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By

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ABSTRACT

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Application of an ecological approach (e.g., Kelly, 1966) to youth violence highlights the fact that youths operate in many interrelated settings. As such, interventions are likely to be ineffective if they focus solely on one domain in youths' lives without considering whether the goals of the intervention are consistent with what they are experiencing in other domains. This study examined congruence of the goals and philosophies underlying school peer mediation programs with caregivers' beliefs and behaviors pertaining to violence and the relationship of congruence between these two domains (i.e., school and family) and youth participation in peer mediation. One hundred fifty-nine caregivers of middle-school students completed a mail survey. Of these, 26 were caregivers of trained peer mediators and 133 were caregivers of students who did not receive peer mediation training. The results indicate that the consistency of caregivers' beliefs and behaviors with school peer mediation programs is mixed. The results also reveal that congruence of caregivers' beliefs and behaviors pertaining to violence with peer mediation goals and philosophies is related to youths being more likely to participate in the programs. These findings support an ecological framework for understanding children's participation in interventions, as well as research demonstrating a need for violence prevention programs to attend to multiple domains in children's lives.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Problem

Youth violence is increasingly becoming recognized by policy makers, researchers, and the media as an urgent problem in the United States. Since 1985, nearly one million adolescents between the ages of twelve and nineteen have been victims of violent crimes each year. Youth are more often the victims of violence than any other age group (Centers for Disease Control, 1992). Teenage males are more likely to die from gunshot wounds than from all natural causes combined (Johnson & Johnson, 1996), and youth violence is currently the leading preventable cause of death for adolescents (Elliott, 1994).

Many people believe that the majority of youth homicides are committed by gangs or other individuals unknown to the victim during robberies and drug deals. The media reinforces these beliefs by depicting youth violence as largely attributable to gangs (Prothrow-Stith, 1991). However, contrary to these beliefs, researchers have found that most homicide victims are killed by people they know (Prothrow-Stith & Spivak, 1992; Centers for Disease Control, 1990; Steinmetz, 1990) and that arguments are the leading cause of homicides (Pallone & Hennessy, 1992; Prothrow-Stith & Spivak, 1992). Studies which focus specifically on youth violence find that for adolescents the majority of interpersonal violence occurs between same race and age peers and commonly

involves individuals who are acquaintances or friends (Hausman, Spivak, Prothrow-Stith, & Roeber, 1992; Nuttal & Kalesnik, 1987).

Violent behavior has many deleterious effects for youths, their families, and their communities. Violence leads to diminished quality of life for victims of violence and people who reside in areas that are high in crime, reduced earning potential for juveniles who are incarcerated, the risk that siblings will model violent behavior, and the emotional stress that family members of both victims and perpetrators experience (Farrington, 1987). The detrimental outcomes of youth violence may also extend beyond offenders, victims, and their families. For example, an impoverished learning environment may result when violence touches schools. The frequency and severity of conflicts in schools appears to be increasing. For the first time, the problem of fighting and violence was reported to be tied with lack of discipline as the biggest problem confronting public schools (Elam, Rose, & Harris, 1994). The National Crime Victimization Survey found that nearly one-in-ten students between the ages of twelve and nineteen years are victims of crime either in or near their school during a six month period (Bastian & Taylor, 1991).

This literature review explores the topic of violence perpetrated by youth. The first section delineates some of the major explanations of the causes of violence. Second, the review examines school-based conflict resolution and peer mediation programs, which are some of the most common interventions for youth violence. School conflict resolution and peer mediation programs are becoming increasingly popular because they are inexpensive and easy to implement, but very little has been done to examine whether

the programs reach youths who need them.

To address this question, the third section draws on ecological theory as a guide for understanding development and evaluation of interventions. When an ecological analysis is applied to interventions, the importance of ensuring congruency across domains emerges. Youths will be more likely to participate in an intervention when the goals and philosophies of the program are consistent with those valued in the other domains of their lives. The family is an especially important domain in which youths spend a great deal of their time and acquire many of their beliefs and behaviors. The congruence of the goals and philosophies underlying school-based violence prevention programs with those valued at home may have implications for whether youths choose to participate in the programs.

Finally, the fourth section outlines the current study, which examines congruence between youths' homes and school violence prevention programs by examining caregivers' beliefs and behaviors that are relevant to youth violence and comparing them to the goals and philosophies underlying school programs. In addition, it examines the impact of congruence between these two domains on whether youths participate in their school's violence prevention program.

Explanations for the Causes of Youth Violence

The problem of youth violence is complex and, as such, explanations for the causes of youth violence vary tremendously. The multiplicity in explanations for youth violence is seen in the popular press. We read in the newspapers and hear on the news about a wide range of factors thought to lead to youth violence. These factors include

social influences such as poor schools, poor parenting, the decline in family values, or violence portrayed in music and television. They also include individual-level explanations based on the assumption that youths who commit violent acts are somehow inherently different from other youths. For example, it is not uncommon today to hear adolescents who commit acts of violence referred to as "juvenile super-predators" (DiIulio, 1996, Juvenile Predator Act, 1996).

Univariate factors. Researchers and theorists have also employed a variety of approaches in seeking to explain youth violence. Many researchers have identified univariate factors that are associated with violence or delinquency. Empirically identified risk factors for serious antisocial behavior include: 1) individual-level characteristics such as biases and deficits in cognitive processing (Dodge, 1986; Slaby & Guerra, 1988); constitutional factors which have a biological or physiological basis, such as genes or neurotoxins that lower intelligence and attention levels and increase physical activity, attention-deficit disorder, and neurological impairments (Hawkins & Lam, 1987); 2) family-level characteristics, such as poor parental management methods (Loeber & Southamer-Loeber, 1987; Patterson & Southamer-Loeber, 1984); family management problems (Patterson & Dishion, 1985; Farrington, 1991; Kandel & Andrews, 1987; Thornberry, 1994); family conflict (Rutter & Giller, 1983); favorable parental attitudes toward and involvement in the problem behavior (Brook, Brook, Gordon, Whiteman, & Cohen, 1990; Kandel, Kessler, & Maguiles, 1978; Hansen, Graham, Shelton, Flay, & Johnson, 1987); 3) peer influences, such as friends who engage in the problem behavior (Barnes & Welte, 1986; Farrington, 1991; Cairns, Cairns, Neckerman, Gest, and Gairepy,

1988; Elliott et al., 1989); and 4) community and societal influences that are mediated through family characteristics or affect the likelihood of individual, family, and peer influences leading to violence. These community and societal influences include the availability of firearms (Alexander, Massey, Gibbs, Altekruse, 1985); media portrayals of violence (Eron & Huesman, 1987); transitions and mobility (Farrington, 1991); low neighborhood attachment and community organization (Murray, 1983; Wilson & Hernstein, 1985); extreme economic deprivation (Farrington, Loeber, Elliott, Hawkins, Kandel, Klein, McCord, Rower, & Tremblay, 1990)

Theories of violence causation. Other researchers have developed theories that incorporate one or more of these risk factors to explain youth violence. Examples of theories that focus on individual-level explanations for youth violence causation include biological theories (e.g., Booth & Osgood, 1993; Mednick & Christiansen, 1977; Eysenck & Gudjonsson, 1989), personality theories (see Sutherland, Cressey, and Luckenbill, 1992), and psychoanalytic theories (e.g., Friedlander, 1947). Theories that incorporate social influences on youth violence causation include social cognitive theory (e.g., Bandura, 1977), social bonding and control theories (e.g., Hirschi, 1969; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990), labeling theory (e.g., Ritzer, 1992), social disorganization, anomie, and strain theories (e.g., Agnew, 1992), Elliott's integrative model of strain, bonding, and learning (Elliott, Huizinga, and Ageton, 1985), interactional theory (Thornberry, 1987), network theory (Krohn, 1986), and self-derogation theory (Kaplan, 1975). Although there are many theories which purport to explain why youth violence occurs, this review will focus on social cognitive theory because it provides the

theoretical framework underlying school-based conflict resolution and peer mediation programs. One of the premises underlying social cognitive theory is that youths who commit acts of violence are not inherently bad. Social cognitive theory instead assumes that youths learn violent behavior through various social influences, thus it is possible to teach them to resolve conflicts using nonviolent strategies.

Social Cognitive Theory. Social cognitive theory[1] is based upon the supposition that social behavior is learned and reinforced through interactions with other people (Bandura, 1977). Violence is viewed as a response to various environmental sources of conflict learned from previous interactions (Bandura, 1977; Prothrow-Stith, 1991). According to social cognitive theory, adolescents who use violence to solve problems are often mirroring conflict resolution techniques they see at home (Bandura & Ross, 1963; Strauss, 1985) or on television (Liebert, Neale, & Davidson, 1973; Eron & Huesman, 1984; Zuckerman & Zuckerman, 1985). Social cognitive theory posits that behavior is learned and maintained through the processes of observational learning, self-regulation and self-efficacy, and reciprocal determinism.

Bandura (see Bandura, 1969, 1977, 1986) states that there are four components involved in the process of observational learning. Observational learning first requires that the individual attend to live or symbolic events that are modeled. Modeling may occur through observation of other people's behaviors, verbal discussions, or discipline encounters. Powerful and attractive models are ideal for capturing attention (e.g.,

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1 Social cognitive theory was originally called social learning theory, but was relabeled by Bandura in 1986 to incorporate self-regulative capacities and self-efficacy.

caregivers, television, or peers). Next, the information is retained in memory through an imaginal or verbal representational system. The individual then enacts behaviors that are similar to the originally modeled behavior. Finally, incentives, such as others' reactions and any additional positive consequences of the behavior, motivate the individual to continue the behavior.

Applying the four components of observational learning to youth violence, youths learn violent responses to conflict from powerful, attractive models by observing their reactions to conflict, or during discussions or discipline encounters. After retaining the behaviors in memory, youths may then later enact behaviors similar to the modeled behaviors. If they receive positive reactions from their peers or obtain other desired outcomes in that situation, it is likely that they will continue to use the violent strategies to respond to conflict.

According to social cognitive theory, the newly learned violent responses to conflict shift from being maintained by expectations of externally administered consequences to being maintained by youths themselves through self-regulation (Bandura, 1977). In the process of self-regulation, youths compare behaviors to their own internal standards, and behaviors that meet these standards are judged positively and those that do not are judged negatively. Youths choose standards from numerous possibilities that are modeled by different individuals as well as by the same individual in differing domains or situations. The selection of standards depends on factors such as the belief that the model is more competent than the youth, the extent to which the modeled behavior is perceived as valued by others, and the extent to which youths view their

behavior as contingent upon their own effort and ability rather than on external factors over which they have little control. Thus, youths may be more likely to choose the standards of violent models if they believe that they are not as competent as the nonviolent models, if they perceive that violent behavior is valued more than nonviolent behavior, or if they believe that factors external to themselves "cause" them to fight.

Self-regulation is largely determined by self-efficacy. According to self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977), individuals form domain-specific beliefs regarding their own abilities and characteristics which guide their behavior by determining what they attempt to accomplish and how much effort they put into their performance in a particular domain or situation. These beliefs about self-efficacy stem from their history of achievement in a particular domain and from observing the accomplishments of other people. If youths have been taught that they are "just bad kids" or if they believe that they are unable to handle conflicts at school without fighting, they are unlikely to try to resolve conflicts nonviolently.

Finally, Bandura (1977, 1986) proposes that behavior, the environment, cognition, and other personal factors have a bidirectional influence on each other. In other words, youths' competencies, self-efficacy beliefs, and self-regulatory capacities are acquired through experience, but they in turn determine their experiences in such a way that they are maintained. For example, youths who believe that they are not as competent as the nonviolent models in their lives or that they are unable to resolve conflicts nonviolently may behave in ways that evoke responses from their environments that reinforce these beliefs. Alternatively, youths may choose environments that value, and thus reinforce,

their violent conflict resolution strategies.

Conclusion. According to social cognitive theory, youths learn violent behavior from powerful, attractive models in a variety of social experiences. Social cognitive theory is supported by research which indicates that associations with delinquent or violent peers can increase the likelihood that youths will engage in delinquent or violent behavior (Barnes & Welte, 1986; Farrington, 1991; Cairns et al., 1988; Elliott et al., 1989), parental attitudes toward delinquent or violent behavior influence the attitudes and behaviors of their children (Brook et al., 1990; Kandel et al., 1978; Hansen et al., 1987), and media portrayals of violence can increase aggressive behavior (Eron & Huesman, 1987; National Research Council, 1993).

Given that social cognitive theory states that violence is a learned behavior, it logically follows that youths may be taught nonviolent strategies with which to respond to conflict. Some of the most common school-based programs utilize this strategy to prevent violence. School conflict resolution and peer mediation programs aim to reduce youth violence by changing the school climate to one in which violent behavior is unacceptable, providing models of nonviolent conflict resolution, and teaching youths new strategies for responding to conflict. The next section of this review describes school-based conflict resolution and peer mediation programs.

School Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Programs

There has been an increase in the implementation of violence prevention efforts in schools in response to the detrimental consequences of youth violence. Violence prevention in schools ranges from metal detectors at school entrances, guards, intercoms

to facilitate communication, and expulsions for students caught with weapons to parenting and after-school programs. Recently, violence prevention strategies have been expanded to include conflict resolution and peer mediation programs (Webster, 1993). These programs have been developed upon the supposition that violence results from interpersonal conflicts and are largely based on social cognitive theory.

