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The Effectiveness of the Warning Signs Program in Educating Youth about Violence Prevention: A Study with Urban High School Students

The effectiveness of the Warning Signs program in educating urban high school youth about the signs of potential violence in themselves and others was studied. No differences were found with exposure to the program. Rather, students in all groups identified certain personality traits that are suggestive of violence, but ignored family, school, and social contributors. Suggestions for school counselors using this program are presented along with a discussion of the program's limitations.

Youth violence is a major problem in our society, one that has received increased public attention since the rash of school shootings that have tragically occurred in recent years. Despite the fact that juvenile arrests for violent crimes actually dropped 23% from 1995 to 1999, the numbers of violent youth remain excessive. In 1999, the estimated number of juvenile arrests for violent crimes was 103,900, composing 16% of all violent crimes, as indicated by the Violent Crime Index (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2000). Fourteen hundred juveniles were arrested for murder and nonnegligent manslaughter; 5,000 for forcible rape; 28,000 for robbery; and 69,600 for aggravated assault.

Significant attention is now rightly being paid to school violence prevention and intervention. Nonetheless, it is important to realize that children are more likely to be victims of crime when they are away from school than when they are at school. In 1999, students ages 12 through 18 were victims of approximately 186,000 serious violent crimes at school, as compared to 476,000 away from school. From July 1, 1998, to June 30, 1999, 33 children ages 5 through 19 were killed in school-associated homicides and four children were victims of school-associated suicides. These are only a fraction of the 2,407 school-aged children who were victims of homicide and the 1,854 school-aged children who committed suicide during this time period (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001).

Despite the relatively small number of school violence incidents, any violence at school is too much, and school counselors must, therefore, be armed with appropriate tools to help prevent violence in their schools. Our graduate students tell us repeatedly that this is the issue that they feel they must know more about if they are to work effectively as counselors in today's schools. When we ask our students to research and write papers on current issues of their choosing, we routinely receive a disproportionate number of papers on school and youth violence. In his foreword to the December, 2000, Special Issue of *Professional School Counseling*, entitled *School Violence and Counselors*, Daya Singh Sandhu, wrote:

Clearly, school violence is on the rise, and teachers, parents, administrators, and communities are increasingly feeling the need to take action to prevent violence. ... As the pressure to develop programs increases, schools are increasingly turning to school counselors for leadership and guidance. (p. iv)

With the shocking nature of the events that have occurred in schools throughout the country, some have wondered if the youth just snapped, acting out violently without real warning. On the contrary, it seems that adolescent killers often broadcast their plans, seeking support and reinforcement from their peers. In comparison to adult rampage killers, adolescent killers have been found to be less emotionally detached and more susceptible to peer influence (Fessenden, 2000). Other warning signs are related to youths' family and social environments. For instance, youth have been found to be at increased risk for violence if they are from families with a history of criminal violence, if they have a history of being abused, if they belong to a gang, and/or if they abuse alcohol and drugs (Moffitt, 1997; Pallone & Hennessy, 1996; Widom, 1995). School counselors, school psychologists, and other school

professionals must be aware of such risks and signs of potential youth violence and need to communicate this knowledge to young people so they can contribute to protecting themselves and others.

THE WARNING SIGNS INITIATIVE

In an attempt to help youth accurately identify potential signs of violent behavior and to recognize the need to seek professional help, the American Psychological Association (APA) and Music Television (MTV), joined together in April of 1999 to launch Warning Signs, a youth anti-violence initiative (Alvarez, 1999). Warning Signs is part of APA's public education campaign, entitled Talk to Someone Who Can Help, that stresses the importance of counseling or psychological services and good mental health (Peterson & Newman, 2000). In more than 500 antiviolence forums held throughout the country, mental health professionals have led discussions with youth after they view the Warning Signs video (Sullivan, 2000). During the 30-minute video, co-produced by APA and MTV and moderated by a popular MTV personality, youth learn about real school-related incidents of violence committed by peers. They hear directly from the young perpetrators, their friends, friends of the victims, and witnesses of the violent events about what led to these acts of violence, what could have prevented these acts, and how to get help. Experts also provide information on the signs that youth display that may lead to violence.

