puts boys at greater risk for becoming further isolated and residual feelings of vengeance.

DEVELOPMENTAL CONTEXT OF BULLYING

The late elementary and early middle school years are the pinnacle of bullying behavior (Duncan, 1999; Oliver, Hoover & Hazler, 1994; Olweus, 2001b; Rigby, Cox & Black, 1997). The middle school years also is the developmental period where peer influences are most strongly felt and peer conformity is most valued (Brown, Clasen & Eicher, 1986; Brown, Eicher & Petrie, 1986). Thereby, this combination of developmentally being desirous of group affiliation and conformity to group norms and being particularly singled out for victimization is very devastating for the developing individual.

Impact of Bullying Victimization on Adolescence

Olweus (2001a) studied the mental and physical health implications of being bullied. He found that children bullied in late elementary school were still being affected by higher levels of physical and mental distress in comparison with their non-bullied peers several years later. The enduring effects of bullying victimization reached far beyond the middle school years.

Conversely, research has found that youths entering high school with positive self-concepts are likely to retain these concepts throughout

adolescence and into adulthood; similarly, negative self-perceptions are equally long-standing (Jessor, Turbin, Costa, 1998). Individuals who were not being subjected to these sorts of negative behaviors during the middle school years were better able to make the transition more smoothly from adolescence to adulthood.

In extreme cases, negative feelings due to bullying victimization can manifest itself in suicidal or aggressive behavior. Cleary (2000) investigated the correlation between bullying victimization and suicidal or aggressive behavior. His research focused solely on high school students in the New York Public Schools. He found that "violent or suicidal behavior occurred 1.4 to 2.6 times more frequently among students who had been victimized by bullying than students who had not been victimized." Similar findings by Olweus (2001a) found that there was a relationship between bullying behavior and suicidal ideation.

FACTORS THAT RELATED TO BULLYING VICTIMIZATION IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Children who become the victims of bullies are classified into two distinct groups: provocative and passive victims (Olweus, 1993, 2001). The provocative victims are often described as needling and inciting the bully into action. The provocative victims are often blamed for the actions that beset them. Students and teachers alike often feel that these provocative victims "deserved the rough treatment that they got" (Olweus, 2001a, p.12). Interestingly, it was found that sometimes an entire class colluded or conspired against these provocative victims. Perhaps there were only a few students who actively bullied the victim, but the other students either by their passivity or their tacit approval allowed the victimization to occur (Olweus, 2001a).

Oliver, Hoover and Hazler (1994) investigated student beliefs about bullying and found that most students believed that bullying victims play a role in their own victimization. The respondents also believed that being bullied made the victim stronger and could be instructive for the victim. These findings suggest that many students may not realize the harm that is done to these bullied individuals.

Although this sort of victim blaming has been implicated as part of the trivialization of bullying incidents, it is estimated that provocative victims only make up 10% to 20% of the total number of bullied victims (Olweus, 2001b). The overwhelming majority of bullied children are passive victims who have done nothing to call attention to themselves,

other than simply coexist in the same environment where the bully resides. Therefore, perceptions that these bullied children are somehow responsible for their own fate are generally untrue and further prejudice the already injured child. Such perceptions also undermine the ability of school personnel to stop the occurrence of bullying as valuable time is needlessly spent on investigating the rationale for why these children were bullied instead of simply eradicating the bullying behavior (Franson, 2000).

FACTORS RELATED TO BULLYING VICTIMIZATION IN THE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

Duncan (1999) has found a strong connection between victimization at the hands of a bully and victimization at the hands of their parents or other adults. Survivors of child abuse were significantly more likely to be also survivors of childhood bullying. The victimization in both the family environment and the school environment made these children much more psychologically distressed and this lingered into early adulthood. Duncan also reports a strong relationship between sexual assault and bully victimization. It is unclear if there is a causal relationship between child abuse and bullying, however, the combination of child abuse and bullying is particularly deleterious for the developing youth.

Parenting behaviors have also been studied in relationship to bullying. Espelage, Bosworth and Simon (2000) found that parental physical discipline practices were significantly associated with bullying behavior. Families that used physical punishments for misbehavior were far more likely to have children that exhibited bullying behavior. Conversely, children whose parents or other adults modeled alternatives to violence were found to have a decreased relationship to bullying behavior. This underlies Bandura's (1973) belief that aggressive behaviors are modeled in the home and then replicated in other settings.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

In this study, data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) were used to examine factors in relationship to bullying.

A cross-sectional sample of 6770 adolescents and an additional oversample of 2252 Latino and African American were included for a total of 9022 adolescents interviewed in the NLSY data set. These respondents resided in 6844 households. The racial composition of the sample was 2335 African American, 1897 Latino and 4790 white. The participants were asked a wide variety of questions regarding work habits, family functioning, family background, family income, school habits, academic functioning, and health-related behaviors. For the purpose of this research, a sub-sample was drawn to include respondents between the age of 12 and 14 years old (N=4807). The NLSY asked youth, "before you turned 12, were you ever a victim of repeated bullying?" Slightly over nineteen percent (19.1%) of the adolescents in the survey responded that they had experienced this repeated violence, similar to the JAMA results of 16.9% (Nansel et al., 2001). Of the youth who had been repeatedly bullied, 59% were male while 41% were female.

Measures

There were two foci of the questions: perceptions of the school environment and behaviors of the adolescent, which includes physical health, school performance, and emotional health. The adolescent's perceptions of the school environment were assessed by questions which included whether the respondent believed they were graded fairly, their belief regarding the discipline being fair at the school that they attend, and their feeling safe at the school they attended. Each of these questions were answered by a four-part Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The questions regarding the behaviors of the adolescents came primarily from an abbreviated form of the Achenbach. The Achenbach is gender specific, with some differences in questions posed to each sex. The questions from the Achenbach are answered in a three-part Likert scale: not true, sometimes true, often true. Many of the questions from the Achenbach are similar to questions asked to children who have been victims to community violence and are being affected by issues of post-traumatic stress disorder (Martinez & Richter, 1993; Osfosky, Wewers, Hann, Fick, 1993). The questions include: "you have trouble sleeping" (female only), "you have trouble concentrating or paying attention" (male only), "you are unhappy, sad or depressed" (both male and female), "you lie or cheat" (both male and female), "your schoolwork is poor" (female only), and "you do not get along with other kids (male only). In addition, two more questions were used to evaluate the

escalation of violent behaviors at school by the respondent: "I got into a fight at school," which ranged in occurrences from zero to upwards of fifty, and "If you have access to a gun, have you carried a gun to school?"

RESULTS

In all of the variables studied, a significant statistical difference was found between the bullied and the non-bullied youth with the exception of carrying a gun to school. In every aspect, the bullied youth are experiencing their lives differently than their non-bullied peers (see Tables 1, 2, and 3).

The questions were evaluated in a series of cross-tabulations, which included a Pearson's Chi-square test for significance. The 12-14 year old males that had experienced repeated bullying were nearly twice (15.9%) as likely to often have trouble concentrating and paying attention as their non-bullied male peers (8.7%). The implications for academic success and future success are great. The bullied males were more than twice as likely to self-report often being unhappy (11.2%) than their non-bullied male classmates (4.8%). The other two questions for males, "lies/cheats" and "do not get along with others," though not as dramatic in their difference between the bullied and non-bullied youth were also found to be statistically significant in the difference between bullied and non-bullied adolescent groups.

Females who were bullied also showed marked differences. Nearly twice as many females who were bullied self-reported that they often lied or cheated (7.1%) than those females who were not bullied (3.8%). Greater than two times as many (10.3%) of females who were bullied reported that their schoolwork was often poor in comparison with non-bullied females (4.2%). Over twenty percent (20.3%) of the bullied females also answered that they often had trouble sleeping as compared with less than ten percent (8.8%) of non-bullied female peers. Like the male victims of bullying, the female victims of repeated bullying were more than twice as likely to self-report that they were often feeling unhappy (16.9%) than their non-bullied female classmates (7.2%).

The bullied students' perceptions of the school environment were also significantly different from their non-bullied peers. Respondents who were repeatedly bullied were nearly two times as likely to disagree or strongly disagree (22.2%) that they felt safe at their school than their non-bullied peers (12.0%). Also non-bullied students were more likely

TABLE 1. Male Respondents

Reponses to "You have trouble concentrating or paying attention"

	Not true	Sometimes true	Often true	Total
No repeated bullying	816 42.4%	939 48.3%	168 8.7%	1923 100%
Repeated bullying	148 27.0%	313 57.1%	87 15.9%	548 100%
Total	964 39.0%	1252 50.7%	255 10.3%	2471 100%

Pearson's Chi-square significance .001

Reponses to "You are unhappy, sad or depressed"

	Not true	Sometimes true	Often true	Total
No repeated bullying	1193 62.0%	638 33.2%	92 4.8%	1923 100%
Repeated bullying	230 42.0%	256 46.8%	61 11.2%	547 100%
Total	1423 57.6%	894 36.2%	153 6.2%	2470 100%

Pearson's Chi-square significance .001

Reponses to "You lie or cheat"

	Not true	Sometimes true	Often true	Total
No repeated bullying	1132 58.9%	720 37.4%	71 3.7%	1923 100%
Repeated bullying	252 46.0%	278% 50.7%	18 3.3%	548 100%
Total	1384 56.0%	998 40.4%	89 3.6%	2471 100%

Pearson's Chi-square significance .001

Reponses to "You do not get along with other kids"

	Not true	Sometimes true	Often true	Total
No repeated bullying	1233 64.1%	545 28.3%	145 7.5%	1923 100%
Repeated bullying	288 52.6%	221 40.3%	39 7.1%	548 100%
Total	1521 61.6%	766 31.0%	184 7.4%	2471 100%

Pearson's Chi-square significance .001

TABLE 2. Female Respondents

Reponses to "You lie or cheat"

	Not true	Sometimes true	Often true	Total
No repeated bullying	942 48.3%	933 47.9%	74 3.8%	1949 100%
Repeated bullying	123 32.5%	229 60.4%	27 7.1%	379 100%
Total	1065 45.7%	1162 49.9%	101 4.3%	2328 100%

Pearson's Chi-square significance .001

Reponses to "Your school work is poor"

	Not true	Sometimes true	Often true	Total
No repeated bullying	1376 70.6%	493 25.3%	81 4.2%	1950 100%
Repeated bullying	212 55.9%	128 33.8%	39 10.3%	379 100%
Total	1588 68.2%	621 26.7%	120 5.2%	2329 100%

Pearson's Chi-square significance .001

Reponses to "You have trouble sleeping"