School conflict resolution programs have been one of the most frequently implemented public health strategies to reduce violence (Wilson-Brewer, 1991). Conflict resolution programs now exist in thousands of middle and high schools (Webster, 1993). In accordance with the tenets of social cognitive theory, students are taught that violence is a preventable health problem that may be addressed by teaching alternative responses to conflict (Spivak, Hausman, & Prothrow-Stith, 1989). Conflict resolution programs attempt to create an environment that reinforces the idea that violence is an unacceptable response to conflict as well as increase youths' perceptions of self-efficacy for socially competent behavior. The programs primarily focus on teaching students to use nonviolent methods of resolving disputes. Other common components of the programs include providing information regarding the causes of violence, the risks of victimization, and methods to challenge beliefs that support the use of violence. Students are taught that violence stems from social influences, such as our violent culture, the media, and structural inequalities in our society (National Institute of Justice, 1994).

School-based conflict resolution programs also frequently include a peer mediation component. In peer mediation programs, students are taught mediation skills and then encouraged to help their peers resolve their interpersonal conflicts through

verbal communication instead of fighting. The students selected to be peer mediators are trained in conflict resolution skills which include active listening, problem definition, brainstorming for possible solutions to the conflict at hand, skills for rephrasing the points back to the disputants, agreement writing, and other mediation principles such as impartiality and confidentiality of cases (Benson & Benson, 1993).

In a review of school-based conflict resolution and peer mediation programs for adolescents, Webster (1993) discusses how conflict resolution programs are becoming increasingly popular because they are inexpensive to implement compared to other interventions. However, very little has been done to evaluate the programs. He warns that conflict resolution and peer mediation programs need longitudinal evaluation to determine their effectiveness and whether they are being utilized by the students who need them most.

In order to address some of these questions, the next section of this review will use ecological theory as a framework for understanding the development and evaluation of interventions. Applying an ecological analysis to interventions facilitates our understanding of factors which influence whether they are utilized by their intended target populations.

Ecological Theory

As discussed earlier, youth violence is a complex problem with multiple causes that span multiple domains of youths' lives and include influences outside of their direct life experiences. Ecological theory provides a framework for understanding complex social problems, such as youth violence, and developing and evaluating interventions that

are sensitive to this complexity.

Ecological theorists emphasize that human behavior does not occur in a social vacuum, but exists as part of a complex system. People operate in many settings and are influenced by factors at many levels. While some aspects of a problem or behavior may be understood by examining one setting, it is necessary to examine multiple settings and levels in order to fully understand all of the potential influences that may converge to cause a problem. Examining the multiple immediate social environments in which people operate, how these settings interact with one another, and the influences of broader community and societal factors will provide a more comprehensive understanding of a social problem than would examining only one setting (e.g., Kelly, 1966; Garbarino, 1992; Rappaport, 1987).

Central to ecological theory is an emphasis on interdependence of systems (Kelly, 1966). Kelly's principle of interdependence states that changes in one setting or level of a system impact other settings and levels in that system. Changes in one component may also impact relationships between components in a system. For example, the effects of a change in state or federal policy which requires schools to provide violence prevention programs for children may diffuse beyond the school. If school administrators contract with community agencies to teach the programs, the policy then impacts that community agency as well as the relationship between the school and the community agency. The policy may impact other settings if children bring new skills and values to their homes, peers, and communities. The policy may change the relationship between the children's homes and the school if school administrators recruit parent volunteers to help run the

program, help with fundraising, or participate in some other way. If parents decide that they value the new program because of their own participation or because of the changes they see in their children, the continuation of this policy and new policies may be impacted through their voting patterns or other policy-influencing activities. Because components within a social system are interdependent, changes to any one component of a system have the potential to create radiating effects. Thus, it is important to attend to the complex interconnections across system parts when planning interventions.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1986) application of an ecological perspective to the study of child development is also relevant to the issue of youth violence. His model incorporates a contextual view of behavior, focusing on how children develop interactively with their immediate social environment, how their immediate social environments interact with each other, and how aspects of the larger social context affect children's immediate settings. Although the model was originally developed for the purpose of studying risks to child development, it has been used to specify the various settings and levels that should be considered in order to understand social problems and plan and evaluate interventions affecting children and youth (Garbarino, 1992).

Bronfenbrenner (1979; 1986) delineates four systems in his model which highlight the multiple settings and levels that impact children and youth: 1) the microsystem level - the multiple settings, including places and people, in which children and youth experience and create day to day reality (e.g., home, school, community, place of worship, etc.); 2) the mesosystem level - the relationships between contexts or microsystems in which children and youth receive direct experiences (e.g., the

relationship between home and school); 3) exosystem level - the situations that influence children and youths' development in which they do not actively play a direct role (e.g., caregivers' workplaces, school boards, etc.); 4) macrosystem level - the cultural ideology and social policies of a society (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1986).

By attending to factors at the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem levels, we are better able to understand the causes of social problems in a way that captures their complexity. Understanding this complexity enables us to consider how components of a system have a reciprocal impact on one another. When examining any social problem, such as youth violence, it is imperative to consider the information each level provides and to keep each level of analysis in mind both when defining the problem and when considering potential solutions (Garbarino, 1992).

Analyzing the problem of youth violence from an ecological perspective helps us to integrate many of the factors associated with youth violence. Violent behavior is shaped in part by youths' interactions with their immediate settings (e.g., home, school, peers, community, etc.). For example, microsystem level factors that may lead to youths engaging in violent behavior might include whether youths have parents or peers that condone or engage in violent behavior. Youths' violent behaviors may also be influenced by interactions between these microsystem level settings. Whether settings in youths' lives, such as home and school, compliment each other and whether or not the settings present basic consistency in values regarding the use of violence may impact youth violence at the mesosystem level. The influences of youths' immediate settings and the interactions between those settings on their use of violence is further impacted by

exosystem and macrosystem level factors. For example, at the exosystem level, the perspective of school boards and local governments on youth violence can affect the policies they implement concerning youth violence (e.g., expulsions for bringing weapons to school or curfew sweeps) and programs they create to remedy the problem. Important macrosystem level influences on youth violence may include gun laws and whether violence is a societal norm. According to ecological theory, change in any one component of youths' social systems impacts other components. Thus, it is important for researchers to consider the impact of microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem level factors when designing interventions.

This perspective is consistent with successful interventions to reduce or prevent youth violence (e.g., Zigler, Taussig, & Black, 1992; Tolan & Guerra, 1993; Webster, 1993). Webster (1993) stresses that a multi-setting approach to violence prevention is necessary. He argues that the problem with many interventions to reduce youth violence is that they do not account for the influence of the many settings in youths' lives. He states that brief interventions that are not reinforced outside the immediate training environment cannot be expected to alter violent behavior. The desired behavior patterns must be reinforced over time and across settings. Programs that fail often do so because of inadequate consideration of the ecological context in which violent behavior is learned and reinforced (Webster, 1993).

Congruence across settings. The application of an ecological approach to the problem of youth violence highlights the fact that youths operate in many interrelated settings and that researchers must attend to the many settings in which violent behavior is

learned and reinforced when planning interventions. This message is echoed in research literature which indicates that violence has causes that span multiple settings in youths lives as well as those outside of their immediate experiences (e.g., exosystem and macrosystem level factors) and in the theoretical framework underlying some of our most popular programs to prevent youth violence (i.e., social cognitive theory). According to social cognitive theory, youths are influenced by powerful, attractive models they observe in all domains in their lives. Studies utilizing social cognitive theory have found that models that children observe in one setting impact their behavior in other settings (e.g., Report of the American Psychological Association Commission on Violence and Youth, 1993). For example, Fry (1988) found that children who observed a high level of violence among adults in their communities were more likely to be aggressive when playing with their peers than children who did not observe high levels of aggression. Thus, it is apparent that although conflict resolution and peer mediation programs are implemented in schools, what happens in domains outside of school has an important impact on the effectiveness of school-based violence prevention programs.

Successful school-based programs to prevent or reduce youth violence must consider multiple settings because conflict resolution skills are learned and reinforced in multiple settings and because youths must use their conflict resolution skills in multiple settings. Interventions are likely to be ineffective if they only focus on one domain in youths' lives without considering the extent to which the goals of the intervention are consistent with what they are experiencing in other domains. If youths learn in domains other than school (e.g., home, community, peers, etc.) that violent behavior is valued and

that conflicts will inevitably result in fights no matter how much effort they exert to resolve them peacefully, or if youths receive other messages which indicate that the skills and beliefs taught in school programs are not valued in the other domains, they are unlikely to participate in school peer mediation programs. Congruence between the skills and values that youths are taught in school conflict resolution and peer mediation programs and the skills and values they learn in other settings in their lives has implications for whether youths will use the programs.

As a first step in understanding the impact of interplay between settings on the utilization of school-based violence prevention programs, this study examines the congruence of the programs' goals and philosophies regarding violence with those of youths' caregivers. Home is an important domain in which to examine congruence because youths typically spend a large portion of their time at home and learn many of their beliefs, behaviors, and skills there. Research has demonstrated that caregivers' attitudes and behaviors greatly impact their children's attitudes and behaviors. Caregivers may wield this influence through modeling or by explicitly teaching their children specific beliefs and behaviors. For example, researchers have found that caregivers' attitudes toward delinquent or violent behavior influence the attitudes and behaviors of their children (e.g., Brook et al., 1990; Kandel et al., 1978; Hansen et al., 1987) and that caregivers' involvement in behaviors such as drinking increases the likelihood that their children will engage in similar behaviors (e.g., Ahmed, Bush, Davidson, & Ianotto, 1984). Researchers who study domestic violence have found that children who witness their caregivers using violence are more likely to be violent

themselves (e.g., Lewis, 1987; Walker & Browne, 1985; Loeber & Dishion, 1984).

In addition, research has also shown that caregivers' parenting strategies influence whether their children become involved in delinquent and/or violent behavior (e.g., Kumpfer, 1996). For example, researchers have found that both physical punishment and child abuse are associated with childhood aggression (Patterson, Capaldi, & Bank, 1991; Report of the American Psychological Association Commission on Violence and Youth, 1993). Research has also shown relationships between childhood aggression and caregivers supporting their children's aggressive behaviors (Report of the American Psychological Association Commission on Violence and Youth, 1993), failing to actively teach their children nonviolent methods of solving social problems (Report of the American Psychological Association Commission on Violence and Youth, 1993), and neglecting to reinforce prosocial behaviors by their children (Patterson et al., 1991).

Because research supports caregivers' roles in influencing their children's beliefs and behaviors, it is important to examine congruence between caregivers' attitudes and behaviors pertaining to violence and those youths learn in school violence prevention programs. The congruence of the goals and philosophies of school violence prevention programs with caregivers' beliefs will impact whether youths choose to use the programs. Youths may choose to not use the programs if they are inconsistent with the values they learn at home. Caregivers may also be less likely to encourage their children to participate in programs which hold goals and philosophies that are counter to their own beliefs.

Purpose of the Current Study

The purpose of this study is to examine congruence between the beliefs and behaviors that youths learn in school conflict resolution and peer mediation programs and the beliefs and behaviors they learn at home. In order to assess congruence, we examine caregivers' beliefs and behaviors that are relevant to youth violence and compare them to the goals and philosophies underlying school programs. This study also examines the impact of congruence between these two domains on whether youths participate in their school's violence prevention program.

School violence prevention lessons. To identify specific areas in which to assess congruence, a content analysis of the peer mediation program examined in this study was conducted. In the curriculum, youth are taught the following: 1) Violence is never an acceptable means by which to resolve conflicts. 2) Violence is a learned behavior and, as such, may be prevented by teaching individuals alternative strategies with which to resolve conflicts. To reduce violence in schools, peer mediation is a better approach than increasing punishments because students learn the necessary skills for resolving conflicts nonviolently. 3) Violence in our society is a result of conflicts stemming from social-environmental causes. Individual-level traits do not cause the majority of violence in our society. 4) Students having conflicts with other students may be effectively helped by their peers. 5) It is important to talk through conflicts rather than resort to yelling, name-calling, ignoring the conflict, or hitting other people.

Caregivers' beliefs and behaviors. Based on the research presented earlier regarding the importance of the attitudes and behaviors that caregivers model for and

explicitly teach their children, a number of caregivers' beliefs and behaviors are examined in this study. These beliefs and behaviors are described below.

Caregivers' beliefs regarding the causes and prevention of youth violence are examined and compared to the lessons pertaining to violence causation and prevention presented to youths in the school conflict resolution and peer mediation program. Congruence between what youths learn at home and in school programs regarding violence causation and prevention has implications for whether youths will use the school programs. For example, if youths are taught at home that violence is caused by genetic factors and is not preventable, they may be less apt to believe in and use a program based on the premise that violence is a learned behavior and individuals may be taught to resolve conflicts nonviolently. Caregivers also may not encourage their children to participate in a prevention program based on social learning theory if they believe that violence cannot be prevented.

Caregivers' behaviors pertaining to violence are also examined. The specific behaviors of interest are based on research literature described earlier, and include caregivers' discipline strategies and their responses when they learn that their children have been fighting.