The Warning Signs initiative lends itself to three methods of implementation by school counselors: (a) single-class school forums, (b) multiple-class or assembly school forums, and (c) community youth forums (Peterson & Newman, 2000). The single-class school forum, chosen for this research, calls for a partnership between the American Psychological Association and middle or high school-based professionals. School counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, and certain teachers would be appropriate facilitators to bring this program into the classroom. Individual classes are identified, the Warning Signs video is shown, and the trained professional then conducts a discussion with students about the warning signs of violence and how to deal with anger and frustration. Copies of the Warning Signs guide are distributed.

The Warning Signs guide, written by APA and designed by MTV, is an appealing brochure that is intended to help youth recognize potentially dangerous thoughts, feelings and behaviors in themselves or their peers, both with regard to violence directed outward as well as violence directed toward one's self. The guide's headings are as follows: (a) Reasons for Violence, (b) Recognizing Violence

Warning Signs in Others, (c) What You Can Do If Someone You Know Shows Violence Warning Signs, (d) Dealing With Anger, (e) Are You at Risk for Violent Behavior, (f) Controlling Your Own Risk for Violent Behavior, and (g) Violence Against Self.

Use of the Warning Signs program has widely expanded practitioner involvement at the national and community levels to help prevent youth violence. Far exceeding expectations, 375,000 guides were distributed and 613 psychologist-led youth forums were held in the first year alone (Peterson & Newman, 2000). To date, however, this initiative has not been the subject of empirical investigations of its efficacy, despite the high face and content validity of the project. Thus, the goal of this investigation was to conduct a preliminary study of the effectiveness of Warning Signs in educating young people in a high-risk, urban community about the signs of potential violence in themselves and others and about what to do when they notice these signs.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

It was hypothesized that students exposed to the Warning Signs video and facilitated follow-up discussion would be able to more effectively identify the warning signs of violence and the steps needed to prevent such behavior in comparison to the students who solely received written materials on the topic of youth violence and its prevention (i.e., the Warning Signs guide). Further, it was hypothesized that students who were assigned to complete a teacher-initiated school project on violence prevention in addition to viewing the Warning Signs video and participating in a follow-up discussion would be able to more effectively identify the warning signs of violence and the steps needed to prevent such behavior in comparison to students in the other two groups.

METHOD

Participants

Participants in this study attended an urban, vocational, public high school located in New York City. The students in this school are predominately African American (80%) and Hispanic (18%), with males outnumbering females by approximately three to one (Division of Assessment and Accountability, 2000). Over 75% of students at this school are eligible for free lunch, which is about 30% higher than the city average. The attendance rate is about 80%, 5% lower than the city average. In 2000, the number of suspensions per 1,000 students in this school was 187, whereas the city average was 45. Similarly, the number of incidents involving the police department in 2000 was 51 per 1,000 students, whereas

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the citywide average was 10. Only 3% of students in this school are recent immigrants, in comparison to 9% citywide. With regard to academic achievement, students in this school have been found to perform well below city averages on the Regents English and Mathematics examinations (Division of Assessment and Accountability).

The selected high school was chosen for several reasons. First, it is in close proximity to our university, whose mission is to serve the community it inhabits. Second, our graduate students in counseling and school psychology will soon be working in schools like this one, and we wanted to gain knowledge that may be helpful to them as they embark on their careers. And third, we felt that the high-risk nature of the student population would provide valuable information as to the validity of Warning Signs as a nationally applicable initiative. Particularly because the video largely depicts white and Hispanic students from suburban and rural areas, evidence of its potential generalizability to a largely African-American urban student population would significantly bolster its widespread usefulness.

A total of 53 eleventh grade students composed the initial sample of those who completed the pre-intervention questionnaire. Twenty-three were in Classroom One, 15 were in Classroom Two, and 15 were in Classroom Three. Thirty-five students of the total 53 also completed the post-intervention questionnaire. This attrition rate occurred in part because some participating students were absent on the day of the post-intervention questionnaire and others had switched classes. The demographics of the student sample with regard to race and gender largely mirrored the demographics of the school population as indicated above.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire of seven open-ended questions was designed by the researchers to assess student awareness in the seven areas targeted by the Warning Signs program. These questions were drawn directly from the topics covered in the program and brochure. The questions were then presented to a number of professionals in child development and education for clarity and appropriateness of language and content for this student population. The ultimate questions were as follows:

1. What do you think leads some people to act violently toward other people? In other words, why do people kick, hit, punch, stab, or shoot people?
2. What are signs that tell you that someone might become violent?
3. What are some things that you could do when you see the signs that tell you that someone might become violent?