	Not true	Sometimes true	Often true	Total
No repeated bullying	1068 54.8%	710 36.4%	171 8.8%	1949 100%
Repeated bullying	143 37.7%	159 42.0%	77 20.3%	379 100%
Total	1211 52.0%	869 37.3%	248 10.7%	2328 100%

Pearson's Chi-square significance .001

Reponses to "You are unhappy, sad or depressed"

	Not true	Sometimes true	Often true	Total
No repeated bullying	1060 54.4%	748 38.4%	141 7.2%	1949 100%
Repeated bullying	136 35.9%	179 47.2%	64 16.9%	379 100%
Total	1196 51.4%	927 39.8%	205 8.8%	2328 100%

Pearson's Chi-square significance .001

TABLE 3. Female and Male Respondents

Reponses to "You feel safe at school"

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
No repeated bullying	1380 35.6%	2026 52.3%	389 10%	79 2.0%	3874 100%
Repeated bullying	222 23.9%	500 53.9%	159 17.2%	46 5.0%	927 100%
Total	1602 33.4%	2526 52.6%	548 11.4%	125 2.6%	4801 100%

Pearson's Chi-square significance .001

Reponses to "You believe you are graded fairly at school"

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
No repeated bullying	1113 28.8%	2172 56.1%	502 13.0%	82 2.1%	3869 100%
Repeated bullying	259 27.0%	507 54.7%	137 14.8%	33 3.6%	927 100%
Total	1363 28.4%	2679 55.9%	639 13.3%	115 2.4%	4796 100%

Pearson's Chi-square significance .024

Reponses to "You believe discipline is fair at your school"

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
No repeated bullying	776 20.1%	2238 57.9%	683 17.7%	166 4.3%	3863 100%
Repeated bullying	174 18.8%	460 49.6%	207 22.3%	87 9.4%	928 100%
Total	950 19.8%	2698 56.3%	890 18.6%	253 5.3%	4791 100%

Pearson's Chi-square significance .001

Reponses to "I got into a fight at school"

Number of fights	0-1	2-5	6-10	11-50	Total
No repeated bullying	3575 92.6%	250 6.5%	22 .6%	12 .3%	3859 100%
Repeated bullying	773 83.7%	127 13.7%	18 1.9%	6 .6%	924 100%
Total	4348 90.9%	377 7.9%	40 .8%	18 .4%	4783 100%

Reponses to "If you have access to a gun, have you carried a gun to school"

	No	Yes	Total
No repeated bullying	69 94.5%	4 5.5%	73 100%
Repeated bullying	28 93.3%	2 6.7%	30 100%
Total	97 94.2%	6 5.8%	103 100%

Pearson's Chi-square significance .566

to believe that they were graded fairly and that discipline was fair than their bullied peers.

Regarding school violence, the students who had experienced repeated bullying were more likely to have been involved in school fighting than their non-bullied peers. However, of the individuals who had access to firearms, were not more likely to bring the weapon to school.

DISCUSSION

Certainly these bullied youths are experiencing a very different quality of life than their non-bullied classmates. The ability for youth to feel comfortable in their school environment and to do well academically and socially is very important for their future success. It is imperative that the residual outcomes of bullying are well known so that the victimization is not further perpetrated. Furthermore, peers, school personnel, and parents need to become aware of the long-term outcomes of being bullied, so that they do not sit idly by as a student is victimized. It is not surprising that carrying a gun to school and being bullied has a non-significant difference between bullied and non-bullied respondents. It seems that being bullied is an early link in a long causal chain that ends in violent behavior. Friedlander (1993) sees violent behavior following a cumulative effect of individual and situational factors. Friedlander (1993) has devised a model that begins with personality characteristics, then personal history (that includes victimization), indirect behavioral models in the media, direct behavioral models from family and peers, disregard for consequences, a contextual constellation (for example, the possession of weapon, or an opportunity), provocation or incentive, and

finally a releaser or disinhibitor (drugs, alcohol, rage). The bullying victimization is not the sole determinant of violent behavior but an important ingredient than can eventually push the youth to violent behavior. It seems to be too simplistic to think of a direct effect between bullying and violent behavior, as has been portrayed in the popular press. However, though the data seem to indicate that there is not a clear difference between those who had been bullied and those who had not been bullied to bring a weapon to school, it does not confirm or deny whether or not they would be more or less likely to discharge that weapon at school.

Combating Bullying Behavior

Many school administrations have instituted programs to "bully-proof" their schools. However, the success of these programs have been varied. Programs that seem to be most successful methodically document the bullying offense(s) and swiftly, fairly, equally, and unemotionally give logical consequences for the bully's behavior (Campbell, 2000). Programs that are the least effective involve antagonizing the parents of the bully to hold them responsible for their child's behavior, which often leads the parents of the bully and the bully to level accusations at the school, or the child that has been bullied (Franson, 2000). In this current study those bullied students perceived school as a less equitable and less safe environment than their non-bullied peers. It is believed, that programs that ameliorated these beliefs would be valuable for the entire school community.

School districts and parents have searched for the proverbial "magic bullet" to eradicate the age-old problem of bullying. As a result, many schools have embraced programs directed at "bully-proofing" through conflict mediation by instructing students in methods of confronting and dealing with emotional and physical torment. Peer mediation and character education have also been heralded as the answer to eliminate bullying from school playgrounds. Individual strategies may impact personal behaviors by giving the students more information regarding encounters with a bully and an increased knowledge of moral values espoused by the school. However, programs that do not effectively change the school environment where the bullying is occurring may only be ephemeral.

Borg (1998) investigated the emotional reactions of the bully. He found that the age of the bully had an effect on the bully's sympathy or

regret after the event had been perpetrated. Borg found that elementary school bullies felt regret for the event taking place. However, secondary school bullies were characterized by feelings of indifference or satisfaction after the event had occurred. Therefore, a victim's impact statement is more effective at influencing the bully's moral development and cessation of victimization in the elementary school child than in an older child. Olweus (2001b) reports that bullying behaviors can be changed when a systems approach is applied to the issue. Since bullying is not merely an individual issue, the community, the school, the class, and the individual need to be discussed. Community characteristics, teacher characteristics and school characteristics need to be addressed to make the program successful. Olweus (1993) found a dramatic reduction of 50% of bullying behavior when a system-wide program was implemented.

Looking at the bullying issue from a more holistic perspective allows for greater change to take place. Peterson and Skiba (2001) advocate a change in the school climate. They see the need to use a multi-dimensional approach to prevent school bullying. This includes increased parent-school involvement, which drops precipitously during the middle school years (Fuller & Olsen, 1998), community involvement, parent education, teacher education, and student education. Peterson and Skiba (2001) believe that a successful prevention policy includes character education for both individual and school values where thinking, doing, and feeling are integrated (Lickona, 1991), conflict resolution curricula that emphasizes assessing feelings, empathy, and improving interpersonal skills, peer mediation that focus on alternatives to aggression and anger, and bullying prevention programs that emphasize student and adult awareness and adult community, family and school personnel involvement. For prevention initiatives to be most effective, they should be ongoing. The program should ecologically effect many levels of the problem and be continually updated and revised (Bogenschneider, 1996).

To effectively intervene in the reduction of bullying behavior an overarching policy that equally and fairly administers logical consequences for bullies needs to be universally established in the school. Furthermore, those witnessing the bullying event need to learn to recognize and actively voice their opposition to its occurrence.

Residual Effects of Bullying Past Adolescence

Bullying harassment by peers has a continuing effect on the victim. Duncan (1999) reports that 46% of the young adults bullied as children still think about having been bullied.

Bullying has more recently been studied past the school age child and the adolescent. Workplace bullying is a topic that has recently been explored. The behaviors of workplace bullying are strikingly similar to childhood bullying. Rayner (1997) conducted a study of British workplace bullying behavior and found that it is most frequently perpetrated against younger, more junior, and newer workers by older, more managerial workers. She found that nearly four-fifths of her sample had witnessed workplace bullying and nearly one-third had left a past position due to workplace bullying (Rayner, 1997). This extracts costs of work productivity, degradation of the work environment, and the possible cost of litigation. Intervention strategies echo the same advice which include a strong workplace policy, increased awareness of the issue, periodic revisitation, conflict resolution, assertiveness training for the victims, as well as, training coworkers to recognize and intervene, and the environmental restructuring of work areas where individuals are not isolated (Namie & Namie, 2000; Rayner, 1997; Smith, 1997). Looking at bullying from a lifespan developmental perspective calls for its eradication in the elementary school years before modes of behavior are well entrenched in the individual's adult behavior patterns.

Bullying is a real and painful experience for those who have experienced it. The outcomes of being bullied far outlast the initial event. The residual effects of being bullied are quantifiable and impact physical health, emotional health, school performance, involvement in school altercations and perceptions of the school environment. As educators and parents, we need to actively condemn its occurrence. To best eradicate the problem of bullying, a system-wide approach needs to be instituted in the childhood years so that it does not continue to harm the development of the child or to be later afflicted in the adult workplace.

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Are there Gangs in Schools? It Depends Upon Whom You Ask

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ABSTRACT. In the past, juvenile gang researchers have focused primarily on the characteristics of gangs and the prevalence of gangs in communities and schools. One of the greatest limitations of this research, however, surrounds the lack of agreement on the definition of a gang and, consequently, the prevalence of gangs in the community and in schools. In this paper, we attempt to provide a new method to (1) define a gang, from a triangulation of the perspectives of law enforcement, school principals, and gang researchers and (2) estimate the prevalence

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of gangs in schools in a three-state region. We determine that the type of definition used dramatically impacts estimates of the prevalence of gangs in schools. The limitations and implications of this finding for school administrators and law enforcement are also discussed.

