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Social Workers Addressing Student-Perpetrated Interpersonal Violence in the School Context : Awareness and Use of Evidence-Supported Programs

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SOCIAL WORKERS ADDRESSING STUDENT-PERPETRATED INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT: AWARENESS AND USE OF EVIDENCE-SUPPORTED PROGRAMS

by

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DISSERTATION APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

An abstract of the dissertation of Natalie Diane Cawood for the Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work and Social Research presented October 24, 2006.

Title: Social Workers Addressing Student-perpetrated Interpersonal Violence in the School Context: Awareness and Use of Evidence-supported Programs

Researchers have argued that there is a research-practice gap in the delivery of prevention and mental health services in the school setting. An extension of the work of Astor and his colleagues (Astor et al., 1997, 1998, 2000), this study addresses that gap by examining the extent to which evidence-supported school violence intervention programs (ESP) are known and used by school social workers, and the barriers that are related to the use of ESPs.

A cross-sectional, web-based survey was completed by 250 members of the School Social Work Association of America, the majority having an MSW as their highest degree. Participants worked in a variety of geographical regions and diverse communities.

Using blocks of variables, two hypotheses were tested through multiple regression analysis: (1) *reported level of violence and practitioner capabilities will predict practitioner awareness of ESPs;* and *(2) reported level of violence, practitioner capabilities, and awareness of evidence-supported programs will predict the use of ESPs.* As expected, the greater the practitioner's time addressing violence,

years of experience, confidence about successfully implementing violence intervention programs, and familiarity with the term "evidence-supported program" the greater the awareness of ESPs the social worker reported. Additionally, the higher the practitioner's level of preparedness to effectively respond to school violence and the more awareness of ESPs, the greater the reported use of ESPs.

Despite 98.8% of the respondents being aware of at least one ESP, only 72.4% of participants reported using an ESP during the last three years. In addition, more than 90% of the school social workers reported implementing numerous interventions that were not evidence-supported. Practitioners had difficulty acquiring ESPs due to unknown effectiveness of programs, programs being cost prohibitive, and not knowing where to locate ESPs. Barriers social workers identified were a nearly exclusive focus on academic subject areas and lack of time to implement interventions.

The findings have implications for university and school district training programs, can inform national and state policy regarding the dissemination and use of evidence-supported programs, and be used by organizations of school social workers to address the implementation of evidence-supported programs to prevent student-perpetrated school violence.

DEDICATION

For my children, Colm Evan and Mayah Etney, who entered this world with a rivalrous sibling they never saw…only its impact on a tired mother who spent too much time wearing her glasses and working at her computer. Also for Abby Everett, my child yet to arrive and a glorious inspiration "conceived" during the final stages of this process. May this dissertation be a symbol to each of you that you can accomplish anything you hope to during your lifetimes and that women can be both nurturing and strong, both academics and cookie-bakers. You will always have my unconditional love, encouragement, and support.

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Chapter One: Problem of School Violence and the Social Work Response

School social workers are often on the front lines as our nation's schools confront the problem of violence among their students. These professionals are both legally and ethically obligated to protect students from harm (Hermann & Finn, 2002). Social work roles and responsibilities are further solidified as school administrators frequently turn to social workers for help in identifying and providing interventions for students who may pose a danger to others (Riley & McDaniel, 2000).

School social workers meet the challenge of school violence by administering violence prevention activities, assessing students' risk of engaging in violent behavior, providing interventions when violence exists, and responding to the aftermath when violence occurs. A myriad of school violence intervention and prevention programs are administered every day. Although approximately 78% of school principals report having programs addressing violence in their schools (Kaufman et al., 1998), relatively few violence prevention or intervention programs have been rigorously evaluated (Flannery et al., 2003).

Evidence-based social work practice is in the early stages of development (Gilgun, 2005). The term "evidence-based" is often used interchangeably with "evidence-supported" or "research-based" and indicates that a program or intervention approach has been shown to be effective in reducing school violence through systematic evaluation. School social workers are key players in alleviating the problem of school violence, but it is unclear whether they possess the tools and

information that they need to assure that their interventions are evidence-based and effective. Olweus (2003) supports this thesis:

> Coping with bully/victim problems has become an official school priority in many countries, and many have suggested ways to handle and prevent such problems. But because most proposals have either failed to document positive results or have never been subjected to systematic research evaluation, it is difficult to know which programs or measures actually work and which do not. What counts is how well the program works for students, not how much the adults using the program like it. (p. 12)

The purpose of this research study is to examine the extent to which evidence-based school violence intervention programs are known and used by school social workers, and to determine the barriers that are related to the use of evidence-based programs.