4. Instead of violence, what are some other ways to deal with anger?
5. What signs in yourself tell you that you may be at risk for becoming overly angry and violent?
6. What can you do when you notice yourself becoming overly angry and potentially violent?
7. What do you think are some signs that a person is thinking about harming himself or herself (feeling suicidal)?

Procedure

Approval to conduct this research in high school classrooms within the New York City public school system was obtained from the Proposal Review Committee of the New York City Board of Education, Division of Assessment and Accountability. The administration of the particular high school of interest was then contacted, and permission was granted by the principal to enter the 11th grade classrooms to carry out this project. Along with students' informed consent, written informed consent was secured from the parents of all students who participated in the study. Students were instructed that participation in this research was voluntary and that they were free to deny their participation at any point during the study with no negative repercussions. This was particularly important considering that this research took place in their classrooms, often in the presence of their teachers.

All student participants first completed the pre-intervention questionnaire assessing their awareness of the warning signs of violence and the actions to be taken to prevent aggression. After completing the questionnaire, students in Classroom One ($n = 23$) received only the Warning Signs guide. In addition to receiving the guide, students in Classroom Two ($n = 15$) watched the Warning Signs video and participated in a follow-up discussion on youth violence, facilitated by the researchers. In addition to the guide and the video/discussion, students in Classroom Three ($n = 15$) received a teacher-initiated assignment in which they were asked to express their perceptions and knowledge of youth violence and its prevention in a creative way. Students created games and wrote autobiographical or fictional essays to satisfy this requirement. Approximately 2 months after the pre-intervention questionnaire, participants again completed the questionnaire assessing their awareness of the warning signs of violence and the actions needed to prevent that aggression in each of the seven targeted areas.

Data Analysis

Students' pre- and post-intervention questionnaire responses to questions about the warning signs of violence (questions 1, 2, 5, and 7) were tabulated according to the Threat Assessment Model outlined

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Table 1. Prong I: Personality Traits and Behaviors that may be Warning Signs of Potential Violence (FBI; O’Toole, 2000) Divided into Preliminary Clusters

Cluster	Personality Traits / Behaviors
Coping/Anger Management	Low Tolerance for Frustration Poor Coping Skills Lack of Resiliency Failed Love Relationship Injustice Collector Anger Management Problems
Behavioral Signs	Leakage Change of Behavior Behavior Relevant to Threat
Depression	Alienation Signs of Depression Masks Low Self-Esteem
Narcissism	Narcissism Dehumanizes Others Lack of Empathy Exaggerated Sense of Entitlement Attitude of Superiority Exaggerated or Pathological Need for Attention Externalizes Blame
Fascination with Violence and Violent People	Inappropriate Humor Unusual Interest in Sensational Violence Fascination with Violent Entertainment Negative Role Models
Rigidity	Intolerance Seeks to Manipulate Others Lack of Trust Closed Social Group Rigid and Opinionated

Table 2. Prongs II, III, & IV: Family, School and Social Dynamics that may be Warning Signs of Potential Violence (FBI; O’Toole, 2000)

Prong	Dynamics
Family Dynamics	Turbulent Parent–Child Relationship Acceptance of Pathological Behavior Access to Weapons Lack of Intimacy Student Rules the Roost No Limits or Monitoring of TV and Internet
School Dynamics	Student’s Detachment from School Tolerance for Disrespectful Behavior Inequitable Discipline Inflexible Culture Pecking Order Among Students Code of Silence Unsupervised Computer Access
Social Dynamics	Media, Entertainment, Technology Peer Groups Drugs and Alcohol Outside Interests The Copycat Effect

by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI; O’Toole, 2000). This approach delineates four prongs of influence in the outcome of potential violence among youth: (a) personality traits and behavior, (b) family dynamics, (c) school dynamics, and (d) social dynamics. Each prong was further developed to include categories of warning signs linked to potential violence (see Tables 1 and 2). These prongs were used to determine the frequency with which students were able to identify the different categories of behaviors in themselves and others as warning signs of potential violence. Due to the natural clustering of certain personal characteristics and actions into overriding topics, the categories listed in the Personality Traits and Behavior prong were assembled by the researchers into six general themes for aid with analysis and additional future research design: (a) coping/anger management, (b) narcissism, (c) behavior signs, (d) fascination with violence, (e) depression, and (f) rigidity. As the other three prongs, Family Dynamics, School Dynamics, and Social Dynamics, included many fewer categories of behaviors, it was not necessary to break them down into clusters for analysis. Due to the relatively small number of participants in this study, the exploratory design, and the descriptive nature of the responses, data analysis was largely qualitative in nature, along with tabulations of the number of responses in each of the four prongs and the six clusters in prong one.