KEYWORDS. Aggression, school violence, gangs, gang violence, peer groups

In addition to the family and peer group, the school has long been regarded as one of the most powerful social institutions affecting children and youth (Hirschi, 1969). As such, schools are important venues in which to consider delinquent activity because they provide opportunities for youth to mix with students from a variety of backgrounds and influence each other in both positive and negative ways. Consequently, it is important to understand the nature and magnitude of the gang problem in schools. While it is known that gang violence is rather atypical in the school environment, this environment can be a fertile ground for gang member recruitment as well as for the planning and coordination of gang activities taking place elsewhere (Lawrence, 1998). Lawrence also cites evidence that the presence of gangs in schools is associated with student fear and victimization. Thus, the number and types of gangs in schools, the number of students involved in gangs, the demographics (race, age, gender) of gang members in schools, and the contribution of gangs to crime and disruption in schools are all important areas of inquiry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

While a plethora of studies examine attributes and activities of gangs (see Curry & Decker, 2003, for review), few studies have examined the presence of gangs in schools. Those that typically estimate the prevalence and incidence of gang activity from the perspective of the student (e.g., Kaufman, Chen, Choy, Ruddy, Miller, Chandler, Chapman, & Rand, 1999; Howell & Lynch, 2000), ask general questions to the principals about the impact of gang activity among a series of other threats to school safety (Sprague, Smith, & Stieber, 2002), or use law

enforcement-generated estimates of gang activity based on actual incidents of law violations at the school (Regulus, 1994). These researchers typically suggest that gang membership at school is higher among nonwhites, urban residents, and students from lower socioeconomic strata. Additionally, gang activity is often positively related with the amount of drug activity and other criminal activity at school (Howell & Lynch, 2000), and it appears to be associated with increased dropout rates and decreased test scores (Regulus, 1994). It is, however, difficult to disentangle the effect of gang membership from low socioeconomic status and other variables that predict both gang membership and poor school performance.

As Park (1995) has suggested, although the history and development of gang culture in the larger community has been thoroughly researched, we have yet to conclusively determine (1) what impact, if any, gangs have on schools and (2) whether the presumed link between violence and gangs in schools is accurate. Park suggests that few scientific studies have assessed the impact of gangs in schools; most only offer broad generalizations regarding the detrimental impact of gang activity on the educational setting.

An important question to pose, then, is what barriers limit the availability of data regarding the presence of gangs in schools. As discussed below, perhaps the largest obstacle in conducting gang research in general is the lack of an agreed upon definition of a gang (Yearwood & Hayes, 2000; Winfree, Fuller, Vigil, & Mays, 1992). Additionally, there are problems with getting gang members to cooperate with researchers (Park, 1995). A third problem with the examination of gang problems in schools (and in communities outside of school, for that matter) lies with school administrators and other public officials; there is a tendency (indeed, in many cases, there are incentives) to deny the existence of gang problems within the school system (Yearwood & Hayes, 2000).

Of these three problems, perhaps the most detrimental is the tendency of school administrators to deny the existence of gang problems. Underreporting of problems in the schools by school administrators to "save face" can actually be problematic over the long term because measures needed to effectively address gang issues in schools (e.g., securing of resources, implementation of programs, etc.) may not be taken (McEvoy, 1990).

Due to the difficulties of definition and measurement, few researchers have examined the prevalence and impact of gangs in schools from either the perspective of the school administrators or the law enforcement officers responsible for coverage of those schools. As such, we do not

know whether there is consensus between these two groups regarding (1) the definition of gang activity in schools or (2) the prevalence of gangs in schools. In this study, we use data from a sample of over 1,200 law enforcement officers and school principals from Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio to develop a novel research strategy intended to shed light on this neglected area of research.

OVERVIEW OF PROJECT

In the summer of 2003, the Eastern Kentucky University Violence Prevention Project (VPP) began an analysis of gang prevalence in schools in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. After extensive discussion with a focus group comprising public school administrators and representatives of the respective state educational organizations, we debated a wide variety of methodological approaches to collecting the data needed to estimate the prevalence of gangs in schools in the tri-state area. Optimally, we would have sent members of the research team to each school in the area, given them a protocol describing signs and symbols of gangs, and let them discuss the gang problem at school with the teachers, students, and administrators. Given limitations of time and budget, however, this was not a feasible option, and it is unlikely to prove feasible in most places. Hence, we sought out an alternative research method that would be more viable but still yield reasonably valid data.

As one of the authors had extensive experience in gang definition and measurement issues and another had worked closely with public schools in two of the three states, we also realized the difficulty of collecting reliable data from school administrators on such a controversial topic as gangs. As such, we decided to employ a research design that heretofore had not been attempted. More specifically, we decided to triangulate three potentially contradictory sources of data on gangs in schools. We asked both school principals and law enforcement officers to estimate the prevalence of gangs in schools and used the principals' responses regarding the behavior of groups in the school to develop a third estimate of gang prevalence.

ISSUES IN GANG DEFINITION

The issue of defining a gang is anything but straightforward (Ball & Curry, 1995; Curry, 2000; Curry & Decker, 2003; Huff, 1989). Indeed, this issue has generated volumes of debate and discussion over the past

100 years. Further, as important as it is to define the gang concept, it may be even more important to define what a gang crime is and who constitutes a gang member. These issues have also generated volumes of debate and discussion (see Curry & Decker, 2003, for review).

The most widely accepted definition of a gang includes the following variables (1) Group (2) Permanence (3) Symbols of membership, including communication (4) Acknowledgement of membership over time and (5) Involvement in crime (Klein, 1995). It is important to note that "turf" or "territory" is not included in this list. This omission is due to the diversity of gangs. Many gangs–perhaps most–protect turf or identify particular neighborhoods as an important source of their identity or membership. However, a large number of gangs, particularly Asian ones, do not identify or use turf.

Consequently, the definition of a gang is crucial for a reasoned approach to the study of gangs. Without a solid definition of a gang member, gang crime, or a gang, there can be no progress in understanding and responding to gangs. Local jurisdictions may choose their own approach; in doing so, however, they are obliged to choose defensible and reasonable criteria. Such a perspective is even more important for school-based exploration of gangs and gang members because, with schools, less detailed knowledge and procedures are available than in the case of law enforcement. Lynch and Howell (2000) detail efforts to understand the presence, behavior, and impact of gangs in schools. Operationalizing a gang using a definition similar to the one above, Lynch and Howell report that 37 percent of students surveyed indicated that there was a gang in their school in data collected from the School Crime Supplement to the National Victimization Survey.

METHOD

Instrument

After reviewing a number of questionnaires available to examine the prevalence of gang membership, we decided to utilize a derivative of the Troublesome Youth Groups/Street Gang Expert Survey created by the Expert Survey Workgroup of the Eurogang Research Program. As such, we created a seven-page questionnaire to send to principals. Following the Eurogang instrument, we used the term "troublesome youth group" instead of "gang" when collecting data from school principals in hope that more reliable data could be generated. Our reasoning is that

admission of the existence of a troublesome youth group at school does not carry the same stigma as admitting that a gang(s) exists, given the emotionality and negative connotations surrounding the latter concept. The questionnaire also assessed the demographics of the principal, asked questions about group behaviors in their school, asked the principal to estimate the impact of these groups on the school culture and educational process, and asked the principal to estimate the extent to which these groups were involved in criminal activity.

Principals were asked a series of 23 questions about their two most troublesome youth groups, including what activities these groups were involved in and whether or not the principal would consider the group to be a gang. This series of questions was developed to provide independent verification of the activities of the "troublesome youth group in question" to determine whether these groups were actually involved in gang-type activities. Finally, principals were asked to describe any in-school programs available at the school to reduce the gang problem. The survey was pilot-tested in November 2003 using 12 principals from the tri-state area; this testing resulting in minimal changes to the original instrument.

Procedure for Data Collection from School Principals

Research suggests that gang membership is far more prevalent among middle and high school students than among elementary students (Hill, Lui, & Hawkins, 2001; Hill, Howell, Hawkins, & Battin-Pearson, 1999; Lahey, Gordon, Loeber, Stouthamer-Loher, & Farrington, 1999). Given the budget limitations of this project, we set the sampling frame as all schools that served students in fifth grade and above in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. Using information available on each state's Department of Education website, we created a mailing list of 2,917 high, middle, and alternative schools. In each state, we requested any school with students in fifth grade or above.

Following the Dillman (1978) method, each principal was first sent a letter in December 2003 notifying them of the survey they would be receiving in January 2004. The surveys were mailed at the beginning of January to the principals and were addressed directly to the principal at each school with a cover letter signed by EKU Violence Prevention Project staff. A postcard follow-up was sent to principals two weeks later, followed by a second survey a week later to the 2,437 principals who had yet to respond to the first mailing. A third survey was mailed two weeks after the second mailing; this time, the survey envelope had

no reference to the principal's name, with the hope that we would capture data from schools where the principal may have changed from the database that we had created. Also, the Kentucky cover letter changed to a letter written and endorsed by the Director of the Kentucky Center for School Safety, an organization that worked closely with principals in Kentucky on school safety issues. The third survey was sent to the remaining 2,148 principals. The final sample consisted of responses from 1,244 principals, a return rate of almost 43 percent.[1]

Procedure for Data Collection from Law Enforcement Officers

The aforementioned principals who chose to provide data were asked to indicate the law enforcement agency responsible for responding to an incident of illegal behavior at the school, and their responses provided a sample of 1,193 completed interviews with representatives from law enforcement agencies.[2] These officers from the law enforcement agencies identified by the principals were interviewed using a different technique. First, while the principals received a questionnaire by mail, the law enforcement officers were queried by phone. As our previous experience with data collection from law enforcement officers suggested that responses to short, simple questionnaires were easier to obtain via telephone interview than through mail surveys, we decided to use telephone interviews to collect the data.

We asked principals who responded to the questionnaire to "list the name of the police department and the name of the officer (if known) who would be most likely to have responsibility for dealing with an incident of illegal behavior committed at your school." Using information collected from the Internet, research staff were able to obtain phone numbers for all of the law enforcement agencies identified by the principals. In situations where we were given a name of a law enforcement officer by the responding principal, that officer was interviewed. In situations where we were not given a name, we asked for the officer most familiar with the school.

While the instrument used to collect data from the school principals was rather lengthy and detailed, the protocol developed to collect data from the law enforcement officers was much shorter, and thus responses typically required less than two minutes of the officer's time (see below for a detailed discussion of instrument). After a pilot test of 30 interviews with law enforcement officers from the region under study, the telephone interviews of the law enforcement officers began in March 2004. Practically all (99.1%) the law enforcement agencies were

contacted during six weeks of intensive phone calls. A small percentage of the completed phone calls ended with no data collected from that jurisdiction; in those cases, six calls were made to the law enforcement agencies without any completed response from the agency.

OPERATIONALIZATION

As a goal of this research was to triangulate three sources of data regarding the prevalence of gangs in schools and thus provide a new technique for measuring the prevalence of gangs in schools, the prevalence of gangs was operationalized through a three-tiered approach. Each of the measures is discussed in detail below.