Caregivers' discipline strategies are important because they provide an opportunity for youths to model their caregivers' behaviors in response to conflict. Caregivers' reactions when they learn that their children have been involved in a fight are important not only because youths may model their behavior, but also because their reactions teach youths whether or not fighting is acceptable. Youths are taught in school

violence prevention programs that violence is never an acceptable way to resolve conflicts. If caregivers send youths messages that are incongruent with this philosophy (e.g., by doing nothing when their children get into fights), youths may be less likely to use the school programs.

Research questions and hypotheses. The study examines the following research questions:

1) What do caregivers think about the causes of youth violence and about how youth violence should be addressed or prevented?

2) Which parenting and/or discipline strategies do caregivers utilize to influence their children's behavior, and how do they respond to their children fighting?

3) Is there a relationship between caregivers' beliefs about violence and youth participation in peer mediation programs? Specific hypotheses include:

A. Caregiver belief in youth violence causes and prevention strategies that are congruent with those taught in school violence prevention programs will be positively related to their children using peer mediation as mediators and/or to resolve a conflict of their own (i.e., as a disputant).

a) Caregiver belief in social-environmental causes of youth violence and social change prevention strategies will be positively related to their children participating in peer mediation.

b) Caregiver belief in social learning theory explanations for youth violence will be positively related to their children participating in peer mediation.

B. Caregiver belief in youth violence causes and prevention strategies that are incongruent with those taught in school violence prevention programs will be negatively related to their children using peer mediation as mediators and/or disputants.

a) Caregiver belief that deterrence-oriented strategies, such as harsher punishments and stricter laws, will prevent youth violence will be negatively related to their children participating in peer mediation.

b) Caregiver beliefs that individual-level factors cause youth violence and that youth violence cannot be prevented will be negatively related to their children participating in peer mediation.

4) Is there a relationship between caregivers' behaviors regarding violence and youth participation in peer mediation programs? Specific hypotheses include:

A. Caregiver use of parenting strategies that are congruent with school violence prevention programs will be positively related to their children using peer mediation as mediators and/or disputants.

a) Caregivers responding to their children fighting by talking with them about other ways to resolve conflicts will be positively related to their children participating in peer mediation.

B. Caregiver use of parenting strategies that are incongruent with school violence prevention programs will be negatively related to their children using peer mediation as mediators and/or disputants.

a) Caregiver use of physical discipline strategies will be negatively related to their children participating in peer mediation.

b) Caregivers engaging in verbally confrontative strategies will be negatively related to their children participating in peer mediation.

c) Caregivers responding to their children fighting by not interfering will be negatively related to their children participating in peer mediation.

Chapter 2

METHOD

Sampling Procedure and Design

This study utilizes a between-subjects design and a one-time mail survey. Caregivers of 300 students attending a middle school in a medium-sized Midwestern city were solicited from a population of 1193 (51% female and 49% male) students to participate in the survey. The targeted sample consisted of 50 caregivers whose children were trained as peer mediators and 250 caregivers whose children did not receive peer mediation training. Because only 50 children were trained as peer mediators at the time of this study, all of their caregivers were selected for participation in the survey. The caregivers whose children were not peer mediators were randomly selected from the school's enrollment roster.

The middle school (grades 6 through 8) was chosen because it had recently implemented a peer mediation program, training 50 children to be peer mediators. The school principal and other individuals involved with the peer mediation program were interested in receiving caregivers' feedback and perceptions of the program to make decisions regarding continuation of the program.

The Total Design Method (Dillman, 1978) for mail surveys was used in this research. Caregivers were mailed a copy of the survey along with a letter from the principal explaining the study and asking for caregivers' cooperation (see Appendix A).

The issue of informed consent was addressed by the following statement which appeared on the front of the survey: "You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by completing and returning this survey. All responses will be kept strictly confidential.".

To identify which surveys belonged to caregivers of peer mediators, these surveys were printed on different colored paper than the rest of the surveys. All caregivers sampled were told that if their surveys were returned by May 27, 1995, they would be eligible to be entered in a drawing for one of five $25 gift certificates for local restaurants. Potential participants received a slip of bright orange paper, which was perforated down the center, in their packet of survey materials. They were instructed to make up an eight-digit number, write it on both halves of the paper, return one half with their survey, and keep the other half if they wished to enter the drawing. Winners of the gift certificates were determined by drawing the numbers out of a box. Participants were told to call the project coordinator on June 19, 1995 from 12pm until 10pm or on June 20, 1995 from 8am until 12pm to see if they had won.

One week after the survey was mailed, all sampled caregivers were sent a reminder card which both thanked the caregivers who had completed and returned the survey and reminded those who did not to return the survey as soon as possible (see Appendix B). Three weeks after the initial mailing, all sampled caregivers were sent another copy of the survey accompanied by a letter telling them how important their input was to this research and to the school (see Appendix C). To increase the number of surveys returned, participants were told in the second letter that they would be eligible for a second lottery if they returned their surveys by June 26, 1995. The surveys from the

first and second mailings were kept separate by giving participants pale green slips of paper to write their numbers on for the second lottery.

Of the 300 surveys mailed, 124 were returned after the first mailing and 35 were returned after the second mailing for a total of 159 (53%) surveys returned. One hundred thirty-three of the 250 (53%) caregivers of non-mediators sampled returned the survey. Twenty-six of the 50 (52%) caregivers of peer mediators sampled returned the survey; caregivers of peer mediators totaled approximately 16% of all respondents.

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Demographic characteristics regarding the sample are provided in Table 1. The majority (87%, N=138) of respondents were female. Ages ranged from 28 years to 66 years, with a mean age of 39 years. Sixty-four percent (N=100) of the sample was Caucasian, 25% (N=39) African-American, 4% (N=6) Latina\Chicana, 3% (N=4) Asian, 2% (N=3) Native American, and 3% (N=4) multi-racial. Eleven percent (N=18) of respondents were single, 62% (N=98) were married, 22% (N=35) were divorced, 3% (N=4) were separated, and 2% (N=3) were widowed.

Respondents reported having from 1 to 10 children, with a mean of 2.7 children. Respondents had a mean of 1.2 children attending the middle school from which caregivers were sampled. Over 47% (N=75) of the respondents answered the survey questions about their daughters, 31% (N=50) answered the questions about their sons, 3% (N=4) answered the questions about their grandsons, 0.6% (N=1) answered the questions about his/her nephew, and 18% (N=29) did not give information about their relationship to the children.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

	Frequency (N=159)	**Percentage**
Race/Ethnicity		
African-American	39	25%
Caucasian	100	64%
Latina\Chicana	6	4%
Asian	4	3%
Native American	3	2%
Multiracial	4	3%
Did not answer	3	---
Gender		
Female	138	87%
Male	20	13%
Did not answer	1	---
Relationship of child to respondent		
Daughter	75	47%
Son	50	39%
Grandson	4	3%
Nephew	1	1%
Did not answer	29	---
Number of kids at middle school		
one	133	84%
two	22	14%
three	3	2%
four	1	1%

Table 1 (continued)

Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

	Frequency (N=159)	**Percentage**
Marital status		
Single, never married	18	11%
Married	98	62%
Divorced	35	22%
Separated	4	3%
Widowed	3	2%
Did not answer	1	---
Age (mean)		
M=39		

Measures

The survey instrument is attached in Appendix D. The survey consists of demographic information, questions pertaining to information school administrators desired, and questions relevant to the research goals of this study. The areas relevant to this study are: 1) caregivers' beliefs regarding the causes of youth violence and how they think youth violence should be prevented; 2) caregivers' behaviors pertaining to youth violence, including modeling violence or poor conflict resolution skills (i.e., during discipline encounters) and giving youths messages regarding whether fighting is acceptable (i.e., caregivers' reactions when they learn that their children have been fighting); 3) youths utilization of the school violence prevention program. The items and/or scales designed to measure these constructs are described below.

Independent Variables

Measurement of Caregivers' Beliefs

The Attitudes Toward Youth Violence Survey, designed to measure caregivers' beliefs pertaining to youth violence, is found on the first page of the caregiver survey instrument (see Appendix D). The survey contains 31 items and is intended to measure the following beliefs or attitudes regarding youth violence causation and prevention: 1) social-environmental explanations for the causes of youth violence, 2) social change prevention strategies, 3) individual-level explanations for the causes of youth violence, 4) youth violence prevention strategies that correspond to individual-level explanations (i.e., prevention via deterrence strategies, or a belief that youth violence cannot be prevented).

The Attitudes Toward Youth Violence Survey is very loosely based on the three-

part Attitudes Toward Crime Scales (ACS)(Ortet-Fabregat & Perez, 1992). The ACS is a 70-item attitudinal survey that utilizes a Likert-type scale response format. The ACS is comprised of the following three independent scales: an attitudes towards the causes of crime scale, an attitudes towards the prevention of crime scale, and an attitudes towards the treatment of crime scale. The attitudes towards the causes of crime scale has two factors, *hereditary* and *individual* causes (genetics, fate, mental illness, and lack of strict rules of social control) and *social* and *environmental* causes (social disadvantage factors that would cause individuals to commit crimes, such as economic, learning, or educational factors). The attitudes toward the prevention of crime scale reflects two dimensions of prevention: orientation toward coercive prevention (threat of punishment acting to deter criminal behavior) and social intervention prevention (crime prevention through the intervention of social agents, youth institutions, and community centers directed at helping young people at high risk, together with the removal of poverty and other social disadvantages attributable to lack of economic resources). The attitudes toward the treatment of crime scale is comprised of one factor, assistance vs. punishment.

Creation of the Attitudes Toward Youth Violence Survey. A number of modifications were made to the ACS before it was used in this study. The instrument was shortened to make it more conducive to being administered as a mail survey. The items that loaded highest on the violence causation and prevention scales in a factor analysis computed by Ortet-Fabregat and Perez (1992) were selected so that the ACS was reduced from 70 to 25 items. The ACS factor loadings are listed in Appendix E. Eight items about families and peer groups were added to the social-environmental

explanations of the causes of youth violence and the social change prevention strategies sections of the survey. In addition, all of the items were reworded to refer to youth violence specifically rather than both violent and nonviolent crimes committed by individuals of all ages. Responses to the items were kept as a Likert-type format, with 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree. This modified version of the ACS comprised the Attitudes Toward Youth Violence Survey.

After the Attitudes Toward Youth Violence Survey was administered in this study, principal components analysis was used to create scales. A description of the procedures used to develop the Attitudes Toward Youth Violence Scales, as well as a description of the scales themselves, is found below.

Scale Development. Using caregivers' responses to the Attitudes Toward Youth Violence Survey, scales intended to measure beliefs pertaining to youth violence were developed.

To develop these scales, exploratory factor analyses were performed in SPSS using the items from the Attitudes Toward Youth Violence Survey. Principal components analysis with varimax rotation and was used to identify factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 (see Table 2, Appendix F). Listwise deletion was used for missing data, which resulted in 28 (of 159) cases being dropped from the analysis. This procedure yielded eleven factors, many either containing only one or two items or items that loaded on more than one factor (i.e., the items were complex). The pattern of correlations for the variables in the 2-item factors was examined to determine whether these factors might be reliable. In each instance, the two items were not highly correlated

with each other (i.e., r<.70) and they were correlated with other variables. As a result of this analysis, eight items which correlated with several factors were removed and a second principal components analysis was computed. Seven factors were extracted, again with several 1 and 2-item factors. Five items that did not appear to fit with the other items were dropped.

Examination of the scree plot of eigenvalues and factors indicated the presence of a four or five-factor solution. Principal components analyses specifying four and five-factor solutions were computed. The five factor solution contained one two-item factor. The two-item factor was deemed unreliable, as the two items were not highly correlated with each other and were correlated with other items. As such, the four-factor solution was chosen. Based on Comrey and Lee's (1992) guidelines, only variables with loadings of .45 (20% overlapping variance) and above were chosen for inclusion in interpretation of each factor.[2] Each of the variables in the four-factor solution met this criteria.

The four factors are named "social-environmental explanations for the causes of youth violence/social change prevention strategies", "deterrence-focused prevention strategies", "social learning theory explanations for the causes of youth violence" and "individual-level explanations for the causes of youth violence/youth violence cannot be prevented". These dimensions are identical to the crime causation and prevention scales of the ACS (although the items within each scale differ). Tables 3,4,5, and 6 in Appendix F present detailed information about each factor.

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[2] According to Comrey and Lee (1992), variables with loadings of .45 are considered a fair measure of a factor.

A reliability analysis was conducted on these four groups of items and the alpha, alpha if item deleted, and item-total correlation statistics were examined. Based on these statistics, items were either retained with their original group or deleted from the scale.

Factor 1, containing six items, represents social-environmental explanations for how youth violence is caused and how it should be prevented. As shown in Table 7 (see Appendix F), the scale coefficient alpha is .77, and the item-total correlations range from .61 to .40. The items comprising Factor 1, their item-total correlations, their alphas if items deleted, and the scale coefficient alpha, mean, standard deviation, kurtosis, and skewness are contained in Table 7 (see Appendix F).