Students’ responses to questions about what they can do to prevent violence in others or themselves (questions 3, 4, and 6) were content analyzed by consensus of the two researchers. Themes that emerged from the responses were noted.

RESULTS

Contrary to the research hypotheses, negligible differences across intervention groups were found on the pre- and post-intervention questionnaire responses to questions about the warning signs of violence. As indicated in Tables 3 and 4, regardless of the intervention group, the students overwhelmingly focused on Prong 1, Personality Traits and Behaviors, when describing warning signs that could potentially lead to violence. Students were particularly attuned to coping deficits and poor anger management, behavioral signs suggesting potential violence, and indications of depression. On the other hand, students rarely remarked on other personality traits and behavior signs, including narcissism, a fascination with sensational violence and violent people, and rigidity.

On both pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, irrespective of intervention group, students' responses most frequently incorporated factors identified in the coping/poor anger management cluster. In this cluster, they reported signs such as the following: "irritability, mood swings;" "they are

either provoked or just starting trouble;" "people may be displacing their anger;" "if they have an explosive temper;" "they provoke someone and really try to test his or her nerves;" and "large sums of people just force you." Students' responses regarding signs in themselves that indicate that they are at risk for becoming overly angry and violent also fell largely into the coping/poor anger management cluster. The following responses are indicative: "If I think violently or attempt to break something, which happens to me rarely;" "I tend to let little things bother me;" and, "when I get mad and cannot think clearly."

The second most frequent type of responses on both pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, irrespective of intervention group, was in the depression cluster. These responses indicated that students are aware of the importance of features such as lethargy, a dark outlook on life, a loss of interest in activities, alienation, and low self-esteem as potential warning signs of violence. Responses that fell into this cluster included: "If they are depressed or [have a] mental illness;" "no feelings about life anymore;" and "they begin to live a dysfunctional and sedentary life."

Table 3. Summary Data of Pre-and Post-Intervention Responses in Prong 1, Personality Traits and Behavior, Divided According to Clusters

	Classroom 1	Classroom 2	Classroom 3	Total Responses
Coping/ Anger Management	31 / 35	28 / 17	29 / 16	88 / 68
Narcissism	0 / 3	1 / 1	8 / 0	9 / 4
Behavior Signs	8 / 10	14 / 6	7 / 8	29 / 24
Fascination with Violence	0 / 2	1 / 0	3 / 1	4 / 3
Depression	26 / 16	12 / 6	13 / 18	51 / 40
Rigidity	0 / 0	0 / 0	1 / 0	1 / 0

Note. Pre-Intervention Questionnaire (participants) $n = 53$; Post-Intervention Questionnaire (participants) $n = 35$. The numbers above reflect the number of responses received in each cluster. Students' responses often included multiple parts and sometimes referred to more than one category. Thus, the numbers in the table reflect the number of responses, which is at times greater than the number of participants.

Table 4. Summary Data of Pre-and-Post-Intervention Responses in Prong 2, Family Dynamics; Prong 3, School Dynamics; and, Prong 4, Social Dynamics

	Classroom 1	Classroom 2	Classroom 3	Total Responses
Family Dynamics	5 / 3	1 / 1	3 / 0	9 / 4
School dynamics	1 / 0	0 / 0	1 / 0	2 / 0
Behavior Signs	4 / 10	2 / 1	7 / 0	13 / 1

Note. Pre-Intervention Questionnaire $n = 53$; Post-Intervention Questionnaire $n = 35$. The numbers above reflect the number of responses received in each cluster. Students' responses often included multiple parts and sometimes referred to more than one category.