Given the authors' experience with school personnel, and the aforementioned concerns about the reliability of answers from principals regarding this topic, we determined it best to use the term "troublesome youth group" (coined by the Eurogang research group, described at http://www.umsl.edu/~ccj/eurogang/euroganghome.htm) instead of "gang." After responding to a series of questions designed to collect demographic information and build rapport with the respondent, respondents were presented with the following statement. "Some informal groups create problems at school such as violating board policies or violating laws, hereafter referred to as troublesome youth groups." We then asked the principals "What percent of the student body at your school would you say was a member of one of these troublesome youth groups during the past semester?" Any principal that responded "0%" was coded as not having a gang at their school. Over one-third of the principals (36.0%) were thus coded "0" from the outset. Additionally, almost one in ten principals (8.3% of the sample) did not provide data for that question. Of those 99 principals, all but four were also coded as not having a gang at their school. Those four principals later indicated that there was a gang present at their school and were thus coded "1" as having a gang.

Principals were then asked how many troublesome youth groups were active at their school in the fall 2003 semester. Responses to that question are presented in Table 1. Approximately one in five principals (19.8%) stated that no troublesome youth groups were active at their school in that time period; of the remaining principals who admitted having troublesome youth groups at their schools, seven in ten admitted that they had one (26.7% of entire sample) or two (23.8% of entire sample) troublesome youth groups at their school. All but one of those

TABLE 1. How many Troublesome Youth Groups Were Active at Your School–Principal Responses

Number of Groups	Number at School	Percentage of Sample
0	146	19.8
1	197	26.7
2	175	23.8
3	90	12.2
4	50	6.8
5	32	4.3
6 or more	46	6.3
Total valid responses	736	100.0
Missing	508	

146 principals who said they had no troublesome youth groups at their school were also coded "0" as not having a gang at their school. This principal indicated that there were no troublesome youth groups present at the school but later indicated that there were gangs present; thus, this principal was coded as a "1" for having a gang.

Principals were then asked a series of questions adopted from the Eurogang research group "Street Gang Expert" questionnaire. These questions are included in Appendix A. To reduce the complexity and length of the questionnaire with the hope of achieving the greatest response rate possible, we asked the principals to respond to these questions for only the two most troublesome youth groups at their school. In retrospect, this was probably a good choice as seven in 10 principals had two or less troublesome youth groups. From responses to these questions, we identified two different types of principals who reported the presence of gangs at their school.

Principal Self-Reported Gang Membership

As is evident from Appendix A, principals were asked whether they considered each of the troublesome youth groups for whom they provided detailed information "to be a gang." Those principals who responded that they did consider that troublesome youth group to be a gang were coded "1," as having a gang at their school. Using the affirmative responses to this question for both troublesome youth groups, there were 117 principals who reported gang membership at their schools.

The "Troublesome Youth Group" Gang

Ten measures pertaining to the group composition and activities that are typically linked with "organized gangs" were then examined using principal components exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation to determine what variables "fit" best, both theoretically (see Lynch & Howell, 2000) and statistically. Six variables loading on one factor were identified, all with loadings of .541 or better on the "gang" factor. Those variables were as follows (1) Does this group have recognized leaders? (2) Does this group have specific rules or codes by which its members must abide? (3) Do normal activities of this group involve behaviors that break the law? (4) Does this group regard itself as a gang? (5) Does this group get involved in a lot of different kinds of illegal behaviors, or just a few kinds? and (6) How often does this group get into physical altercations with other groups like it? Each of the first four questions above were coded Yes=1, No=0. The fifth question was coded so that groups involved in "a lot of different kinds of illegal behaviors . . ." were coded 1 and all others were coded 0 while the last question was coded as Often, Sometimes=1; Never=0.

Those principals who answered that the troublesome youth group at their school met at least half of the valid responses on the six criteria for which they provided responses were considered to have an unreported gang at their school.[3] Using this procedure, 71 schools were identified as having troublesome youth groups that appeared to be gangs.

Law Enforcement Officers' Reporting of Gangs

As stated above, law enforcement officers were interviewed by telephone. After a very short introduction, officers were read a script defining "a group of youths or young adults in your jurisdiction that you or other responsible persons in your agency or community are willing to identify or classify as a 'gang'."

Respondents were then asked:

> During the 2003-04 school year, were any youth gangs active at School Name? A school would be considered to have an active youth gang if two or more known or suspected members of the gang acted jointly, through a conspiracy, or in complicity to commit violations of the school or criminal law (i.e., fights, attacks, violence, sale of drugs, and/or brought guns to school during the school year).

Those officers who responded "no" were told that the interview was completed and thanked for their effort. Those officers who responded "yes" were then asked a series of questions about the number, size, and activities of the gangs at the school under question. One in ten officers (116 or 9.3%) indicated that the school in question did have a gang, while approximately two percent (20 or 1.6%) responded that they did not know whether the school had an active gang. The remaining officers (1) responded that the school did not have an active gang presence (1,056 or 85.0% of the officers); (2) refused to participate in the survey (19 or 1.5%); or (3) could not be contacted during the duration of the study (32 or 2.6%).

So How Many Gangs in Schools are There?

As the title of this work reflects, the number of gangs in schools depends not only on "whom" you ask but also on "how" the question is asked. The results presented in Table 2 indicate that the prevalence of gangs in schools in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana is dependent upon the "generosity" of the definition. Gang prevalence at school is categorized into four "levels" of gang membership. If we use the most conservative definition (when both the school principal and the law enforcement officer responding for that school agreed that a gang was present at the school), then only one in 50 (25 schools) in the sample under study had a gang at their school. Interestingly, each of the other definitions yielded approximately the same prevalence of gangs in schools, somewhere around seven percent. The most "liberal" definition of gang presence at schools in this sample (a definition that states that a school had a gang if *any* of the groups defined a school as having a gang) suggests that approximately one in five schools (22.2%) in this sample had an active

TABLE 2. Number of Gangs Present at Schools by Various Definitions

Type of Definition	Number	Percent
Law enforcement only defined	91	7.3
Principal only defined	92	7.4
Researcher defined	71	5.7
Law enforcement/principal defined	25	2.0
No gang presence	957	76.9

gang presence. Thus, the prevalence of gangs in schools in this study truly "depends on who you ask."

CONCLUSION

A Conceptual Continuum of School Gang Prevalence

In this study, we have described a new method to measure the prevalence of gangs in schools. Based on our findings, we suggest that triangulating responses from law enforcement and principals regarding the prevalence of gangs in schools is preferred over methods that examine the perspectives of one or the other of these groups. In addition, examining the presence of gang indicators, even when the principal or law enforcement agencies deny gang presence, provides an alternative source of information. A logical question becomes, given the three measures of gang activity at school studied here, and the corresponding disparities among the three, which is the *best method* to use for estimation of gang presence. We suggest that estimates of the prevalence of gangs in schools should be based on *all three* measures, perhaps in the form of a vertical continuum of gang membership. Thus, those schools where both principals and law enforcement agents agreed that there was gang activity would rank at the top of the continuum, in what we term as "confirmed gang presence." Secondly, based on our experience with both law enforcement and school administrators, the next tier on the continuum would be "likely gang presence"–those where principals stated that there was an active gang presence and law enforcement officials denied the presence. This is because it is likely that the principal is more cognizant of the activity at his or her school and, as we pointed out earlier, it is often not in the principal's best interest to admit gang presence. As such, those schools where the principal labels a troublesome youth group as a "gang" probably had an active gang presence. The third tier on the continuum would be "probable gang presence"–those schools where the law enforcement officer responsible for the school (but not the principal) states that a gang is active at the school. Finally, the lowest tier on the continuum, labeled "possible gang presence," would consist of those schools where the principal states that there are troublesome youth groups, these groups fit many of the criteria for gangs, yet the principal does not respond that gangs are active at the school. Of course, the fifth logical possibility is that none of the data substantiate gang presence.

Limitations and Implications

We see two major limitations to our database. The first, and perhaps most apparent, is the less than desirable survey return rate from principals of 43 percent. Although response rates of 50 percent or lower are fairly common in mail surveys (Singleton & Straits, 2005), there is conventional agreement among authorities (e.g., Dillman, 1978) that a 60 to 75 percent return rate is needed to insure external validity or generalization of results from a sample to a population. Thus, the results from this study may not be generalizable to the schools in the three-state area under study and certainly may not be representative of the middle and high public school populations throughout the country. Nevertheless, there are a number of caveats to consider before completely dismissing the results presented here. First and foremost, a response rate such as this is comparable with that obtained by other researchers attempting to collect data from public school principals by mail (Sprague, Smith, & Steiber, 2002; Sprague, Colvin, Irvin, & Stieber, 1998). Our experience with high school and middle school administrators is that they are a population with very little to gain (and potentially much to lose) by participating in research efforts such as this. In a time of increased attention to school safety, those principals with gangs in their schools may be reluctant to admit this presence, even on a confidential survey. Secondly, it may also be the case that the principals were not knowledgeable of the organization providing funding for this project and were thus reluctant to release such potentially volatile information to an entity with which they were not familiar. While we have no way to measure whether this may or may not be the case, the fact that the participation rate in Kentucky was 10 percent higher than in the other states gives credence to this idea. Eastern Kentucky University, the site where the research originated, was more recognizable and potentially more dependable for those principals in Kentucky than principals in other states. Nevertheless, the return rate for the questionnaires in this study makes any generalization from these results potentially problematic; thus, generalizations should be made with caution.

The second kind of limitation relates to the data collection methods employed. In an effort to optimize the response rate by keeping the phone survey short, we did not ask law enforcement officers questions pertaining to the criteria for gang presence as we did with principals. Had we done so and been able to achieve an acceptable return rate, however, we would have had a fourth category of valuable information. We would have been in a position to empirically determine the extent to

which police officers deny gang presence at a school at the same time that they identify the existence of criteria consistent with the presence of gangs, such as a leadership structure or membership codes among youth groups that they identify as problematic.

In addition, we relied exclusively in this research on mail and phone surveys to generate quantitative data about the perceptions of principals and police officers. Such a study could be improved by incorporating qualitative and quantitative data from questionnaires and field observations and detailed interviews with students, parents, teachers, administrators, and classified staff regarding the prevalence of gangs in schools. There is no question that qualitative data would be a valuable supplement to aid the interpretation of quantitative data. At the same time, it would be very difficult to collect observational and interview data on the scale covered by this study.

To our knowledge, no empirically grounded continuum of school gang prevalence, like the one described here, has been developed. Yet, such a continuum could be helpful for both law enforcement and school administrators who are considering the extent of the gang problem in their schools. If a district has a number of schools, and a limited budget to provide services or training intended to reduce gang activity, the method described above would allow that district to assess gang activity at the schools, prioritize the problem, and use the limited resources in the most efficient manner to address the problem where intervention is most needed.