Factor 2 represents the view that harsher punishments and stricter laws will deter youth from becoming violent. After examining the item-total and alpha if item deleted statistics, the item "A good way to prevent violent acts by youth is to bring back the death penalty" was removed. There are three items in the final scale, the scale coefficient alpha is .77 and the item-total correlations range from .66 to .54. The items comprising Factor 2, their item-total correlations, their alphas if items deleted, and the scale coefficient alpha, mean, standard deviation, kurtosis, and skewness are shown in Table 8 (see Appendix F).

Factor 3 consisting of 5 items, delineates social learning theory explanations for the causes of youth violence. The scale coefficient alpha is .58 and the item-total correlations range from .40 to .24. The items comprising Factor 3, their item-total correlations, their alphas if items deleted, and the scale reliability, mean, standard deviation, kurtosis, and skewness are shown in Table 9 (see Appendix F).

Factor 4, containing 5 items, represents the idea that youth violence is caused by stable, individual-level factors and, thus, cannot be prevented. The scale coefficient alpha is .57, and the item-total correlations range from .38 to .30. The items comprising Factor 4, their item-total correlations, their alphas if items deleted, and the scale reliability, mean, standard deviation, kurtosis, and skewness are shown in Table 10 (see Appendix F).

Four scale scores were calculated for each respondent by calculating the mean for responses to items contained in Factor 1 ("social-environmental explanations for the causes of youth violence/social change prevention strategies" scale), Factor 2 ("deterrence-focused prevention strategies" scale), Factor 3 ("social learning theory explanations for the causes of youth violence" scale), and Factor 4 ("individual-level explanations for the causes of youth violence/youth violence cannot be prevented" scale).

Congruence between caregivers' beliefs and the school program. Determination of whether caregivers' beliefs and the lessons presented in school violence prevention programs are congruent is based on the content analysis of the school violence prevention curriculum presented earlier. For the purposes of this study, beliefs that are congruent with school programs include: (1) agreement with social learning theory explanations for youth violence, (2) agreement with social-environmental explanations for the causes of youth violence and social change prevention strategies,(3) disagreement with deterrence-oriented strategies to prevent youth violence, and (4) disagreement with the idea that individual-level factors cause violence and that violence is a stable trait that cannot be prevented.

To ascertain whether caregivers' beliefs are congruent with the lessons presented in the school violence prevention program, caregivers' mean scores on each of the four attitude scales were calculated and examined for level of agreement or disagreement. Mean scores of 2.7 and below were classified as agreement with the construct, while scores of 3.3 and above were considered to be in disagreement (1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree). Scores above 2.7 and below 3.3 were categorized as neither agreement not disagreement.

It should be noted that these classifications were used only for descriptive purposes and not for analyses. Rather, caregivers' mean scores on the four attitude scales were used in correlational analyses with the dependent variable in this study (described later in this section) to determine the relationship between congruence in beliefs and utilization of school violence prevention programs.

Measurement of Caregivers' Behaviors

The caregiver behaviors measured in this study include discipline (i.e., disciplinary or parenting strategies caregivers utilize to influence their children's behaviors) and reactions to fighting (i.e., caregivers' reactions when they learn that their children have been fighting). The items and scales used to measure caregivers' disciplinary strategies and reactions to fighting are described below.

Discipline. A modified version of the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1976), which measures intimate partner violence, was used to measure caregivers' disciplinary strategies (see page 7 of Appendix D). The items were adapted to address the topic of caregivers disciplining their children. Some of the more sensitive items, such as beating,

kicking, and choking were removed and items such as "complimented your child for good behavior" and "encouraged your child to behave well" were added to measure the extent to which caregivers used positive strategies to influence their children's behavior.

The modified conflict tactics items were scored using Never=1, A Little=2, Sometimes=3, and A Lot=4. Principal components analysis with varimax rotation was used to identify factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. Listwise deletion was used for missing data, which resulted in 14 (of 159) cases being dropped from the analysis. Six factors were extracted, three of which were two-item factors. Items in the two-item factors were not highly correlated with each other (i.e., $r<.70$) and were correlated with other variables. In addition, one item did not load on any factor. This item, "Hit your child with your fist" was removed.

Based on the scree plot of eigenvalues and factors, a principal components analysis specifying a three-factor solution was computed (see Table 11, Appendix F). Variables with loadings of .45 and above were chosen for inclusion in interpretation of each factor. Only one variable "complimented your child for good behavior", which loaded on the second factor, did not meet this criteria. The three factors are named "physical discipline strategies", "positive parenting strategies", and "verbally confrontative strategies". The three factors are described in Tables 12, 13, and 14 of Appendix F.

A reliability analysis was computed on the items comprising each factor, and the coefficient alpha, alpha if item deleted, and item-total correlation statistics were examined. Based on these statistics, items were either retained with their original group

or deleted from the scale.

Factor 1 consists of 5 items and contains items concerning caregiver use of physical discipline. Examples of items include "hit your child out of anger" and "pushed, grabbed, or shoved your child". The scale alpha is .83, and the item-total correlations range from .71 to .56. The items contained in Factor 1, their item-total correlations, their alphas if items deleted, and the scale coefficient alpha, mean, standard deviation, kurtosis, and skewness are shown in Table 15 of Appendix F.

Factor 2 consists of 7 items pertaining to positive parenting strategies to influence children's behaviors. This factor includes items such as "complimented your child for good behavior", "encouraged your child to behave well", and "talked with your child about how s/he was misbehaving". The scale alpha is .66 and the item-total correlations range from .51 to .29. It should be noted that this scale is not used in analyses because a relationship between caregiver use of positive, noncoercive parenting strategies and utilization and effectiveness of violence prevention programs for youths was not hypothesized in this study.

Factor 3 reflects nonphysical yet verbally confrontative tactics. The item "argued with your child, but did not yell" was removed from the scale for conceptual reasons. The remaining 3 items in this factor are "yelled at your child", "insulted your child", and "gotten so mad at your child that you stomped out of the room". The scale alpha is .64, and the item-total correlations range from .44 to .40. The items contained in Factor 3, their item-total correlations, their alphas if items deleted, and the scale coefficient alpha, mean, standard deviation, kurtosis, and skewness are shown in Table 16 of Appendix F.

Reactions to fighting. To gain insight into caregivers' reactions when they learn that their children have been fighting, caregivers were given a list of four possible strategies and asked if they would use each strategy at all, and if it was the strategy they would be most likely to utilize if their child fought. In this study, caregivers' responses to two items are described and used in correlational analyses. The two items pertain to whether they would be most likely to: 1) talk with their child about other ways to handle conflicts, or 2) not interfere in the situation. Both questions are coded as either yes or no.

Congruence between caregivers' behaviors and school programs. Determining congruence between caregivers' behaviors and the lessons taught in school violence prevention programs is guided by the content analysis of the school violence prevention curriculum described earlier. In this study, caregivers reacting to their children fighting by talking with them about nonviolent strategies to resolve conflicts is considered congruent with school programs. Behaviors that are incongruent with school programs include: 1) using physical discipline, 2) participating in verbally confrontative strategies such as name-calling and yelling, and 3) choosing to not interfere when children fight. The reactions to fighting item "not interfere" was deemed incongruent with school programs because caregiver inaction may be viewed by youths as an tacit message that fighting is acceptable.

To ascertain whether caregivers' behaviors are congruent with the lessons presented in the school violence prevention program, caregiver use of each of the two types of discipline strategies is described using percentages. Caregivers' reactions to fighting are also described by reporting the percentage of the sample who responded that

they would be most likely to "choose to talk about other ways to handle conflicts" or "choose to not interfere".

Again, these categories are used solely for descriptive purposes and not for analyses. Caregivers' mean scores on the discipline scales and responses to the reactions to fighting items are used in correlational analyses with the dependent measure (described below) to determine the relationship between behavioral congruence and utilization of school violence prevention programs.

Dependent Variable

Utilization of School Violence Prevention Programs

Utilization of the school violence prevention program includes youths becoming trained as peer mediators and/or youths using peer mediation to resolve a conflict with another student. Information regarding whether or not the youth is a peer mediatior was provided by the school. Caregivers were asked whether their children had participated in peer mediation as a disputant (see item D6 in Appendix D).

For the purposes of analyses, a peer mediation participation variable was computed that included both being trained as a peer mediator and being a peer mediation disputant. The peer mediation participation variable was scaled as 0=no participation, 1=peer mediation disputant, 2=trained peer mediator, and 3=trained peer mediator and peer mediation disputant.

Chapter 3

RESULTS

This chapter reports the findings of the current study. First, youths' participation in the peer mediation program, the dependent variable, is described. The next sections describe procedures for data analysis and present the findings of the study in order of the four research questions.

Youth Participation in the School Violence Prevention Program

The sample consisted of 34 caregivers whose children participated in the school violence prevention program in some capacity. Twenty-six caregivers (16% of the total sample) of peer mediators participated in the study. Sixteen caregivers (10% of the total sample) reported that their children had used the services of peer mediators to resolve a conflict that they were having with another student. Eight youths (5%) were both peer mediators and peer mediation disputants.

Procedures of Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS for Windows. Correlational analyses were computed with pairwise deletion to account for missing data. Directional hypotheses allowed one-tailed tests of significance.

Inference probabilities and odds ratios were calculated for all sample correlations in this study. When a sample correlation is small in magnitude and is not statistically significant, inference probabilities and odds ratios may contribute further information regarding the sign of the population correlation. The inference probability index (IP) is a

tool for assessing the probability that rho (the population value) is in the predicted direction (Levine, 1997). When a positive relationship is predicted, the odds ratio is the probability that rho is positive divided by the probability that rho is negative. When a negative relationship is predicted, the odds ratio is the probability that rho is negative divided by the probability that rho is positive (Levine, 1997). Guidelines for interpreting inference probabilities and odds ratios are given in Table 17.

Findings

The results of the study are presented in order of the four research questions.

1. What Do Caregivers Think About the Causes of Youth Violence and How Youth Violence Should Be Prevented?

Means, standard deviations, ranges, and sample sizes for each of the caregiver attitude variables may be found in Table 18.

Sixty percent (N=95) of caregivers reported that they agree with social learning theory explanations for youth violence (M=2.6, SD=.66, range=1.0-4.6, N=158). Many caregivers (50%, N=79) also reported that they agree with social-environmental causes of youth violence and social change prevention strategies (M=2.7, SD=.81, range=1.0-5.0, N=158).

Seventy-nine percent (N=125) of caregivers agreed with use of deterrence-oriented prevention strategies (M=2.1, SD=.91, range=1.0-5.0, N=157), but most (92%, N=147) disagreed that youth violence is caused by individual-level factors and cannot be prevented (M=4.2, SD=.53, range=2.4-5.0, N=158).

Table 17

Interpretation of the Inference Probability Index for Correlations

Inference Probability (IP)	Reverse Probability (1-IP)	Odds Ratio	Sign of Population Value
.98	.02	49 to 1	positive
.96	.04	24 to 1	positive
.93	.07	13 to 1	positive
.90	.10	9 to 1	positive
.75	.25	3 to 1	positive
.68	.34	2 to 1	positive
.67	.33	1.99 to 1	inconclusive
.50	.50	1 to 1	inconclusive
.33	.67	1.99 to 1	inconclusive
.34	.68	2 to 1	negative
.25	.75	3 to 1	negative
.10	.90	9 to 1	negative
.07	.93	13 to 1	negative
.04	.96	24 to 1	negative
.02	.98	49 to 1	negative

Table 18

Description of Caregivers' Attitudes Toward the Causes of Youth Violence and How They Think Youth Violence Should Be Prevented[1]

Caregiver Attitudes	Mean	SD	Range	N
Social learning theory causes	2.6	.66	1.0 - 4.6	158
Social-environmental causes and social change strategies	2.7	.81	1.0 - 5.0	158
Deterrence-oriented prevention strategies	2.1	.91	1.0 - 5.0	157
Individual causes/youth violence cannot be prevented	4.2	.53	2.4 - 5.0	158

[1] Attitude scale scores range from 1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree

2. Which Disciplinary or Parenting Strategies Do Caregivers Utilize to Influence Their Children's Behavior, and How Do They Respond to Their Children Fighting?

Forty-four percent of the caregivers reported that they used some form of physical discipline with their children. Many caregivers also reported engaging in verbally confrontative strategies, such as insulting or calling their children names (37%, N=59), stomping out of the room (54%, N=86), and yelling at their children (92%, N=146), when trying to influence their behavior.

When asked how they would react if they learned that their children had been fighting, 87% (N=139) of caregivers of peer mediation participants responded that they would be most likely to talk with their children about other strategies for resolving conflicts, while 6% (N=11) reported that they would be most likely to not interfere.

Caregivers' responses to each of the discipline items, their discipline scale scores, and their responses to the reactions to fighting items may be found in Table 19

3. Is There a Relationship Between Caregivers' Beliefs Regarding Violence and Youth Participation in Peer Mediation Programs?

To answer this question, Spearman correlations were computed between youths' level of participation in peer mediation and each of the 4 Attitudes Toward Youth Violence Scales. A summary of the relationships between caregivers' beliefs about youth violence and youth participation in peer mediation is found in Table 20. Each individual hypothesis will be addressed below.