Table 5. Summary Data of Types of Pre-and-Post-Intervention Responses to Questions about how to Prevent Violence in Others and Themselves

	Classroom 1	Classroom 2	Classroom 3	Total Responses
Remove Self from Situation	24 / 10	13 / 8	11 / 3	48 / 21
Talk to Potentially Violent Person	12 / 10	11 / 2	11 / 8	34 / 20
Talk to Someone Else (friend, adult, parent, etc.)	19 / 27	20 / 7	14 / 10	53 / 44
Engage in Activity for Distraction or to Release Feelings	28 / 38	6 / 10	24 / 14	58 / 62

Note. Pre-Intervention Questionnaire $n = 53$; Post-Intervention Questionnaire $n = 35$. The numbers above reflect the number of responses received in each cluster. Students' responses often included multiple parts and sometimes referred to more than one category. Thus, the numbers in the table reflect the number of responses, which is at times greater than the number of participants.

Similarly, with regard to potential violence against the self, students reported the importance of depressive traits and behaviors such as the following: “they often go through guilt trips, become depressed, and refrain from other people’s company;” and “some people will always like to be alone,” and “doesn’t socialize with anybody.”

The third most frequent type of responses on both pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, irrespective of intervention group, indicated student attention to behavioral cues, including changes in behavior, behavior relevant to a threat, and leakage (“when a student intentionally or unintentionally reveals clues to feelings, thoughts, fantasies, attitudes, or intentions that may signal an impending violent act;” O’Toole, 2000, p. 16). Examples of student responses in this cluster include the following: “if the person is making threats with nonverbal communication;” “making a joke that can be serious, like, ‘I wish I can just die;’” and, “constantly saying they can’t take it anymore.”

Student awareness of family, school, and social factors that may contribute to violence was lacking in both the pre-and post-intervention questionnaires, as indicated by the dearth of responses in these clusters (see Table 4). School factors were ignored almost entirely; only one student reported that one’s “attitude toward schoolmates and teachers” is important. Another wrote that being “abused in school” could lead one to violence. Family and social dynamics were alluded to somewhat more often than school factors, although still considerably less frequently than personality traits and behaviors. Several responses alluded to “family problems” in general and the influence of “gangs” as predictive of potential violence.

Viewing the Warning Signs video and participating in a follow-up discussion, even when accompa-

nied by the completion of an assignment on violence prevention, had no impact on questionnaire responses pertaining to effective ways of diffusing a potentially violent situation (see Table 5). Students indicated that they coped with potential violence in themselves by engaging in another activity, either as a healthy distraction or to release anger. Activities mentioned included sports, shopping, punching a pillow, and going out with friends, among others. When asked to consider how they would respond to potential violence directed toward them or a peer by another, students advocated walking away from the situation or attempting to talk to the potentially violent individual. Students also reported that they would seek assistance from someone such as an adult, a parent, a friend, or a school professional.

DISCUSSION

Preliminary data suggest that the students were able to identify some of the warning signs of violence, as identified by the FBI and the Warning Signs program, particularly in the area of personality traits and behaviors. Although the students in this study identified coping skills/anger management, behavioral signs, and signs of depression, they neglected other key personality factors and ignored the importance of family, school, and social factors almost in entirety. Moreover, in this study there appeared to be no benefit to watching the video, participating in a follow-up discussion, and carrying out an assignment on youth violence.

With the seemingly high face validity of the Warning Signs program and its widespread use throughout the country, it becomes questionable as to why the results here were not supportive of its use. There are several reasons why the program may not have had its desired effect with this population

of students. It is possible that the Warning Signs video, which utilizes youth offenders from predominantly white, suburban, and rural areas may not accurately assess the type of violence experienced by minority, urban youth. These students spoke of witnessing everyday aggression and violence, rather than the “bottled up” explosions of violence portrayed in the video. Perhaps they, therefore, dismissed it as a potential learning tool and instead watched it only for its entertainment value. In light of this finding, it is recommended that a large-scale validation study of the program be implemented across diverse groups and geographic settings. The importance of Black and Hispanic populations being well represented in any validation study is highlighted by these findings.

Secondly, these results support the value of violence prevention programs as collaborative, interdisciplinary approaches in order to be effective. In a recent compilation of papers, Elliott, Hamburg, and Williams (1998) emphasized a bio-psycho-social paradigm for both the understanding and prevention of urban youth violence. This perspective views aggression and violence within the public schools as a social, public health crisis that must be addressed through multifaceted interventions that target the community, the family, and the school system itself (Fink, 2001).