Our findings also highlight the importance of communication between police and school administrators. Past research (May, Fessel, & Means, 2005; Minor, Fox, & Wells, 2002) has highlighted the fact that school administrators and law enforcement agencies responsible for coverage of the school do not typically communicate well with one another. This study, while not directly measuring communication between the two groups, also seems to imply that there is little communication between police and schools regarding the presence of gangs in schools. Only 25 schools had both principals and law enforcement officers in agreement that there was gang activity at that school. If a principal perceives gang activity in his or her school, and if school-police communication is what it should be, then law enforcement officers responsible for coverage oft hat school should be aware of the gang activity. Likewise, if law enforcement officers are aware that an "active" gang member attends a school, then the principal should be made aware of that perception. Communication between the two groups is essential to reduce the presence of gangs in schools.

This research also implies the need to provide training to school administrators to identify gang members. Using the "troublesome youth group" method, almost one in 10 principals were found to have a possible gang presence in their schools, even though they denied the existence of a gang. It is certainly possible that these schools do not have an active gang presence, but it is evident that the principals perceive some clear indicators of such a presence. Training school administrators to objectively review group activity at their schools to determine whether it is gang related would be helpful in not only reacting to the presence of gangs in schools once they are in place, but also in preventing the presence of gangs by recognizing early warning signs and taking proactive measures to stop the trend from progressing.

Finally, this research reinforces the position that school administrators need to realize the value and importance of admitting problem behaviors at schools. As long as a culture exists among administrators that they should deny the existence of problems (e.g., gang activity, drug distribution) at school until they no longer have a choice but to admit the problem, problems that need attention will remain un-addressed. Admission that a school has a problem is the first step, and until that point, it is difficult to mobilize community resources to deal with, and especially resources to prevent, that problem. Thus, if principals are aware that they have troublesome youth group activity, and that activity has indicators of being gang related, then communicating this information to the superintendent and the law enforcement agency responsible for the school can help prevent the detrimental effects of gangs once they become engrained.

NOTES

1. As the school was the unit of analysis for this study, we mailed questionnaires to principals at every school in our sampling frame, even when two schools (e.g., a middle and a high school) shared the same mailing address. There were 58 schools that had an address that was identical to that of another school with a unique principal name, indicating that we received data from separate principals for two separate schools at the same mailing address. Three principals completed two surveys (one for a middle school and one for a high school at the same address) and two schools had completed questionnaires that duplicated the mailing address of another school but the principal was not identified by name. Finally, one school had a principal name identical to that of another school that did not share the same mailing address, although the schools were on the same street. Thus, we are confident that the persons providing data for two schools with identical mailing addresses were answering the questionnaires with

school-specific responses, even in those cases where the same principal answered for two separate schools.

Additionally, we conducted state-level independent sample t-tests examining differences between those schools where the principal responded and those schools where principals did not respond on three variables regularly used as control variables in examinations of school violence (percent of the student population who received free/reduced lunch, enrollment, and the school's standardized test score mean). In each state, there were statistically significant differences between the two groups of schools, with responding principals having significantly smaller percentages of the student population receiving free/reduced lunch and significantly higher standardized school test scores. As such, the sample under study here appears to have a "good school" bias and thus may be a conservative estimate of gang presence at school and may not be generalizable beyond the scope of this study. As the purpose of this study was to explore a new approach to measuring gangs in schools, we feel that limited generalizability of this study does not obviate the purpose.

2. Each principal was asked to identify the law enforcement officer or agency that was responsible for responding to incidents that might occur at the school. In some cases, a law enforcement agency was identified by more than one principal (e.g., two principals at different schools in the same district). In those cases, interviewers asked for the officer most likely to be knowledgeable of the gang activity at school. Thus, the responses providing data for this analysis were received from 791 different law enforcement agencies. Thus, some agencies provided data for two or more schools in their district.

3. We realize that our choice of the number of criteria that must be met for classification as a school with a gang is purely subjective. Nevertheless, given the seriousness of the criteria utilized (particularly as we felt most groups that were not gangs would meet very few of these criteria), we felt that those groups that met at least half of the criteria should be classified as gangs.

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APPENDIX A

Thinking about the groups enumerated in Question, please complete the following information for the group that you consider to have been the single most disruptive youth group (in terms of board violations and/or illegal activities) at your school in the fall semester of 2003. Enter "DK"("don't know") if you can't provide an informed estimate.

*a. Does this group have a name for itself? Yes No
If yes, name:_____

b. Estimate the total number of youth who belonged to this group during the past year._____ youth

c. Enter the age of the youngest and the oldest participant.
Youngest: _____ years old Oldest: _____ years old

d. Mark the ONE category that BEST describes the ages of most people in this group.
_____Under 12 years _____12 to 14 years
_____15 to 16 years _____17 years or over

e. In what year did this group form? Year _____

f. Circle the ONE category that BEST describes the gender composition of this group.
All male Mostly male About 1/2 male 1/2 female
Mostly female All female

g. What is the ethnic/nationality composition of this group? List each ethnic group represented by participants and the percentage of the group membership. (% should total 100).
_____ _____%
_____ _____%
_____ _____%

_____ _____%

h. Were any participants born in another country? If yes, enter the name of their country of origin in the space provided:
Yes No
If yes, names of country(ies):_____

*i. Within this group, are there distinct subgroups or cliques that especially spend time together? Yes No

*j. Does this group have recognized leaders? Yes No

*k. Does this group have specific rules or codes by which its members must abide? Yes No

*l. Does this group think of itself as having an area at your school that it calls its own and should protect against other, outside groups? Yes No
If yes, describe areas:_____

*m. Do the normal activities of this group involve behavior that violates the law? Yes No (If No, please skip to Question R)

n. Does this group get involved in a lot of different kinds of illegal behaviors, or just a few kinds? Please check just ONE category.
___A lot of different kinds ___Just a few kinds ___No illegal behaviors

o. If this group is involved in illegal behaviors, please rank the illegal activities most common among this group with 1 being the most common illegal activity committed by group members and 8 being the least common illegal activity committed by group members? Please rank so that each activity has its own unique score (e.g., 1-8), and use 0 to indicate if the activity is not known or not present at your school.

Rank
___ Drug Distribution
___ Drug Use
___ Using force to take things from other students
___ Purposely damaging/destroying school property
___ Using force or threats of force against other students
___ Stealing items from other students
___ Drug Possession
___ Alcohol Use

p. How often does this group use alcohol?
Often Sometimes Never Don't Know

q. How often does this group use illegal drugs?
Often Sometimes Never Don't Know

*r. Does this group have distinct clothing that separates them from other groups? Yes No If yes, describe:

*s. Does this group have other physical identifiers that separate them from other groups? Yes No If yes, describe:

*t. How often does this group get into physical altercations with other groups like it?
Often Sometimes Never
There is only 1 troublesome youth group at my school

u. If this group is referred to as a gang, band, tribe, club, crew, or other term, please note it: Term for this group:_____

*v. Does this group regard itself as a gang? Yes No

**w. Do you consider this group as a gang? Yes No

The ten questions marked with one asterisk were entered into an Exploratory Factor Analysis. Based on the loadings discussed in the paper, six of them were selected for use in the definition of a troublesome youth group as a gang. The question marked with two asterisks was used to determine the principal-defined gangs.

Secret Cults in Nigerian Institutions of Higher Learning: Need for a Radical Intervention Programme

B. I. Popoola
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ABSTRACT. The paper appraises the phenomenon of campus secret cults in Nigeria. Specifically, the paper sets off by exploring various definitions of secret cults before tracing the history of campus cults in Nigerian higher institutions. The paper identifies various reasons for the emergence of secret cults and discusses the consequences of cult activities on the Nigerian educational system. For a lasting solution to the problem, the paper recommends the establishment of a structure which will recognize the existence and operation of fraternities on campuses with the main objective of re-structuring, monitoring and regulating their activities.

KEYWORDS. Cultism, secret cults, school violence, vandalism

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INTRODUCTION

The "secret cult phenomenon" is undeniably the greatest of the contemporary social problems confronting the Nigerian educational system today. Though this phenomenon is not new in the nation's ivory towers, the dimension it has assumed in recent times is both frightening and alarming. It has therefore become a matter of great concern not only to educational administrators but also to the entire society. The general picture is that the institutions of higher learning, on which the future of the nation depends, have now become breeding grounds for blood-sucking youths who have no regard for the sanctity of human lives.

Available statistics on the occurrence of cult-related killings in university campuses are indeed worrisome. Gotevbe (2004) reported that a minimum of 54 students were murdered in 1997 in campus cult wars, while several other hundreds were maimed or wounded. In 1996, the casualty list revealed that 46 lives were lost and that over one hundred and forty six thousand (146,000) cult members had been initiated of which 63,000 are part of the nation's workforce.

In a similar vein, Hank (1999) estimated that hundreds of students have been slain in the last five years, with scores more victimized by rape, assault, extortion, kidnapping, blackmail, torture and arson. Recently, a daily newspaper reported that just within the first two weeks of August, 2004, thirty-three students from three Nigerian universities were brutally murdered in cultic butcheries, suspected to have been perpetrated by cult members (Daily Champion, Aug. 30, 2004). According to the reports, the toll of the ever-intensifying cultic butcheries is no longer restricted to students. It is now extended to lecturers and officers of the universities. The cultists have also widened the scope of their operation to include armed robbery.

It is particularly disheartening that cult activities, apart from disrupting normal academic programmes of the institutions, have literally made university campuses unsafe for human habitation. Quite often, there are violent clashes between cult members and university teachers or administrators. Many times, rival cult groups engage in violent fights over trivial matters as space for holding nocturnal meetings. Cult members are known for intimidating lecturers and setting personal scores with them by subjecting them to various acts of terrorism such as violent attack, vandalism, assault and in many cases, murder.

Cultists in university campuses carry out their operations always armed with guns and other lethal weapons including explosives, axes,

clubs, cutlasses, sword, etc. They terrorize, maim or kill their victims with reckless impunity either during cult clashes or cult attacks. Cult clashes are bloody, war-like conflicts between or among rival cult groups while cult attacks, on the other hand, are any dastardly acts carried out by a particular cult group against innocent individuals who are not members of any of the blood-thirsty groups. The alarming frequency of cult clashes and attacks in our tertiary institutions with its attendant spill-over effect on primary and secondary education makes it a matter of great concern for all stakeholders of the Nigerian educational system.