Table 19

Description of Caregivers' Discipline Strategies and Reactions to Fighting[1]

Physical Discipline	Never	A little	Sometimes	A lot
Spanking	56% N=89	31% N=50	12% N=19	1% N=1
Threaten to hit	59% N=94	24% N=38	15% N=24	1% N=2
Hit out of anger	79% N=126	18% N=28	3% N=5	___
Pushed, grabbed, or shoved	71% N=113	23% N=36	6% N=9	___

Physical Discipline Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range	N
	1.4	.51	1.0-4.0	159

[1] Discipline scale scores range from 1=never to 4=often
Reactions to fighting are single items scored 0=no, 1=yes

Table 19 (continued)

Description of Caregivers' Discipline Strategies and Reactions to Fighting

Verbally Confrontative Strategies	Never	A little	Sometimes	A lot
Yelled	7% N=11	46% N=73	40% N=63	6% N=10
Insulted, called names	63% N=100	30% N=47	6% N=9	2% N=3
Stomped out of room	45% N=72	37% N=59	16% N=26	1% N=1

Verbally Confrontative Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range	N
	1.9	.55	1.0-4.0	159

Reaction to fighting	Most Likely to Choose This Strategy
Talk about other strategies for resolving conflicts	87% N=139
Not interfere	6% N=11

Table 20

Correlational Analysis for Caregivers' Attitudes and Behaviors and Their Children's Participation in Peer Mediation

Congruent Attitudes and Behaviors	**r**	**Probability Value is Positive**	**Odds Ratio**	**N**	**Sig (p<.05)**
Social learning theory causes	.02	.60	1.50	158	ns
Social-environ. causes/ social change prevention strategies	.05	**.73**	**2.70***	158	ns
Choose to talk with children about ways to resolve conflicts other than fighting	-.03	.36	.56	152	ns

Incongruent Attitudes and Behaviors	**r**	**Probability Value is Negative**	**Odds Ratio**	**N**	**Sig (p<.05)**
Deterrence-oriented prevention strategies	-.16	**.98**	**49***	157	**sig**
Individual causes/ violence cannot be prevented	-.04	**.69**	**2.23***	158	ns
Physical Punishment	-.03	.65	1.86	159	ns
Verbally Confrontative	.01	.45	.82	159	ns
Choose to not interfere if children fight	-.09	**.86**	**6.14***	143	ns

*These values affirm that rho is in the predicted direction.

A. Caregiver belief in youth violence causes and prevention strategies that are congruent with those taught in school violence prevention programs will be positively related to their children using peer mediation as mediators and/or disputants.

a) Caregiver belief in social learning theory explanations for youth violence will be positively related to their children participating in peer mediation.

Support was not found for a relationship between youth participation in peer mediation and caregiver belief in social learning theory explanations for youth violence. The correlation between caregiver belief in social learning theory explanations for youth violence and youth participation in peer mediation is not statistically significant, and the odds ratio is inconclusive as to whether the population correlation is greater than 0.

b) Caregiver belief in social-environmental causes of youth violence and social change prevention strategies will be positively related to their children participating in peer mediation.

Although a statistically significant relationship was not found between youth participation in peer mediation and caregivers' belief in social-environmental causes of youth violence and social change prevention strategies, the odds ratio supports the hypothesis that the population correlation is greater than 0. These results provide tentative support for a positive association between caregiver belief in social-environmental causes of youth violence and social change prevention strategies and youth participation in peer mediation as a mediator and/or disputant.

B. Caregiver belief in youth violence causes and prevention strategies that are incongruent with those taught in school violence prevention programs will be negatively related to their children participating in peer mediation as mediators and/or disputants.

a) Caregiver belief that deterrence-oriented strategies, such as harsher punishments and stricter laws, will prevent youth violence will be negatively related to their children participating in peer mediation.

A significant relationship was found between caregivers' beliefs about deterrence strategies and youth participation in peer mediation ($r=.18$, $p<.05$, $N=157$). Youths whose caregivers believed that tougher punishments will deter youths from using violence were less likely to participate in peer mediation as a mediator and/or disputant.

b) Caregiver beliefs that individual-level factors cause youth violence and that youth violence cannot be prevented will be negatively related to their children participating in peer mediation.

The odds ratio shows a negative relationship between caregiver beliefs in stable, individual-level causes of youth violence and the idea that youth violence cannot be prevented and youth participation in peer mediation as a mediator and/or disputant. Youths whose caregivers espoused these beliefs were less likely to participate in peer mediation. The correlation coefficient is negatively signed, but not statistically significant.

4. Is There a Relationship Between Caregivers' Behaviors Regarding Violence and Youth Participation in Peer Mediation Programs?

To address this question, Spearman correlations were computed between level of youth participation in peer mediation and a) each of the caregiver discipline scales, and b) the 2 reactions to fighting items.

A. Caregiver use of parenting strategies that are congruent with school violence prevention programs will be positively related to their children using peer mediation as mediators and/or disputants.

a) Caregivers responding to their children fighting by talking with them about other ways to resolve conflicts will be positively related to their children participating in peer mediation.

A significant relationship was not found between youth participation in peer mediation and caregivers' reports that they would talk about other ways to handle conflicts if their children fought. As shown in Table 20, the odds ratio is inconclusive as to whether the population value is greater than 0.

B. Caregiver use of parenting strategies that are incongruent with school violence prevention programs will be negatively related to their children using peer mediation as mediators and/or disputants.

a) Caregiver use of physical discipline strategies will be negatively related to their children participating in peer mediation.

A significant relationship was not found between youth participation in peer mediation and caregivers utilizing physical discipline. The odds ratio is also inconclusive as to whether the population value is less than 0 (see Table 20).

b) Caregivers engaging in verbally confrontative strategies will be negatively related to their children participating in peer mediation.

A significant relationship was not found between youth participation in peer mediation and caregivers utilizing verbally confrontative strategies. The odds ratio is also inconclusive as to whether the population value is less than 0 (see Table 20).

c) Caregivers responding to their children fighting by not interfering will be negatively related to their children participating in peer mediation.

Support was found for a negative relationship between caregivers choosing to not interfere when their children fight and youth participation in peer mediation. The odds ratio supports the hypothesis that the population correlation is less than 0, although this finding is not statistically significant.

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION

This study provides information about the congruence of the goals and philosophies underlying school peer mediation programs with caregivers' beliefs and behaviors related to violence, and the relationship of congruence between these two domains (i.e., school and family) and youths' participation in peer mediation. The results support an ecological framework (e.g., Kelly, 1966; Bronfenbrenner, 1979) for understanding factors which influence children's participation in interventions, as well as previous research which supports caregivers' importance in influencing their children's attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Brook et al., 1990; Hansen et al., 1987; Ahmed et al., 1984; Kandel et al., 1978). This study found that congruence of caregivers' beliefs regarding how youth violence is caused and how it should be prevented with the goals and philosophies of peer mediation programs is related to youths' level of participation in the programs. The specific results, as well as the implications of the findings for how school violence prevention programs are designed and implemented, are discussed below.

Congruence of Caregivers' Beliefs and Behaviors with School Peer Mediation Programs

The results of this study indicate that caregivers' beliefs regarding the causes of youth violence and how it should be prevented are, for the most part, consistent with the lessons taught in and assumptions underlying school peer mediation programs. Most (60%) caregivers believe that youth violence is caused by youths learning from other

people that violence is an acceptable solution to problems, and many caregivers (50%) believe that youth violence stems from problems in youths' environments (e.g., high unemployment and poverty). Few caregivers (1%) believe that violence is caused by factors inherent in the youths themselves (e.g., genetics).

While caregivers' beliefs regarding the causes of youth violence are mostly congruent with those underlying peer mediation programs, the congruence of their views regarding the strategies that should be used to prevent youth violence is less clear. Few caregivers (3%) believe that youth violence is not preventable. Interestingly however, although they tend to view social learning and social-environmental factors as causing youth violence, they espouse both social change strategies (e.g., alternative schools and working to eradicate poverty) and deterrence strategies (e.g., imposing harsh punishments) to prevent youth violence.

Given our current focus as a nation on using deterrence-oriented strategies, the finding that caregivers support deterrence is expected. The number of dollars we spend on deterrence (i.e., prisons) far outnumbers the dollars we spend on social change prevention strategies (Gottfredson, 1997). As such, it seems surprising that the caregivers in this sample were so supportive of social change prevention strategies. Researchers have examined the general public's attitudes toward juvenile offenders and found them to be quite punitive (e.g., Baron, 1996). It is possible that respondents felt it was socially desirable to support social change prevention strategies because they knew that the survey was connected to the school and the peer mediation program. Alternatively, the beliefs reported in this sample may not reflect the beliefs of the population of all caregivers

because of a bias in sampling.

However, it is also conceivable that caregivers do agree with both types of strategies. Previous research has not yet examined caregivers' beliefs toward youth violence. Research with other populations, though, has yielded results similar to those found in this study. For example, a study with correctional officers found their reported beliefs to be similar to those of the caregivers in this study. The correctional officers stated that they believed that longer and harsher sentences were necessary, yet they also cited lack of role models as a main cause of crime and reported believing that social and educational institutions were important in crime prevention (Arthur, 1994).

As with attitudes, the consistency of caregivers' behaviors with school peer mediation programs appears to be mixed. Most caregivers (87%) report talking with their children about other strategies to resolve conflicts when they fight, and very few caregivers (6%) report choosing to not interfere in the situation.

However, many caregivers report engaging in verbally confrontative strategies such as insulting or calling their children names (37%) and yelling at their children (92%). In addition, many (44%) caregivers report using some sort of physical discipline. These findings are consistent with other research on physical punishment. Studies which examine attitudes toward using physical punishment find that most Americans believe that physical punishment is necessary under some circumstances (Straus, 1991). Studies focusing on adolescents' experiences of physical punishment have reported a 46-50% prevalence rate (e.g., Bachman, 1967; Straus, 1971; Straus & Donnelly, 1993).

The Relationship Between Caregivers' Beliefs and Behaviors and Their Children's Participation in Peer Mediation

The results provide support for the hypothesis that congruence between caregivers' beliefs and behaviors and the goals and philosophies of peer mediation programs is related to youths' involvement in the programs. This study found that youths whose caregivers believe more strongly that deterrence-oriented strategies are effective means of preventing youth violence are less likely to participate in school peer mediation programs than youths whose caregivers believe less strongly in the value of deterrence. This suggests that caregivers who affirm the value of punishment as a deterrent may not encourage their children to be involved in a program designed to offer an alternative to punishment.

The finding that caregivers' beliefs in the importance of deterrence is related to their children's lack of participation in peer mediation is not surprising. This finding is consistent with the tenor of the national debate on violence prevention. In our current discourse about violence, social change and deterrence-oriented prevention strategies are often presented as dichotomous: either 'soft' or 'tough' solutions to the problem of violence. This dichotomy has been perpetuated as a tactic by some legislators to influence voters' perceptions of their opponents. Politicians who pursue prevention strategies that focus on the social-environmental and social learning aspects of the causes of violence are labeled 'soft' on crime and violence (e.g., U.S. Congress Representative Riggs), while those who advocate for deterrence-oriented strategies such as requiring longer sentences and building more prisons are viewed as 'tough' on violence (e.g.,

Representative McCollum and Senator Hatch). To the extent that peer mediation programs are viewed as the opposite of punishment, and thus 'soft' on violence, it is not surprising that many caregivers might not endorse them.

Other trends in the data also lend support for the hypothesis that congruence of caregivers' beliefs with peer mediation programs is related to their children's involvement in the programs. These trends suggest that youths whose caregivers believe in the philosophy and goals of peer mediation are more likely to participate in the programs. Caregiver belief that violence is caused by problems in youths' environments and that social change strategies should be used to prevent youth violence is related to their children's level of participation in peer mediation. Conversely, trends in the data suggest that youths whose caregivers' beliefs contradict the assumptions underlying peer mediation are less likely to be involved in the programs. Caregiver belief that youth violence is due to causes inherent to youths and that youth violence is not preventable is related to their children being less likely to participate in peer mediation. These findings also suggest that caregivers may encourage their children to participate in peer mediation if they believe in its philosophy and goals.

In terms of behavior, tentative support was found for a relationship between caregivers' reports that they believe that they should take action when their children fight and youth participation in peer mediation. Youths whose caregivers report that they would not interfere if their children fought are less likely to be involved in peer mediation. One possible explanation for this finding is that when they choose to not respond to their children fighting, caregivers send their children a tacit message that

fighting is an acceptable method of solving problems, thus peer mediation is unnecessary. Another possibility is that caregivers who report that they would be most likely to not interfere when their children fight do not explicitly discuss both the importance of not fighting and the need to learn nonviolent conflict resolution strategies with their children.

These results support an ecological framework (e.g., Kelly, 1966; Bronfenbrenner, 1986) for understanding how the interrelatedness of settings may affect children's participation in interventions. It appears that mesosystem-level factors may influence whether interventions reach their intended target populations. The findings of this study are consistent with research which has demonstrated the need for violence prevention programs to attend to multiple domains in children's lives (see Webster, 1993), as well as research supporting caregivers' roles in impacting their children's attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Brook et al., 1990).