Additional findings have linked stated attitudes about violence to levels of self-reported aggression toward peers (Dodge, 1993; Vernberg, Jacobs, & Hershberger, 1999). From a social-developmental and cognitive perspective, attitudes and beliefs guide individual differences in social information processing (Dodge; Farrell, Meyer, & Dahlberg, 1996). In the case of aggression specifically, the belief that coercion and/or overt aggression may lead to a desired outcome could lead adolescents to attend more to hostile cues within their environment, and thus access aggressive responses more readily and anticipate positive responses for such outcomes (Dodge). In keeping with these hypotheses, several violence prevention programs have integrated components focusing on the promotion of virtues and the development of a culture of peace (Aspy, 2000; Mattaini, 2001; Mattaini & Lowery, 2000). These programs incorporate a multifaceted approach assessing the perpetrator’s personality and behaviors as well as aspects of the family, school, and social environment endorsed by the FBI (O’Toole, 2000). As a whole, these researchers suggest that a meaningful understanding of children’s attitudes toward aggression is a critical component in effective violence prevention.

Finally, it is suggested that validation studies of Warning Signs and other violence prevention programs utilize the FBI’s four-pronged threat assess-

ment system, which has been developed through analyses of a variety of studies and consultation with experts in the fields of psychology, sociology, criminal justice, and education. Moreover, it is recommended that future work incorporate a large-scale validation study of the clusters of personality traits and behaviors that have been proposed herein.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS

The preliminary data on the Warning Signs program have some important implications for professional school counselors. Our research supports previous studies suggesting that, in order to be effective, violence prevention programs must be implemented long-term and must not only address student behavior and personality traits, but family, school, and social components as well (Moffitt, 1997; Pallone & Hennessy, 1996; Widom, 1995). In a recent report on lethal violence in schools, Gaughan, Cerio, and Myers (2001, August) concluded that:

If we want to address this agonizing problem, perhaps we should pay some attention to what the children are telling us. We need “kinder, gentler” schools. We cannot continue to allow bullying and abuse as normal milestones of child development. We need to communicate the value of caring, and demonstrate that care. We need to provide alternatives to violence for problem solving to encourage more frequent, open, and genuine communication between students and the adults who care for them at home, at school, in the community (p. 38).

Professional school counselors must, therefore, begin to actively advocate for comprehensive violence prevention initiatives and must stand firm against the temptation to implement “quick-fix, band-aid approaches.”

The link between particular family, school, and societal components and violence among youth has been practically addressed in several existing violence prevention initiatives, including the Peacemaker! Model (Mattaini, 2001; Mattaini & Lowery, 2000), the Philadelphia Story (Fink, 2001), and the Chicago Plan (Bell, Gamm, Vallas, & Jackson, 2001). These programs have been effective in their efforts both to reduce youth violence on school and community-wide levels and to facilitate meaningful parental involvement in reducing youth violence and promoting their healthful social and emotional development.

State governments also have begun to address the need for additional training in the area of violence

Students are aware of features such as lethargy, a dark outlook on life, a loss of interest in activities, alienation, and low self-esteem as potential warning signs.

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prevention among professionals in education, administration and supervision, and pupil personnel services. For instance, the New York State Department of Education (2000) recently passed legislation (Project SAVE) that mandates that professionals receive 2 hours of training in violence prevention, which must include exposure to: (a) the study of the warning signs of violence and other troubling behavior among youth from a social and developmental framework; (b) statutes, regulations, and policies relating to a safe school environment; (c) effective classroom management techniques; (d) social and problem-solving skills techniques embedded within the regular curriculum; (e) intervention techniques for a school violence situation; and (f) an effective referral process for potentially violent youth (New York State Education Department).

These mandates are in direct response to the clear need for training in violence prevention. However, many local and national agencies are the first to admit that while this training is an important step, it clearly remains only a start. Therefore, counselor education programs must begin to actively address youth violence and violence prevention initiatives within their curricula. For example, child development courses should include discussions on normative child development in areas such as emotional and verbal expressiveness and the social and familial contributions to youth violence. Fieldwork and practicum classes should incorporate ongoing discussions of relevant research outlining effective violence prevention and mitigation initiatives. These discussions should be augmented by extensive clinical work that includes meaningful involvement in collaborative and comprehensive bullying and violence prevention programs within the school system. By infusing violence prevention and intervention training within the broader context of the curricula, counselor education programs will drastically improve the preparedness of their students and will work to insure that they are equipped to make an effective and truly well informed difference in this area as they begin to work as professional school counselors. ■

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