DEFINITION AND MEMBERSHIP OF SECRET CULTS

Cultism has various definitions in research literature. The Online Dictionary of English defines the concept as "a religious sect generally considered to be extremist or false, with its followers often living in an unconventional manner under the guidance of an authoritarian, charismatic leader." Cults are generally categorized as secret societies because their activities, which are run and shrouded in secrecy, are known only to members of the group. Becker (1982) conceptualized a cult as an almost structureless, individual-centered group whose characteristics are determined by the isolation and alienation of its members from the structure of the larger society and from its formalized religious institutions. Elegbeleye (1997) gave an apt summary of the characteristics of a cult. These include the fact that:

- its activities are shrouded in secrecy; they operate mainly at night;
- its goals are amorphous and mostly anti-social;
- its size is small; membership is usually highly restricted and its initiation ceremony is extremely arduous as to discourage just any comer;
- it searches for a mystical experience;
- it lacks a proper organizational structure such that would allow for any semblance of fair play in line with a democratic tradition;
- its operations reflect traces of sociopathy and psychopathy;
- members are characterized by a heavy dosage of agoraphobia; hence, their collective tendency to regress to the cave era of the early beginnings of man;
- its flow of authority is characterized by autocratic eccentricity; they terrorize non-members.

Many writers and researchers have contended that membership of campus secret cults is an exclusive reserve of the children of the rich or wealthy members of the society (Ogunbameru, 1997). Olukoya (2004) argued that most cult members are from rich homes and are mainly the children of Nigeria's ruling class who seek to control the universities in the manner their parents control the country.

However, recent developments have shown that the membership of cults cuts across all categories of students. There exist in the various cults children from wealthy and those from poor homes. While the children of the rich would join cults because of the financial standing of their parents and the desire for power, those from poor homes tend more often to join cults in order to obtain at all costs the good things of life which reality has denied them. The prevalence of cult activities in tertiary institutions is therefore a reflection of what is happening in the larger society where violence has become the order of the day.

Low intelligence and poor academic performance are other characteristics of cult members. A good number of cultists are students who failed their courses and have overstayed in the university. They react violently through their cult members against teachers in charge of their failed courses. They coerce the lecturers into awarding them good grades. Those who refuse are often shot dead in their offices.

In addition, some of the cult members are womanizers. Any female student who refuses their love advances is in trouble; she risks outright elimination. On the other hand, if any lecturer befriends their favorite girls, such a lecturer's life is in serious danger as he will be penciled down for elimination any time the group strikes.

Another group of students who join campus secret cults, according to Ogunbameru, are students who are not bold enough to act individually or independently. Such students believe that the artificial protection provided by membership of secret cults can be used not only to suppress the shyness in them but also as a means of forcefully securing girl friends. Others join secret cults because they lack proper parental care. This group of students consists of young boys or girls from troubled or broken homes who are influenced by their peer groups to join all kinds of associations including secret cults. Unfortunately when such students become members of the cults, they dare not pull out or they will be pursued and eliminated for fear of revealing the group's ungodly or illicit dealings.

One recent development that gives intense cause for apprehension is the increasing number of female students in secret cults. Women are now playing an active part in campus cultism unlike before when they

watched the scenario from the distance of their hostels. Today, we hear of "Amazons of Belzebob," "The Jezebels," etc. These are new cadres of female cultists who operate on their own.

HISTORY OF CAMPUS CULTS IN NIGERIA

The existence of secret cults in Nigerian universities is not a recent phenomenon. The first secret cult in a Nigerian university campus, the Pyrates Confraternity, was founded by Nobel Laureate, playwright and novelist, Professor Wole Soyinka, at the University of Ibadan in the 1950s. Campus cultism was then not originally associated with violence and secrecy of operation as shown by the objectives and modus-operandi of the Pyrates Confraternity. The objectives, according to Ogunbameru (1997) were to:

- fight against moribund convention or colonial mentality in the University College. Such mentalities include the compulsory wearing of formal dresses to the cafeteria and the idea of students behaving as overlords and pro-British behaviour;
- fight for humanistic ideals and to revive the soul life in the campus;
- establish a system whereby discipline, orderliness, and orientation to laudable national objectives could be planted in the minds of youngsters; and
- fight against corruption and tribalism.

Ogunbameru also reported that Pyrates at the University College once took charge of law and order during Student Union elections and other activities in the campus. There were reported cases where members of the Pyrates Confraternity got involved in philanthropic activities such as blood donation, Rag-Day celebrations and donation to the poor and needy. From these, it can be concluded that campus cults were initially conceived as pressure groups to contribute positively towards societal peace and social change.

For many years before and after Nigeria Independence, the Pyrates Confraternity remained the only campus cult in Nigeria's institutions of higher learning. Ogunbameru reported that due to internal crisis, some members of the Confraternity broke away to form alternative cults in the 1970s. Dismayed by the disintegration of their vision, the Pyrates removed themselves from campuses in the 1980s. Shortly thereafter, all campus fraternities were outlawed by a government edit. This marked

the beginning of secret cults in campus as the edict which outlawed existing campus cults merely plunged their members into secrecy and baser depths of anti-social behavior (Hank, 1999).

Today, in addition to the Pyrates Confraternity, there are over twenty secret cults in Nigerian higher institutions. Prominent among them include the Buccaneers, Blood Suckers, Black Axe, Eiye Confraternity, Maplates, Black Suckers, Black Berret, Green Berret, Neo-Black Movement, Trojan Horse, Burkina Faso Revolution, Temple of Eden Fraternity, Mafioso, Osiri, Scorpion, Dragon, Panama Pyrate Confraternity, Ku Klux Klan, Amazons, Walrus, Mgbamagbuy Brothers, etc.

The pertinent question to ask at this juncture is why campus cults, which initially started as pressure groups to promote social awareness, influence decisions and contribute to societal peace, have now become criminal gangs of students who exhibit negative traits such as truancy, vandalism, stealing and constantly resort to violence as means of expressing their wrongly perceived discontent and displeasure. The section that follows addresses the factors which have hitherto contributed to the resurgence of cult activities in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE GROWTH OF CULT ACTIVITIES

There are various factors which have contributed to the unabated resurgence of cult activities in Nigerian tertiary institutions. First, majority of cult members are children of the rich and the powerful in the society. Some of them can be described as the "youth wing" of the ruling class. They are well-connected with high-ranking and powerful Nigerians who in the first place were responsible for the corruption and rot in the larger society. It is not surprising therefore that government and university administrators find it difficult to deal decisively with cultists for fear of offending some influential and powerful Nigerians. Thus, what the nation is witnessing today in the educational sector is a sad reflection of the decadence in the larger Nigerian society.

Another explanation for the worsening of cult crisis on Nigerian campuses is the declining quality of contemporary family life. Many children no longer have parents they can look up to for inspiration. Some parents themselves are members of secret cults. There is little or no time to spend with the children to show love and affection. No one can deny the fact that some parents are the brains behind the sponsoring of campus cults in our institutions. They release funds and weapons to

their wards to carry out their nefarious activities. With the backing of parents, cult members carry out their activities with the confidence that nothing can happen to them if they are caught.

The tender age at which many students enter the university nowadays makes them vulnerable to joining campus secret cults. It is not uncommon to find fourteen-year-old undergraduates in Nigerian campuses. Apart from being under-aged, many teenage undergraduates are immature and inexperienced. Being away from home for the first time, they usually have very strong desires to belong to peer groups. In a bid to discover their potentials, teenagers tend to become very inquisitive about their environment. They frequently ask questions about themselves, the academic environment and the society at large. Secret cults pretend to have the answers to these question, and because of the mystery surrounding them, inquisitive adolescents are easily convinced to join to find answers to their nagging questions (Ogunbameru, 1997).

Another obvious explanation for the resurgence of cult crisis on the campuses is the deteriorating state of infrastructure in most campuses. Hostel facilities are inadequate; libraries are poorly equipped while laboratories are either not functioning or non-existent.

The absence of a conducive environment for academic work coupled with the non-availability of extra-curricular and recreational facilities with which students can spend time to dissipate energy and tension invariably leaves them with no option other than to engage in nefarious activities. In the face of the worsening conditions of the universities as reflected in the dearth of teaching and learning materials, overcrowding, poor sanitation and poor conditions of service for teachers, resulting in poor quality of teaching and poor quality of products, examination malpractices, incessant strikes and closure of institutions, many students have found cult activities to be the most enjoyable pastime.

University teachers and administrators cannot be exonerated from the blame. It is unfortunate that in most campuses today, lecturers who ought to be custodians of discipline are themselves not disciplined. Many of them hardly do the work they are paid to do. Some encourage examination malpractices and even extort money from their students through the sale of handouts. A lecturer who has made love advances to almost all the girls in his class cannot inspire anyone to learn. The obvious display of professional misconduct by university staff makes it apparently inconceivable for students to be disciplined.

To make matters worse, there is evidence to show that manyuniversity administrators use cult groups to settle scores with their opponents. In their quest for power and position, it is not uncommon to

find vice-chancellors who recruit cult members to help them consolidate their positions or deal with political opponents. It is therefore wrong to assume that only students are guilty of membership of campus secret cults. University administrators who frequently use them to suppress opposition especially from student union leaders are equally liable.

The diminishing economic prosperity of the average Nigerian is another factor that has contributed in no small measures to the resurgence of cult activities in tertiary institutions. Gone were the days when with the possession of a degree, one's daily bread was guaranteed. Today, unemployment has become the order of the day leading to crisis of confidence and faith in our educational institution. The general poverty in the land in the face of high cost of feeding, hostel accommodation and rising costs of books compels many indigent students to depend on their wealthy colleagues for survival. Indeed, most students become cultists in order to survive the life on campus. Some join cults because they are frustrated with life and dissatisfied with the general state of affairs in the country.

The decline in societal moral values also contributes indirectly to the scourge of cultism in Nigerian educational institutions. In the Nigerian society of today, virtues such as honesty, hard work and patience have become scarce commodities. There is open display of wealth and many Nigerians respect men of money and do not care as much for men of honour. According to Abati (1994), the Nigerian society seems to have adopted violence as a convenient means of conflict resolution. This is why there is an unprecedented increase in the number of ethnic militia groups and inter-communal wars with the attendant infiltration of cheap arms and ammunition into university campuses. The murderous cultists and many other university students today are products of the culture of violence and the disintegrated family system which have no regard for the traditional virtues of hard work but demonstrate absolute disrespect for the sanctity of human life.

The uncontrolled influx of foreign films into Nigerian homes has contributed in no small measures to the growth of cultism in Nigerian society. The youths of today spend a lot of time watching violent films which have found their ways into every home. The culture of violence which foreign films instill in our youths is capable of promoting the growth of violent cult activities in tertiary institutions.

The militarization of the psyche of the average Nigerian as a result of many years of military rule also encourages the growth of cultism and violence in the society. Over the years, Nigerians have unconsciously

assimilated the military mentality of doing things with "automatic alacrity and immediate dispatch." Consequently, our youths have grown up with the conviction that aggression or violence is important to get things done and to achieve immediate results.