The influence of the beliefs and behaviors examined in this study on youth participation in peer mediation may be due to caregivers explicitly encouraging their children to participate if the program coincides with their beliefs, or discouraging their children's participation if it does not. Alternatively, youths' participation may be subtly impacted either by messages from their caregivers that fighting is acceptable, thus the program is unnecessary, or vice versa. Of course, it should be noted that this study's cross-sectional design makes it impossible to discern whether caregivers' beliefs and behaviors impact their children's involvement in peer mediation, or whether youths' involvement influences their caregivers' beliefs and behaviors. In other words, we can conclude only that congruence between caregivers' beliefs and behaviors and peer

mediation goals and philosophies is related to youth participation in the programs, not whether congruence leads to participation. It is equally possible that caregivers' beliefs and behaviors regarding youth violence change as a result of their children's participation in peer mediation. Only longitudinal exploration of these relationships can answer that question.

Limitations of the Study

In addition to the limitations imposed by this study's cross-sectional design, there are other limitations concerning the representativeness of the sample as well as methodological problems which may have hindered accurate measurement of the independent variables.

Although this study represents an important first step in understanding caregivers' beliefs and behaviors regarding youth violence and their relationship with youth participation in school violence prevention programs, there are several problems which direct us to be cautious in generalizing the study's findings to the population of all caregivers. One potential problem for generalizability concerns the use of a convenience sample of caregivers at one middle school, and the fact that the sample does not accurately represent the proportion of caregivers whose children participate in peer mediation. Caregivers of peer mediation participants were purposely oversampled in this study because participants were a small percentage of the school population at the time the survey was administered. This oversampling may have led to the beliefs and behaviors of the overall sample of caregivers in this study appearing more congruent with the goals and philosophies of school programs than would the beliefs and behaviors of

the population of all caregivers.

The mail survey methodology may also limit generalizability of findings from this sample to the population of all caregivers. It is possible that caregivers who responded to the survey differ from those who did not in terms of reading ability, beliefs about the importance of violence prevention programs, belief in the utility of research, involvement in their children's educational experience, or in their inclination toward "volunteerism". However, the steps outlined for administering mail surveys in the Dillman Total Design Method (Dillman, 1978) were followed as closely as possible to address this potential threat to generalizability. The response rate for this study was 53%, which is comparable to response rates achieved in other studies using empirically tested methods to increase response rates (e.g., Dillman, 1978; Faria, 1990) and substantially higher than the typical rates achieved in studies in which no attempts are made to improve response rates (e.g., Robertson and Bellenger, 1978; Hinkle and King, 1978; Kalafatis, 1996).

The fact that the majority of respondents (87%) were mothers may pose another problem for generalizing the beliefs and behaviors of this sample to the population of all caregivers. While the information gathered by this research does not represent all of the beliefs and behaviors that are modeled for and taught to youths in their homes (e.g., by their male caregivers), this problem is consistent with the majority of research conducted on children's developmental processes which focuses on their relationships with their mothers (Phares, 1992).

In addition, although the beliefs that social-environmental rather than individual-level factors cause youth violence, that violence is preventable, and that social change

strategies may be employed to prevent violence are key concepts of the philosophy underlying peer mediation, these beliefs were not strongly related to youth participation in the programs. As noted earlier, with the exception of their beliefs about deterrence, the beliefs that caregivers reported about youth violence were unexpectedly positive. Given previous research on the general public's beliefs about juvenile justice as well as our nation's current political climate, we would not expect caregivers to endorse social change prevention strategies as strongly as they did. The extent to which these findings are due to social desirability, a positive response bias, or a sampling bias may have obscured any relationships between these beliefs and youth participation that might exist.

Finally, there were also problems concerning the reliability and validity of the behavior measures. The low level of reliability for the discipline scales and the single-item measurement of caregivers' reactions to fighting may have resulted in attenuation of the relationships between caregivers' behaviors and youth participation in peer mediation. It is also possible that the aspects of caregiver behavioral congruence that are related to youth participation in peer mediation were not captured in this study. For example, the strategies caregivers use to resolve conflicts with other adults may be more salient to youth participation in school violence prevention programs than their use of discipline strategies and their reactions to their children fighting.

Practical Implications

The results of this study suggest that school administrators can increase youth participation in school violence prevention programs by considering youths' experiences in domains outside of school. However, most school-based violence prevention programs

are implemented without any complementary effort to include other settings in youths' lives (Webster, 1993). Although peer mediation programs are becoming increasingly popular because they are relatively inexpensive to implement, the findings from this study suggest that unless caregivers' beliefs about the programs are taken into consideration, the programs may not reach a large number of youths who may need them (Webster, 1993).

It appears that increased congruence between caregivers' beliefs regarding violence and the goals and philosophies of school peer mediation programs will enhance youths' participation in the programs. This study found that one area in which caregivers' beliefs and school programs' goals and philosophies are inconsistent concerns whether deterrence-oriented strategies should be used to prevent youth violence. This finding raises the issue of how to address the inconsistency. School administrators could try to either change the programs or change caregivers' beliefs to make the two more congruent. However, there are problems associated with both of these approaches.

School administrators could change the program so that it is more consistent with caregivers' attitudes. For example, the program could be implemented in conjunction with punishment for all violent offenses, so that peer mediation is always implemented within an overall strategy of deterring youth from using violence. This strategy would have the benefit of addressing the broader context in which youths function, making school violence prevention programs more consistent with caregivers' beliefs as well as the beliefs promoted in other settings which impact youths, such as the media. There are potential problems associated with this approach, however. It is not known how

changing the philosophy and goals of the program would change its effectiveness. The current focus of the program is to teach youths nonviolent conflicts resolution strategies, thereby increasing their perceptions of self-efficacy for resolving conflicts without fighting. According to social cognitive theory, if youths feel more competent in resolving conflicts nonviolently, they are more likely to do so. Incorporating peer mediation into an approach designed to frighten youths into not using violence may influence whether they develop feelings of competence.

In addition, peer mediation is currently offered as an alternative to punishment for less serious violent offenses. Implementing the program in conjunction with punishment would most likely impact youths' motivations for participating. It is likely that the number of students using peer mediation would decrease because students would know that they would be punished whether or not they expended the effort to resolve the conflict peacefully. If school administrators made participation in peer mediation mandatory, students might resent being forced to participate and, as a result, may be less cooperative during the mediation and less likely to comply with the terms of the agreement drafted during the mediation session.

School administrators could also try to change caregivers' beliefs to make them more consistent with the goals and philosophies of peer mediation programs. However, changing caregivers' beliefs seems unlikely to be successful. As stated earlier, caregivers' beliefs in deterrence are supported by our larger society, thus a change in this belief would not be supported or reinforced in other settings. Successfully changing caregivers' beliefs would require changing beliefs within caregivers' circles of friends,

workplaces, places of worship, communities, and other settings in which they participate. In addition, any intervention to change caregivers' beliefs would also have to change how violence prevention is presented in the media, especially during elections.

Alternatively, school administrators could try to alter caregivers' perceptions of peer mediation. Although caregivers' beliefs in using both social change and deterrence strategies to prevent violence are not completely congruent with peer mediation programs, they are consistent with most overall school district policies for responding to violence. While school violence prevention programs, such as peer mediation, are becoming increasingly popular, school administrators are simultaneously taking steps to 'get tough' on violence. In the school in which this study was conducted, peer mediation is offered as an alternative to punishment for less serious violent offenses, such as yelling and pushing, in the hope that students will learn nonviolent conflict resolution strategies and avoid future and more serious violence. For more serious violent offenses, such as a fist fight or possession of a weapon, however, suspension or expulsion from school is mandatory. The combination of using peer mediation to respond to less serious violent offenses while simultaneously deterring more serious offenses by threatening harsh punishment seems more consistent with caregivers' beliefs regarding how youth violence should be prevented. Thus, one possible strategy for increasing youth participation in peer mediation is to change caregivers' perceptions of the congruence of peer mediation programs with their beliefs by informing them of the role peer mediation plays in overall district policy concerning violent offenses. This could easily be accomplished by including a statement in the school policy handbook, sending a letter home to caregivers,

and by addressing the issue during parent open-house nights.

Future directions

Future research should follow up on understanding the potential role of congruence in impacting the effectiveness of peer mediation and whether youths participate in the programs. In particular, researchers should explore the mechanisms by which congruence might influence whether youths participate in school violence prevention programs (i.e., whether caregivers actively encourage or discourage their children's participation or whether program use is impacted by youths modeling their caregivers' attitudes and behaviors).

Future research should also build on this study by addressing its weaknesses. Information should be obtained from multiple sources, such as all caregivers in the family, the school, and the youths themselves. In addition, improvements could be made on this study by using more reliable measures and asking additional questions. For example, researchers could further explore caregivers' beliefs about deterrence and social change prevention strategies by asking respondents to choose which strategies they support the most and including open-ended questions concerning why they believe those strategies would be the most effective.

Another important question to be explored is whether caregivers' beliefs and behaviors affect youth participation in school violence prevention programs or youth participation in the programs impacts their caregivers' beliefs and behaviors. Future research should address this question by utilizing longitudinal research designs to further examine the relationship between congruence of caregivers' beliefs and behaviors with

those taught in school violence prevention programs and youth participation in the programs.

Finally, it is crucial that future studies focus on examining the effectiveness of peer mediation programs in preventing youth violence. If peer mediation is found to be a useful approach, researchers should then explore which aspects of the programs are necessary for effectively preventing violence. The findings would direct school administrators as to how they can increase congruence between caregiver and program values without undermining program effectiveness. This line of research should also explore the relationship between congruence of caregiver and program values and the effectiveness of peer mediation for youths who choose to participate.

Conclusion

This study represents a first step in examining the relationship of congruence between the philosophies and goals of school violence prevention programs and caregivers' beliefs and behaviors and youths' participation in the programs. The results of this study suggest that increased congruence between these two domains may augment youths' participation in the programs. One area in which caregivers' beliefs were found to differ from peer mediation programs' philosophies and goals concerns whether deterrence-oriented strategies should be used to prevent youth violence. The findings of this study support an ecological framework for understanding how interrelatedness of settings influences youths' participation in interventions. The results also have practical implications for how school violence prevention programs are designed and implemented.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

First Letter to Caregivers

May 23, 1995

Dear XXX Parent,

Violence has become a critical problem in the United States. More and more we are hearing about violence touching the schools and its harmful effects on our children. In response to this alarming problem, there has been an increase in the efforts of schools, such as XXX, to start violence prevention programs. However, no one really knows what parents think about how violence is caused, how to prevent violence, and how useful these school programs are in preventing violence. XXX is working with Michigan State University to get parents' ideas and to find out what parents think.

You are one of a small number of parents whose opinion is being asked. Your name was drawn from a lottery of all XXX parents. Your opinion is important. It is vital to this project that each survey be completed and returned. You may be assured of complete privacy in your answers. Your name will never be linked to the survey.

Parents whose surveys are received by June 19, 1995 will be eligible to win one of five $25 gift certificates for local restaurants. Enclosed in this packet is an orange piece of paper. If you would like to be entered in the restaurant lottery, please make up an 8-digit number and write it on both halves of the paper. Cut the paper in half, send one half back in the postage paid envelope with your survey and keep the other half in a safe place. **The restaurant lottery will be held on June 19, 1995.** Please call Jennifer Juras at xxx-xxxx from noon until 10pm on June 19 or from 8am until noon on June 20 to see if your number has won. You will be asked to present your number when you come to the XXX office to claim your prize.

The results of this project will be made available to all XXX faculty and parents. You may receive a copy of the results by sending a written request to the address printed on your survey. Please do not put this information on the survey itself.

I would be happy to answer any questions you might have. Please write or call. The telephone number is (xxx) xxx-xxxx. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Juras
Project Coordinator

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

Reminder Postcard to Caregivers

Dear XXX Parent,

Last week a survey was sent to your home in which you were asked about your opinions about school programs to prevent violence. Your name was randomly picked from a lottery of all XXX parents.

If you have already completed and returned the survey, thank you very much. If not, please do so as soon as possible. Because only a small number of XXX parents' opinions were asked in this project, it is very important that your opinion be included. Also, if the orange slip of paper that was in your survey packet is received by June 19, you will be entered in a lottery for a chance for a $25 gift certificate for local restaurants. If you have any questions or if you did not receive your survey, please call me at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Juras
Project Coordinator

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

Second Letter to Caregivers

June 9, 1995

Dear XXX Parent,

About two weeks ago a survey about youth violence was sent to you. **XXX Middle School is working with Michigan State University on this survey because we believe that parents' opinions about violence prevention are very important.**

While the response has been encouraging, we still have not received a number of surveys. Because this is an anonymous survey, we do not know which parents have or have not completed and sent in their surveys. If you have sent in your survey, thank you very much. If you have not, please know that your input is important. Because only a small number of parents were randomly selected for the survey, we need to hear from as many parents as possible in order to make the project a success. Another copy of the survey has been enclosed in case your survey did not reach you or has been misplaced.

If you have not yet entered the restaurant lottery you may still do so. The drawing for the original mailing is June 19, 1995. The drawing for this second mailing is June 26, 1995. Parents whose surveys are received by June 26, 1995 will be eligible to win a $25 gift certificate for their favorite restaurant. Enclosed in this packet is a small slip of paper. If you would like to be entered in the restaurant lottery and have not already done so, please make up an 8-digit number and write it on both halves of the paper. Cut the paper in half, send one half back in the postage paid envelope with your survey and keep the other half in a safe place. To see if you have won the lottery for this second mailing, please call Jennifer Juras at xxx-xxxx from noon until 10pm on June 26 or from 8am until noon on June 27.