CONSEQUENCES OF CAMPUS SECRET CULTS

The activities of cultists in Nigerian higher institutions have negative consequences on the nation's educational system and the entire Nigerian society.

Writing on the consequences of cult activities on students, Adeyemo (2004) lamented that the menace has serious devastating physical, emotional, psychological and social implications for both student cult members and non-members. Cult members exhibit negative traits such as truancy, vandalism, stealing and constantly resort to violence as means of expressing their wrongly perceived discontent and displeasure. In the process of carrying out their activities, they embrace the use of lethal and dangerous weapons and the taking of hard drugs. Consequently, they frequently sustain both physical and psychological injuries. Quite often, cult members lose their lives during cult outings and clashes.

Cult activities cannot but have negative consequences on the academic performance of cult members. Cult activities take a substantial part of the time ought to be spent on meaningful academic work. Cult members are known to possess bad study behaviour and are poorly motivated for academic success. They usually fail their courses and may end up dropping out of school due to poor academic performance.

Another negative consequence of cult activities is the frequent disruption of law and order in the campuses and the incessant threat to public peace in the university community. In most campuses, students and lecturers live under constant fear, a situation which makes meaningful academic work impossible. Cult clashes are frequently accompanied by destruction of public property and death of innocent and defenseless members of the society. Quite often, universities are shut down for months to prevent further destruction of lives and property. When they eventually resume, lecturers usually resort to hurried lessons and crash programmes to make up for the lost time, a practice which eventually leads to the production of half-baked graduates.

WAYS OF CURBING THE MENACE OF CAMPUS CULTS

For meaningful and lasting solutions to the menace of cultism, there is need for a novel but radical approach. The factors that make cultism thrive in our campuses must be dealt with. First, the issue of collapsed infrastructures must be addressed. Facilities such as laboratories, libraries, hostel accommodation, lecture rooms, catering and transport services must be upgraded without further delay. Campuses must be fully equipped with enough sporting and recreational facilities with a view to providing opportunity for students to dissipate energy and reduce the tension and frustration of campus life.

Government and university administrators should, as a matter of urgency, set in motion a well-thought machinery of "recognizing" and moderating the activities of all campus cults. Our experience in the last four years has proved that outlawing cult groups is not an effective method of curbing their activities.

Rather than outright prohibition, it might make sense to put in place a comprehensive programme that will de-mystify all fraternities and bring into the open their activities. To do this, leaders of all the fraternities should be called upon to work with university administrators through the establishment of a statutory committee to coordinate their activities. The committee will liaise directly with various cult leaders and encourage them to work with university administrators in finding solutions to the menace of cultism. By doing this a regulatory body that will oversee the activities of cult members and possibly encourage them to become peaceful and productive student associations would have been put in place. Oguntuase (1999) had expressed support for this approach but added that the regulatory body should be charged with the following responsibilities:

- Identify all student members of each group and prepare the comprehensive register of their members. There is no need to deal with people who are faceless but perpetrate the worst of crimes.
- Screen all student members and identify those with criminal orientation and drug/alcohol abuse and recommend them for appropriate treatment. Those whose mental conditions are suspect and those with poor orientation should face expert psychologists for necessary treatment and de-briefing.
- Establish guidelines for the existence and operation of fraternities on campuses and the means to monitor and regulate their conduct. For any fraternity to exist, it must be accredited by the institution.

- Develop appropriate framework for minimizing and dealing with inter-fraternity conflicts as well as formulate programmes that will enhance inter-fraternity harmony through collaborative activities aimed at providing service to the communities.
- Develop framework to monitor and report on the composite academic performance of each group and their members and recommend appropriate rewards for academic and moral excellence thereby imbibing some of the traditions of the American Honour societies.
- Develop framework to expunge all ritualistic tendencies and physically excruciating tasks associated with initiation into each group; thus placing more emphasis on the intellect than on the physique. In the same vein, all vestiges of terror and danger contained in their paraphernalia should be jettisoned in favor of symbolism that will enjoy public appeal.
- Put up a programme to disarm all their members and surrender the weapons to the authorities.

In addition to the above measures, the menace of cultism in higher institutions can be curtailed by the enthronement of virile and formidable student unions. Experience has shown that in institutions where students' unionism is strong and responsible, clandestine activities of cult members are usually curtailed. Therefore, university authorities should stop regarding the vibrant officers of the students' union as enemies whose powers must be emasculated.

The authorities of tertiary institutions should urgently introduce programmes aimed at re-conditioning the minds of the students. Lecturers and parents must be enlightened on the dangers of campus cult to the institutions and the larger society. Cult members must be stripped of all protection granted them by their parents, lecturers and patrons within and outside the campuses. When this is done, school authorities will find it easy to re-orientate and integrate them into the academic community.

The authorities of our tertiary institutions should stop the execution of various draconian, oppressive and exploitative policies which often compel undergraduates to mobilize themselves to protect their interest with whatever means at their disposal including violence and cultism. The present culture of violence in tertiary education will be minimized if educational administrators endeavor to integrate their students into the decision-making machinery of their institution. This is the spirit of the 21st century democratic culture.

Parents should set good examples for our youths by rejecting all immoral acts which have led to the current level of decadence in our society. There is need for parents to have quality time with their children, communicate with them and educate them on the negative consequences of belonging to unlawful associations.

Authorities of tertiary institutions should henceforth desist from the practice of inviting police to campuses for the maintenance of law and order. It is sufficient for each institution to have its own security outfit. Many civil rights organizations such as the Democratic Socialist Movement (2003) have strongly opposed the recent agitation by Vice Chancellors for the establishment of permanent police presence on campuses. The reality is that the police on campus are as dangerous if not more dangerous than the cultists. If allowed a permanent presence on campus, the poverty-stricken Nigeria Police, with its unenviable record of killings by accidental discharge along with characteristic harassment, extortion and bribery might end up aiding and abetting the cultists after collecting bribes from them. This is a well-known phenomenon in the larger society between the police and armed robbers and other categories of criminals.

CONCLUSION

The negative consequences of campus cult activities as demonstrated in this paper suggest the need for all stakeholders in education to join hands together in fighting the menace. The fight against cultism and its perpetrators must not be left alone to the government. Instead it should be the responsibility of all well-meaning Nigerians. Since cults are now spreading to secondary schools in the country, urgent and radical steps must be taken to fight the menace. It is the contention of this paper that because of its socio-psychological antecedents, an outright eradication of cultism may not be achievable immediately. What is feasible now is to put in place a framework which will recognize the existence and operation of fraternities on campuses with the main objective of re-structuring, monitoring and regulating their activities.

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The Efficacy of Sexual Violence Prevention Programs: Implications for Schools

Jeannie Adair

ABSTRACT. Over the past decade researchers have begun to explore the prevalence, incidence, short and long term effects, and prevention of sexual violence. The purpose of this article was to provide a review of the literature related to the efficacy of sexual violence prevention programs. The review showed that there are many prevention programs yet few that have been formally evaluated and little empirical evidence to show that knowledge gained in these programs leads to prevention. This review highlighted criteria that are essential for prevention programs, recommendations for future programmatic directions and research, and implications for school personnel are presented.

KEYWORDS. Sexual assault, sexual abuse, sexual violence, incest, sexual assault prevention, prevention, school, evaluated prevention programs

Sexual violence is thought to be a common experience, although the total number who are sexually violated has been almost impossible to ascertain (Goldman & Padayachi, 2000). Despite many methodological problems with sexual violence research designed to estimate incidence

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and prevalence rates, most of the researchers believe that the rates of reported sexual abuse are conservative figures (Goldman & Padayachi, 2000).

National data state that one out of every three females and one out of every seven males reported unwanted sexual experience before the age of 18. Sixteen percent of those incidents reported were incest, which is defined as any form of sexual activity between a child and a parent, stepparent, or surrogate parent figure (Wittmer, 1993). The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP, 2001) notes that adolescents are more likely to experience sexual violence than any other age group.

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2002) defines *sexual violence* as: "Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person, regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work" (p. 149). Sexual violence can include attempted rape, rape, sexual harassment, sexual coercion, sexual contact with force, and threat of rape (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; WHO, 2002).

In studies of children and adolescents, about two of every three who had been sexually abused displayed at least one of a wide variety of problems following the sexual abuse (Kendall, Williams, & Finkelhor, 1993). Those who have been sexually abused are more likely than those nonabused to show fear, have nightmares, suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), become delinquent, engage in sexually inappropriate behavior, run away, harm themselves, experience depression, experience fearfulness, withdraw, become angry and display aggression, have poor peer relationships, experience poor self-esteem, experience deterioration of body image, and exhibit a sudden deterioration in academic performance (Kendal et al., 1993). These problems were found to a greater extent in sexually abused participants than those who were nonabused in every study that was reviewed (Kendall et al., 1993; AMA, 1985). In a study of older children and teenagers, from age nine to 18, Silverman, Reinherz, and Giaconia (1996) found that, compared with nonabused youth, those who had been sexually abused were more likely to have more emotional distress, physical symptoms, more problems with thinking and attention, were more aggressive, and had more social problems.

Due to the long-term effects of sexual violence on children and adolescents, there is a great need for effective prevention programs (Yeater & O'Donohue, 1999). Most programs that are being implemented and reported in the literature have not been formally evaluated

for effectiveness and thus are difficult to compare (Crowell & Burgess, 1996). The important outcome of program evaluations is provision of evidence that they work to reduce the risk of sexual violence. Yet, because there is little empirical evidence on sexual violence prevention, it is difficult to choose an effective program. It is important to conduct such research in order to identify effective prevention programs that will include risk factors for experiencing sexual violence, the health and psychosocial implications of victimization, and resources for preventing violence.

The literature search for the present paper included several databases in order to find studies related to sexual violence, sexual violence prevention, and programs that evaluated the effectiveness of prevention programs. The databases used included ERIC, PsyINFO, Info Trac/ NC LIVE, Academic Search Elite, and Expanded Academic ASAP. The search words used included: sexual assault, sexual abuse, sexual violence, incest, sexual assault prevention, prevention, preschool, elementary school, middle school, high school and college, and evaluated prevention programs. The literature from the above databases were examined and included in the present review.

LITERATURE REVIEW: PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Prevention curriculums have become the preferred option for dealing with issues of childhood sexual violence over the past several years. It is hoped that these programs will give children the knowledge and skills to reduce their risk of being abused (Finkelhor, 1986). However, it is unclear if merely acquiring knowledge can reduce the risk of being sexually assaulted. It has been difficult to ascertain the behavioral changes of prevention programs due to ethical issues associated with simulating abusive situations (Tutty, 1997). Thus, it has been difficult to assess prevention or risk reduction of sexual violence based solely on prevention curriculums.

Several reviewers have examined sexual abuse prevention programs. Two such review articles by Carroll (1992) and Tutty (1992) examined research evaluating child sexual abuse prevention programs. The reviewers found that most studies contain methodological problems such as no control groups, small sample sizes, and lack of assessment of long-term effects. They could evaluate whether the participants increased knowledge about sexual violence, yet could not assess if the

increased knowledge and skills gained actually reduces a child's likelihood of becoming a victim.

Prevention programs are available in almost all school districts (Daro & Salmon-Cox, 1994). These programs seem to cover, teaching the concept of sexual abuse, teaching the concept of saying no and getting away, and teaching the concept of telling an adult (Finkelhor & Strapko, 1992). The primary goal of these techniques is to reduce a child's vulnerability to abuse by relatives, acquaintances, and strangers (Kohl, 1993).

Many different formats are used to provide prevention materials, including films, books, plays, puppet shows, discussion groups, and role-play. The basic concepts conveyed by most programs are similar. There are several major themes included in prevention programs which include body ownership, good touch/bad touch, private parts, no secrets, identification of strangers, tricks, permission to tell, touching by people you know, fault and blame, and sexual abuse risk of boys (Tutty, 1995) and defining sexual abuse, recognizing potential abuse, and identifying support systems and get help (Conte, Rosen, & Saperstein, 1984; Finkelhor, 1986).

Although some basic concepts concerning prevention strategies are common to most programs, the programs vary widely on a number of dimensions such as format, age of participants, occupation of the program leader, and the length of the program. It is hypothesized that these variables could influence program effectiveness yet, researchers have only started to investigate the impact (Davis & Gidycz, 2000). One of the major problems is that efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of these prevention programs have lagged behind program development (Finkelhor, 1986; Hazzard & Angert, 1985). The direct effects of sexual violence prevention programs on participants should determine the actual effectiveness of curriculum. Thus, if the prevention curriculums are going to be used, then it is recommended that a systematic evaluation of the programs be conducted to ascertain the effects of the prevention behaviors of the participants who receive the programs.

Another issue with most outreach programs is that they are focused on presenting primarily in the schools and are not being implemented in community settings as well. In North Carolina, the state does not approve curriculums to be used in public schools. The Department of Public Instruction establishes goals and objectives in the Healthful Living Standard Course of Study (K-12 focus on relationships), and each teacher/school district selects the instructional materials that will be used to teach these standards (North Carolina Public Schools, n.d.)

When focusing prevention programs only in school settings the programs are not reaching those who are home schooled or drop-outs. Thus, while it is important to offer prevention programming in school settings because there is a large population of young people that can be reached, such outreach efforts should also be provided in community settings as well.

APPRAISING THE SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Most prevention education programs being utilized are not published, nor have they been formally evaluated. Programs vary with respect to length, approach (i.e., mixed sex, boys only, girls only, lecture, video, vignettes) as well as vary by content (i.e., attitudes, empathy, knowledge, supportive behaviors).

Evaluations of programs are reported according to categories that include: attitudes, behavioral intention, behaviors (self-reported and observed), knowledge and incidence of self-reported victimization. Issues to consider are that there are few published evaluations and there is a need for longitudinal studies.

Finkelhor, Asdigan, and Dziuba-Leatherman (1995) identified several elements considered necessary for comprehensive sexual abuse prevention programs. These include: "content about sexual abuse, bullies, good and bad touch, confusing touch, incest, screaming and yelling to attract attention, telling an adult, and abuse is never the child's fault; a chance to practice in class; information to take home; a meeting for parents; and repetition of material over more than a single day" (p.143).

A number of elements have been identified as consistent within promising prevention programs. These include (National Rape and Sexual Assault Prevention Project, 2000; Schewe, 2002):

- Informing students about relevant school policies, complaint procedures, and existing laws;
- Examining the concept of consent, including the forms coercion can take and typical things people might say to pressure someone into having sex;
- Examining myths and stereotypes about sexual assault;
- Exploring the contribution that alcohol and other drugs may play in sexual assault;

- Promoting victim empathy to replace traditional victim blaming and increasing the understanding that sexual assault can happen to anyone–young or old, female or male, rich or poor, attractive or plain;
- Tailoring the curriculum to the particular audience, such as using examples that reflect the age and racial characteristics of the audience, and using local rather than national statistics;
- Avoiding confrontation, blaming men and blaming the victim;
- Focusing on healthy relationships as well as understanding what sexual assault is and its causes; and;
- Providing information on national and local community resources to help those victimized by sexual assault (e.g., crisis lines, sexual assault centers).

The National Rape and Sexual Assault Prevention Project (2000) stated that effective female-only programs include: ways perpetrators behave, addressing peer pressure, bystander issues, victim blaming attitudes, enhancing assertiveness, and self-defense skills. Effective male-only programs include: peer and societal pressure that promote abusive behavior, sexual assault myths and stereotypes, men and boys as victims, and how to respond to girls and boys who have been victimized. They also recommended that programs use a variety of presentation methods that include: videos, students being actively involved, role-playing, problem-solving, script writing, and presentations by survivors and by sex offender treatment providers. Multiple sessions, teacher training/community educators, getting parents involved, and using evaluations were also encouraged.

The curriculum must be consistent with what is currently known about effective instruction for its participants. In the present report, curriculums that were formally evaluated have been identified, and the set has been narrowed down to programs that attempt to focus on sexual violence. There are many programs available on sexual harassment, healthy relationships, and the like; however the goal of the present paper is to look at what is available and being used related to preventing sexual violence. Since there are not many evaluated programs with a sexual violence focus, the scope of this article was broadened to cover middle and high school programs.

The most effective preschool and elementary sexual violence prevention programs are those that are interactive and were multimedia formats (Casper, 1999). Preschool and elementary programs tend to teach boys and girls together and most measure knowledge gained in order

to determine whether the programs are effective. Yet, whether knowledge equals behavior changes remains a question (Reppucci, Land, & Haugaard, 2001).

There has been little research on programs for adolescents. Fortunately, researchers are beginning to see the importance of providing prevention programs to adolescents (Lonsway, 1996). Interactive programs tend to be the most effective approach just as they are in the preschool/elementary programs. It appears as if these programs occur as afterthoughts targeting mixed or same gender audiences.

LIMITATIONS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Despite the great strides that have been made in understanding sexual violence, future research needs to address areas where research is sparse. One gap in evaluating sexual violence prevention programs is research that specifically addresses adolescent prevention programs. Most studies examine the victimization of college aged women or child sexual abuse prevention. When adolescents have been the subjects, the research has focused primarily on school-based programs. Dropouts or children who are home schooled have not been targeted for either programming or research.

Another gap in the research is the limited number of participants from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds included in the sample populations. Other limitations include the failure to define research variables such as descriptions of time, age of victims, gender, race, and relationship to the perpetrator. Most studies lack consistent definitions of sexual victimization.

Furthermore, effective studies need to include data on perpetration of sexual violence, including the factors that facilitate sexual violence. Other limitations in the current research include sampling bias and conceptual inconsistencies, which reduce the ability to generalize findings across populations. Lastly, prevention programs that show promise in reducing sexual violence among adolescents must be thoroughly evaluated so that future researchers and advocates may replicate the model prevention programs (Foshee et al., 1996; Foshee et al., 2000).

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An appropriate prevention curriculum should provide information to participants so that they gain knowledge to prevent or at least reduce their risk of being sexually assaulted. This knowledge should be functional in that it influences their behaviors. A well-developed prevention curriculum should help participants perceive more accurately their own vulnerability to sexual assault.

Effective prevention curriculums should offer more than one session. Allowing enough time for effective programs to achieve their objectives and then offer follow up sessions at least once a year afterward would be advisable. Research findings indicate that follow up plays an important part in the success of prevention programs.

Prevention programs without scheduled reinforcement are less likely to be successful. Thus, there is a need to plan for and schedule follow up reinforcement to achieve success. One problem with this concept is that most prevention curriculums are administered in school settings where the time frames given are often less than needed for effective programs, and follow up is almost unheard of. Other concerns include when prevention programs should be conducted (i.e., pre-kindergarten, high school, or through the life span) and where prevention programs are conducted. It appears that most are based in school systems and thus is one reason that school personnel need to be abreast of this issue and able to effectively conduct or find experts in the field to conduct such programs.

Sexual violence prevention curriculums are plentiful, yet it appears that most have not been evaluated for effectiveness. Thus, there is a need to conduct more formal evaluations of programs being used. These evaluations could help school personnel or experts in the field to provide comprehensive prevention programs to adolescents that may reduce their risk of being sexually victimized or at least increase their knowledge of resources if they have already been victimized.

Ultimately, longitudinal studies would be effective evaluation approaches because they would track attitudes, knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors over time. It is difficult to know if knowledge equals behavior and if the increase in knowledge holds over time. Therefore, it is also recommended that retrospective studies of whether earlier programs that were found to be effective were actually effective in holding an increase in knowledge were effective in preventing victimization be conducted. Knowing whether the prevention programs actually prevent victimization would be difficult to ascertain because self-reporting depends upon respondents being honest and understanding what consti-

tutes victimization. And, many who receive the prevention training may never need to use it.

It is unclear whether knowledge gained from prevention programs is enough to gauge actual prevention behaviors. The ideal situation would be to base results on direct observation, yet, as is the case with most prevention education curriculums, it would be unethical to place participants in danger, real or not.

A range of complex issues regarding sexual violence exists, and effective school personnel should strive to stay abreast of the latest research findings. From the present review, the following suggestions for school personnel involved in these traumatic and tragic cases are offered:

- Collaborate with other organizations that serve adolescents, creating a team approach to education.
- Cooperate with designing prevention programs or evaluations and help develop and implement prevention programs in school settings.
- Know referral sources for adolescents who may need medical or mental health services. This should include referrals to local rape crisis programs and victims advocacy groups.
- School personnel should be trained to screen and/or be familiar with signs of sexual violence.
- All services to adolescents are provided in a safe and confidential environment.

It is hoped that the present review demonstrated that there are many prevention programs and few that have been formally evaluated. Aspects that are essential to prevention programs were highlighted and recommendations for future directions, further research, and implications for school personnel were made. Sexual violence is prevalent, and there remains a need for finding effective prevention curriculums that will help curtail incidences of sexual violence.

Prevention programming seems to be a good idea that can be improved upon. Better information about how well that which is now available works is the next step in the improvement process.

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