The results of this project will be made available to all XXX faculty and parents. You may receive a copy of the results by sending a written request to the address printed on your survey. Please do not put this information on the survey itself.

If you have any questions, please write or call. The address is printed on your survey. The telephone number is (517) xxx-xxxx. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

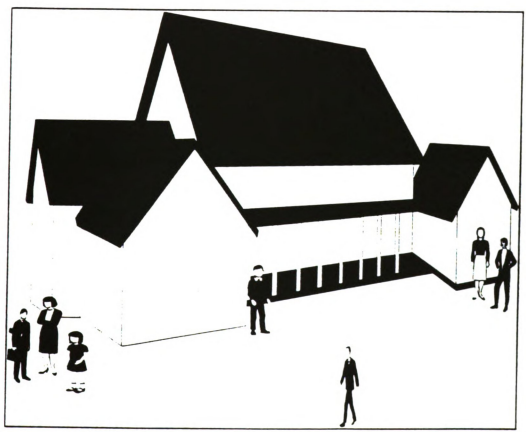
Jennifer Juras
Project Coordinator

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

Caregiver Survey

XXX Middle School Parent Survey



You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by completing and returning this survey. All responses will be kept strictly confidential. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Jennifer Juras at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

An important part of this project is to find out what people think about youth violence (ages 10-18) in American society. The first set of questions are about what you think are the causes of fighting and other acts of violence by young people. For each of the following statements, please indicate by circling the letters whether you **Strongly Agree (SA)**, **Agree (A)**, **Disagree (D)**, or **Strongly Disagree (SD)** with the statement.

SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree				
Tougher punishment measures are necessary for making youth think before behaving violently	SA	A	D	SD
To prevent youth violence, we must focus on families	SA	A	D	SD
A good way to prevent violent acts by youth is to bring back the death penalty	SA	A	D	SD
Strict and hard law enforcement is a good way of preventing youth violence	SA	A	D	SD
Youth behave violently because they hang out with the wrong crowd	SA	A	D	SD
It is sometimes necessary for youth to use violence to get what they want	SA	A	D	SD
Youth violence is due to living in bad neighborhoods	SA	A	D	SD
Youth violence is caused by our violent culture	SA	A	D	SD
Alternative schools will help prevent youth violence	SA	A	D	SD
Violence is an effective way of resolving conflicts for youth	SA	A	D	SD
An effective way of preventing youth violence would be for everyone to have an opportunity to get a good education	SA	A	D	SD
Mental illness is an important cause of youth violence	SA	A	D	SD
The influence of other youth can cause violent behavior	SA	A	D	SD
It is necessary to harden methods of punishment in order to prevent youth violence	SA	A	D	SD
The influence of other youth can prevent violent behavior	SA	A	D	SD
Unemployment is an important cause of youth violence	SA	A	D	SD
It is not possible to prevent youth violence	SA	A	D	SD
In order to prevent youth violence it is necessary to put more money into economically deprived areas	SA	A	D	SD
Hard work is the best rehabilitation measure for youths who behave violently	SA	A	D	SD
A good way to prevent violent behavior is to focus on gangs	SA	A	D	SD
Efforts directed at the prevention of youth violence are a waste of time	SA	A	D	SD
Youth violence is more often a flaw in our society than a flaw in the offender	SA	A	D	SD
Youth violence is caused by growing up in a single-parent home	SA	A	D	SD
Youth learn to be violent because of the violence on television	SA	A	D	SD
Youth violence is due to a shortage of economic and labor resources	SA	A	D	SD

SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree				
Youth learn to be violent because they have violent role models	SA	A	D	SD
Drugs are an important cause of youth violence	SA	A	D	SD
Working to eliminate poverty in poor areas of big cities would be a good way to decrease youth violence	SA	A	D	SD
Youth violence is caused by poor parenting	SA	A	D	SD
Youth violence is caused by genetic factors or carried in the family blood	SA	A	D	SD
Youth violence can be prevented by teaching youth nonviolent ways of responding to conflict	SA	A	D	SD

The next set of questions are about crime and violence in your neighborhood. Please circle the number for the answer that best describes how you feel.

B1. How much of a problem is fighting or other violence in your neighborhood (2-3 blocks around where you live)?

1 Not a problem at all
2 A little bit of a problem
3 Somewhat of a problem
4 Very much a problem

B2. How safe is your neighborhood at night?

1 Very safe
2 Safe
3 Somewhat unsafe
4 Very unsafe

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following two statements?

B3. Crime is serious enough in my neighborhood that I would move if I could

1 Strongly agree
2 Agree
3 Disagree
4 Strongly disagree

B4. The chances of being the victim of a violent crime (rape, mugging) are great in my neighborhood

1 Strongly agree
2 Agree
3 Disagree
4 Strongly disagree

The next set of questions are about school programs designed to prevent fighting and other violent acts by

youth. Parent input and suggestions are important to our school programs. Please answer the following questions as completely and as honestly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers.

C1. Do you think that schools should teach youth ways of dealing with conflict other than fighting?

1 Yes
2 No

C2. Do you think that it is important for schools to have violence prevention programs?

1 Yes
2 No

C3. Do you think that it is the school's responsibility to work to prevent violence?

1 Yes
2 No

C4. Do you think that your taxes for schools should be used for violence prevention programs?

1 Yes
2 No

C5. What do you think should be included in a school program to prevent fighting and other violent acts by students?

_____

_____

_____

C6. In what ways do you think parents could be used in a violence prevention program at XXX Middle School?

_____

_____

_____

C7. How willing would you be to become involved in a program to prevent student violence at XXX Middle School?

1 Very willing
2 Somewhat willing
3 Undecided
4 Somewhat unwilling
5 Very unwilling

C3	In which of the following activities would you be willing to participate? *(Please check all that apply)*	
a	Receive written materials to learn about violence prevention programs.	
b	Receive written materials to learn how to help my children learn conflict resolution skills	
c	Attend a training session to learn mediation/conflict resolution skills.	
d	Attend training so that I could volunteer my time to help train the students.	
e.	Volunteer my time to help supervise or coordinate the program.	

D1 Are you aware of the violence prevention program at xxx Middle School called *Peace Makers*?

1 Yes
2 No –> skip to D10

D2. What is your understanding of what that program does?

_____

_____

_____

D3. Is your son or daughter aware of the Peace Makers program at xxx ?

1 Yes
2 No –> skip to D10
3 Don't Know –> skip to D10

D4. Does he or she see it as a positive option for resolving interpersonal conflicts at school?

1 Yes –> go to D5a
2 No –> go to D5b
3 Don't Know –> go to D6

D5a. Why does he or she see it as a positive option for resolving conflicts?

_____

_____

_____

Please go to question D6

D5b. Why doesn't he or she see it as a positive option for resolving conflicts?

_____

_____

_____

D6 Has your child used the services of *Peace Makers* to help resolve a conflict at school?

1 Yes
2 No
3 Don't Know

D7. Has your son or daughter completed the 10 to 12 hours of Peace Maker training and earned the title of "apprentice" or "original" Peace Maker (This would have involved attending 6 after school sessions & 1 Saturday session)?

1 Yes
2 No --> skip to D9
3 Don't Know --> skip to D10

D8. Has the *Peace Maker* training helped your child to successfully manage conflicts with his or her family members or friends?

1 Yes
2 No --> go to D9
3 Don't Know --> go to D9

D8a. What has your child learned?

_____

_____

D9. Have you been involved with *Peace Makers* in any way, for example attending PTSA meetings, helping with fundraising, or helping your child to participate?

1 Yes --> go to D9a
2 No --> go to D9b

D9a. What did you do?

_____

_____

_____

D9b. Why haven't you been involved?

_____

_____

_____

D10. Are you involved in any other school programs or voluntary activities?

1 Yes
2 No --> go to next set of questions

D10a. Which programs or activities are you involved in?

_____

The next questions are about the reasons why children fight and your response to conflicts between children. These questions focus on fighting among children that you know.

E1. How often do fights happen in your child's group of friends?

1 Several Times A Week
2 Once A Week
3 Several Times A Month
4 Once A Month
5 Every Couple Of Months
6 Very Rarely
7 Never

There are many reasons why children fight. Do friends of your child fight for any of the following reasons? Please rank your answers. First, please place a 1 by the most important reason why friends of your child fight. Next, select the least important reason why friends of your child fight and put a 4 next to it. Then, select the second most important reason why friends of your child fight and put a 2 by it. Finally, put a 3 next to the remaining answer.

E2. Friends of my child fight because . . .		Ranking
a.	They are bad kids	
b.	They watch violent television programs	
c.	There are no consequences for fighting	
d.	That is how their parents have raised them	

There are many ways parents can resolve fights between children. For each of the following, please indicate whether or not you would take that action and which action you would be MOST likely to use.

E3. If you heard your child fighting, what would you do?	Would take this action at all?		Is this the action you would be MOST likely to take?	
Physically discipline him or her?	YES	NO	YES	NO
Talk with him or her about other ways to handle conflicts?	YES	NO	YES	NO
Ground him or her or take away privileges (such as his or her allowance, or television?	YES	NO	YES	NO
Not interfere?	YES	NO	YES	NO

The next questions are about how you deal with situations in which you are either happy or unhappy with your child's behavior. There are many ways to deal with these situations. Please circle the answer that best describes how often you have done the following in the past six months:

How often have you	Never	A Little	Some-times	A Lot
Complimented your child for good behavior	1	2	3	4
Encouraged your child to behave well	1	2	3	4
Given your child increased responsibilities or freedoms for behaving well	1	2	3	4
Rewarded your child for good behavior	1	2	3	4
Set or enforced clear rules or guidelines for behavior	1	2	3	4
Talked with your child about how s.he was misbehaving	1	2	3	4
Had your child take a time-out	1	2	3	4
Took away privileges or grounded him/her	1	2	3	4
Argued with your child, but did not yell	1	2	3	4
Yelled at your child	1	2	3	4
Insulted your child, called him/her bad names or said things to make him/her feel bad	1	2	3	4
Gotten so mad at your child that you stomped out of the room	1	2	3	4
Threatened to hit your child	1	2	3	4
Pushed, grabbed or shoved your child	1	2	3	4
Hit your child with your hand, like a spanking	1	2	3	4
Hit your child with your fist	1	2	3	4
Hit your child with something other than your hand	1	2	3	4
Hit your child out of anger	1	2	3	4

The following questions are for statistical purposes only.

F1. Are you

1 Male
2 Female

F2 What is your marital status?

1 Single, never married
2 Married
3 Divorced
4 Separated
5 Widowed

F3. What is your race or ethnicity?

1 African American
2 Caucasian (non Hispanic)
3 Hispanic
4 Asian or Pacific Islander
5 Native American
6 Multiracial
7 Other (please indicate) _____

F4. How many children do you have in each age group? (If you do not have any children in a particular age group, please write "0")

Under 5 Years	
5 to 13 Years	
14 to 18 Years	
19 to 24 Years	
25 and Over	

F5. What is your age? _____ YEARS

F6. How many of your children attend XXX Middle School? _____

F7. Please list the first names (no last names) of the people that live with you, their ages, and their relationship to you.

a. _____ _____

b. _____ _____

c. _____ _____

d. _____ _____

e. _____ _____

Thank you very much for completing this survey. Please return it in the postage paid envelope. If you have any additional comments please write them on the back cover. Remember to use the orange paper to write down your 8-digit number for the restaurant lottery and send it with your survey. Be sure to keep your half of the orange paper in a safe place until the drawing on June 19. If by chance the envelope is missing, please return it to:

Jennifer Juras
Department of Psychology
135 Snyder Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824-1117

APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E

Attitudes Toward Crime Scales - Factor Analysis (Ortet-Fabregat & Perez, 1992)

Attitudes Toward Crime (ACSc) **Hereditary and individual causes**	**Com**	**I**	**II**
A person becomes a criminal because it is carried in the blood	.66	.79	-.19
Criminals are *born* criminals	.48	.67	-.18
Crime is determined *mainly* by one's genetic make-up	.41	.65	-.19
Many gypsies commit crimes because they carry it in the blood	.41	.61	-.19
Crime is due only to hereditary factors	.37	.59	-.16
Crime is caused by an excess of freedom in society	.30	.55	-.01
If there were not so much permissiveness, there would not be so much crime	.29	.53	-.06
Crime is caused by mental illness	.25	.49	.05
Most criminals are mentally ill	.27	.49	.18
Criminals cannot change their destiny	.22	.45	-.11
Criminality is predestined	.19	.40	.15

Social and environmental causes:	**Com**	**I**	**II**
Crime is fundamentally due to a shortage of economic and labor resources	.37	-.03	.60
Crime is due only to social and physical environment	.35	-.06	.59
Unemployment is the most important cause of crime	.31	.02	.56
Crime is more often a flaw in our society than a flaw in the offender	.35	-.24	.54
Most criminals have poor cultural and educational levels	.20	-.08	.52
Most criminals received a poor quality of education at school	.26	.05	.51
Many criminals do not have the opportunity to behave socially	.28	-.20	.49
Drugs are the main cause of crime	.21	.18	.42
If a person commits a crime it is because he/she wants to	.18	.19	-.38
Eigenvalue		4.2	2.2
Percent of Variance		21.2	11.4

Attitudes toward the Prevention of Crime Scale (ACSp): **Coercive prevention:**	**I**	**II**	**Com**
Tougher punishment measures are necessary for making offenders think before committing a crime	.82	-.12	.70
It is necessary to harden methods of punishment in order to prevent crime	.81	-.10	.68
Strict and hard law enforcement is the best way of preventing crime	.76	-.11	.59
Boys caught for their first crime must be harshly punished	.71	-.18	.54
The best way of preventing crime is by bringing back the death penalty	.70	-.09	.50
The police must have more autonomy with regard to law enforcement	.66	-.12	.46
The criminal justice system usually obstructs the work of the police	.57	-.09	.34
Crime would disappear with a greater police presence	.57	.03	.32
When a boy is caught for his first crime, the best preventative measure is to put him in jail	.55	-.24	.36
The best way of preventing crime is to put drug addicts in jail	.48	-.17	.26
Social Intervention Prevention			
It is necessary to create and improve institutions where children at high risk of becoming delinquents could attend	-.08	.69	.48
Professionals in the criminal justice system have to know about recent scientific knowledge in relation to crime	-.08	.63	.40
In order to prevent crime it is necessary to put more money into deprived areas	-.16	.58	.37

An effective way of preventing crime would be by detecting and assisting adolescents who are at high risk of becoming delinquents	.14	.57	.35
In the field of crime it is not possible to talk about preventative measures	.17	-.56	.35
Efforts directed at the prevention of crime are a waste of time	.25	-.56	.38
To prevent crime, more community workers are *not* necessary	.25	-.52	.33
To prevent crime, *professionals* with educative functions are necessary	-.17	.50	.28
An effective way of preventing crime would be for everybody to have the opportunity of attaining a good educational and cultural level	.01	.48	.23
Progressive elimination of poor areas of big cities would decrease crime significantly	.01	.41	.17
If the powers that be had more knowledge about factors related to crime, it would be easier to prevent crime	-.18	.39	.19
Crime is exclusively a police problem	.25	-.35	.19
Eigenvalue	5.9	2.5	
Percent of Variance	27.1	11.7	

Attitudes toward the Treatment of Crime Scale (ACSt): <u>Assistance vs. punishment</u>	**I**	**Com**
Home leaves for inmates should *not* be allowed	-.74	.54
Criminals need strong treatment in prison	-.73	.54
Hard work is the best rehabilitation measure for criminals	-.73	.53
Every prisoner should have the opportunity to do paid work while serving his/her sentence	.69	.48
Physical punishment is necessary, from time to time, so that criminals get what they deserve	-.67	.44
Application of treatments aimed at social rehabilitation of criminals must be favored	.64	.42
The criminal justice system should be harder with criminals	-.64	.42
When the conditions of imprisonment are improved (spaciousness, cleanliness, intimacy, etc.), rehabilitation will be easier	.64	.41
State powers should designate a lot more money to build more humane prisons	.54	.30
Loss of freedom, without any kind of rehabilitation measure, is a poor penal method	.50	.25
A first offense should *not* be punished with prison	.48	.23
An increase in the cultural level of criminals can be an important factor in achieving their rehabilitation	.47	.22
It is an injustice that society pays for prisoners to eat without working	-.46	.21
It is necessary to assess the effectiveness of treatment programs for criminals	.45	.20
The most dangerous criminals should be segregated	-.32	.17
Reform of the current penitentiary system is fundamental for achieving the rehabilitation aim	.42	.17
For the elimination of crime, penalties other than imprisonment are necessary	.41	.17

Drug addicts must be treated like patients	.35	.12
Current prisons are 'schools of crime' because of lack of economic and human resources	.30	.08
Eigenvalue	6.0	
Percent of Variance	31.6	

APPENDIX F

APPENDIX F

Scale Information

Table 2

Principal Components Analysis - Four Factor Structure (N=131)

Factor	Eigenvalue	Pct. of variance	Cum. pct.
1 - Social-environ.	3.50	17.5	17.5
2 - Deterrence	2.63	13.2	30.6
3 - Social learning theory	1.97	9.9	40.5
4 - Individual	1.59	7.9	48.4
5 (not included)	1.21	6.0	54.5

Table 3

Principal Components Analysis - Social-Environmental Factor 1

1. In order to prevent youth violence it is necessary to put more money into economically deprived areas.
2. Youth violence is due to a shortage of economic and labor resources.
3. Unemployment is an important cause of youth violence.
4. Working to eliminate poverty in poor areas of big cities would be a good way to decrease youth violence.
5. An effective way of preventing youth violence would be for everyone to have an opportunity to get a good education.
6. Alternative schools will help prevent youth violence.

Item number	Communality	**Factor loadings Social-Environ.**	Factor loadings Deterrence	Factor loadings SLT	Factor loadings Individual
1	.61	**.77**	-.03	.06	.07
2	.59	**.75**	-.08	.06	.16
3	.60	**.74**	-.03	.19	.15
4	.52	**.65**	-.19	.25	-.07
5	.45	**.63**	-.02	-.22	-.08
6	.37	**.53**	.07	.28	-.08

Table 4

Principal Components Analysis - Deterrence Factor 2

1. It is necessary to harden methods of punishment in order to prevent youth violence.
2. Tougher punishment measures are necessary for making youth think before behaving violently.
3. Strict and hard law enforcement is a good way of preventing youth violence.
4. A good way to prevent violent acts by youth is to bring back the death penalty.

Item number	Communality	Factor loadings Social-Environ.	**Factor loadings Deterrence**	Factor loadings SLT	Factor loadings Individual
1	.67	-.02	**.82**	.00	-.00
2	.65	-.12	**.80**	.03	-.06
3	.62	.10	**.78**	.03	.01
4	.38	-.21	**.57**	.05	.11

Table 5

Principal Components Analysis - Social Learning Theory Factor 3

1. Youth learn to be violent because they have violent role models.
2. Youth violence is caused by our violent culture.
3. Youth learn to be violent because of the violence on television.
4. Youth violence is due to living in bad neighborhoods.
5. The influence of other youth can cause violent behavior.

Item number	Communality	Factor loadings Social-Environ.	Factor loadings Deterrence	**Factor loadings SLT**	Factor loadings Individual
1	.51	.01	-.07	**.71**	.04
2	.45	.20	.25	**.58**	.09
3	.40	.05	-.20	**.57**	-.17
4	.46	.21	.20	**.54**	.30
5	.27	.05	.07	**.50**	-.13

Table 6

Principal Components Analysis - Individual Factor 4

1. Youth violence can be prevented by teaching youth nonviolent ways of responding to conflict.
2. Youth violence is caused by genetic factors or carried in the family blood.
3. Mental illness is an important cause of youth violence.
4. Efforts directed at the prevention of youth violence are a waste of time.
5. It is not possible to prevent youth violence.

Item number	Communality	Factor loadings Social-Environ.	Factor loadings Deterrence	Factor loadings SLT	**Factor loadings Individual**
1	.48	.18	.20	.11	**-.63**
2	.47	.06	-.01	.27	**.63**
3	.48	.21	.20	.09	**.62**
4	.35	-.08	-.01	-.15	**.57**
5	.34	.11	.07	-.09	**.56**

Table 7

Reliability Analysis - Social-Environmental Factor 1

1. In order to prevent youth violence it is necessary to put more money into economically deprived areas.
2. Youth violence is due to a shortage of economic and labor resources.
3. Unemployment is an important cause of youth violence.
4. Working to eliminate poverty in poor areas of big cities would be a good way to decrease youth violence.
5. An effective way of preventing youth violence would be for everyone to have an opportunity to get a good education.
6. Alternative schools will help prevent youth violence.

Item number	Corr. item-total correlation	Alpha if item deleted
1	.56	.72
2	.59	.71
3	.61	.71
4	.52	.73
5	.41	.76
6	.40	.76

Statistics for scale:	Mean	Std. dev.	Kurtosis	Skewness	Alpha
(N=158)	2.7	.81	-.37	.10	.77

Table 8

Reliability Analysis - Deterrence Factor 2

1. It is necessary to harden methods of punishment in order to prevent youth violence.
2. Tougher punishment measures are necessary for making youth think before behaving violently.
3. Strict and hard law enforcement is a good way of preventing youth violence.

Item number	Corr. item-total correlation	Alpha if item deleted
1	.66	.63
2	.63	.67
3	.54	.78

Statistics for scale:	Mean	Std. dev.	Kurtosis	Skewness	Alpha
(N=157)	2.1	.91	-.01	.84	.77

Table 9

Reliability Analysis - Social Learning Theory Factor 3

1. Youth learn to be violent because they have violent role models.
2. Youth violence is caused by our violent culture.
3. Youth learn to be violent because of the violence on television.
4. Youth violence is due to living in bad neighborhoods.
5. The influence of other youth can cause violent behavior.

Item number	Corr. item-total correlation	Alpha if item deleted
1	.40	.49
2	.39	.49
3	.31	.54
4	.37	.51
5	.24	.58

Statistics for scale:	Mean	Std. dev.	Kurtosis	Skewness	Alpha
(N=158)	2.6	.66	.42	.36	.58

Table 10

Reliability Analysis - Individual Factor 4

1. Youth violence can be prevented by teaching youth nonviolent ways of responding to conflict. (-)
2. Youth violence is caused by genetic factors or carried in the family blood.
3. Mental illness is an important cause of youth violence.
4. Efforts directed at the prevention of youth violence are a waste of time.
5. It is not possible to prevent youth violence.

Item number	Corr. item-total correlation	Alpha if item deleted
1	.37	.52
2	.38	.48
3	.35	.50
4	.30	.53
5	.31	.53

Statistics for scale:	Mean	Std. dev.	Kurtosis	Skewness	Alpha
(N=158)	4.2	.53	.87	-.85	.57

Table 11

Principal Components Analysis of Discipline Items - Three Factor Structure (N=145)

Factor	Eigenvalue	Pct. of variance	Cum. pct.
1 - Physical discipline	4.1	24.4	24.4
2 - Positive parenting strategies	2.5	14.9	39.2
3 - Verbally confrontative strategies	1.6	9.3	48.6
4 (not included)	1.2	7.2	55.8
5 (not included	1.1	6.3	62.1

Table 12

Principal Components Analysis - Physical Discipline Factor 1

1. Hit your child with your hand, like a spanking
2. Threatened to hit your child
3. Hit your child out of anger
4. Pushed, grabbed, or shoved your child
5. Hit your child with something other than your hand

Item number	Communality	**Factor loadings Physical**	Factor loadings Positive	Factor loadings Verbally Confrontative
1	.69	**.81**	-.06	.17
2	.64	**.77**	-.02	.23
3	.54	**.72**	.05	.15
4	.58	**.68**	-.09	.32
5	.47	**.67**	.15	-.03

Table 13

Principal Components Analysis - Positive Parenting Strategies Factor 2

1. Set or enforced clear rules or guidelines for behavior
2. Rewarded your child for good behavior
3. Given your child increased responsibilities or freedoms for behaving well
4. Talked with your child about how s/he was misbehaving
5. Had your child take a time-out
6. Encouraged your child to behave well
7. Complimented your child for good behavior

Item number	Communality	Factor loadings Physical	**Factor loadings Positive**	Factor loadings Verbally Confrontative
1	.58	.23	**.68**	-.25
2	.46	-.18	**.65**	.07
3	.41	-.02	**.64**	.01
4	.49	.33	**.54**	.29
5	.36	-.03	**.54**	.27
6	.42	.36	**.47**	-.28
7	.38	-.23	**.43**	-.37

Table 14

Principal Components Analysis - Verbally Confrontative Strategies Factor 3

1. Yelled at your child
2. Insulted your child, called him/her bad names, or said things to make him/her feel bad
3. Gotten so mad at your child that you stomped out of the room

Item number	Communality	Factor loadings Physical	Factor loadings Positive	**Factor loadings Verbally Confrontative**
1	.46	.21	-.09	**.64**
2	.41	.28	-.18	**.55**
3	.38	.37	-.04	**.49**

Table 15

Reliability Analysis - Physical Discipline Factor 1

1. Hit your child with your hand, like a spanking
2. Threatened to hit your child
3. Hit your child out of anger
4. Pushed, grabbed, or shoved your child
5. Hit your child with something other than your hand

Item number	Corr. item-total correlation	Alpha if item deleted
1	.70	.78
2	.71	.78
3	.59	.81
4	.64	.79
5	.56	.82

Statistics for scale:	Mean	Std. dev.	Kurtosis	Skewness	Alpha
(N=159)	1.41	.51	.92	1.27	.83

Table 16

Reliability Analysis - Verbally Confrontative Strategies Factor 3

1. Yelled at your child
2. Insulted your child, called him/her bad names, or said things to make him/her feel bad
3. Gotten so mad at your child that you stomped out of the room

Item number	Corr. item-total correlation	Alpha if item deleted
1	.41	.48
2	.44	.47
3	.40	.49

Statistics for scale:	Mean	Std. dev.	Kurtosis	Skewness	Alpha
(N=159)	1.9	.55	1.1	.88	.64

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