Nature and Scope of the Problem

Definition of School Violence

From gang activity and robbery, to bullying and intimidation, to gun use and assault, concern with violence extends across grade levels on every campus. Although the term school "violence" has been generally reserved for severe forms of physical harm, this study extends the use of the term to include a wider range of aggressive behaviors. Strauss, Gelles, and Steinmetz (1980) define violence as:

> An act carried out with the intention, or perceived intention, of causing physical pain or injury to another person. The physical pain can range from a slight pain such as a slap, to murder. The basis for 'intent to hurt' may range from a concern for a child's safety (such as when a child is spanked for running into the street) to hostility so intense that the death of the other person is desired. (p. 20)

This definition of violence encompasses the description of "bully" presented by Olweus (2003):

> ...a student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. The person, who intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort on someone else is engaging in negative actions, a term similar to the definition of aggressive behavior in the social sciences. People carry out negative actions through physical contact, with words, or in more indirect ways, such as making mean faces or gestures, spreading rumors, or intentionally excluding someone from a group. (p. 13)

Astor (1995), the investigator of a national study of school social workers' efforts to curb violence, suggests that social workers should consider adopting the definition of violence presented by Strauss et al. (1980). Astor also supports including Olweus's (2003) definition of bullying, noting that most researchers use the bullying and school violence literatures interchangeably. Astor cautions that these definitions focus solely on interpersonal violence when the term "school violence" may also include acts such as vandalism, arson, or theft, which do not always require interpersonal violence.

The current study defines school violence as: intentionally inflicting, or attempting to inflict injury, discomfort, or physical pain on another person through the use of physical contact, threats, name calling, or intimidation in the school setting, including school sanctioned events, or while using school-district provided transportation services, including student to student violence, and student/school personnel violence. This definition is limited to interpersonal violence, not including other crimes occurring on school grounds. Community violence and violence in the home are related issues that disproportionately affect urban, poor, and minority

students, but are beyond the scope of the current study (Stein et al., 2003). Student and school characteristics such as ethnicity, socioeconomic level, and community setting are considered in the study, but the primary focus remains on violence within the school context.

Boys are traditionally considered to be the more aggressive gender and tend to exhibit more physical aggression (Garbarino, 1999). Research by Crick and colleagues indicate that girls typically show aggression differently than boys, using non-physical forms of aggression that have been labeled "relational aggression" (Crick, 1996; Crick, Casas, & Mosher, 1997; Ostov & Keating, 2004). Relational aggression is a form of aggression that includes behaviors such as facial expressions, body posturing, spreading rumors, undermining relationships, and excluding others from interactions (McEvoy, Estrem, Rodriguez, & Olson, 2003). Most often, girls use relational aggression to damage social relationships. In addition to research findings that indicate physical and relational aggression are gender-linked, relational aggression has been found to be relatively independent of physical aggression (Crick, 1996; McEvoy et al., 2003). The current study does not exclusively examine aggression exhibited by boys, but does exclude relational aggression, focusing on the more overt forms of interpersonal aggression found in the school setting.

Scope of the Problem

Discipline in the public schools: A problem or perception, which appeared in the January 1979 edition of *Phi Delta Kappan*, traced school violence back to the 1950s (Williams, 1979). In that decade, "there seemed to be a marked increase in both

serious and less serious antisocial behavior on the part of our youth" (Williams, p. 385). A 1956 study by the National Education Association revealed that violence was beginning to become a concern in the schools. Prior to this time, a 1949 survey of high school principals noted no problems with interpersonal violence or destruction of property. The survey documented lying and disrespect as the most serious problems, with running in the halls and impertinence as other major problems of concern (Warner, Weisst, & Krulak, 1999).

In January 1978, *Violent schools – safe schools: The safe school study report to Congress* (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare) reported:

> In recent years the press and other media have carried an increasing number of reports about crime and violence in the nation's schools. Vivid descriptions are presented of assaults, robberies, and sometimes murders in our schools. We hear of fighting gangs establishing and warring over 'turf,' non-students entering schools to prey upon pupils, classrooms and even whole schools being destroyed. One Los Angeles high school principal described the situation by saying that 'for teachers and students alike the issue is no longer learning, but survival.' Moreover, the problem is pictured not only as bad, but getting worse. (p. 3)

The Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency (1975) found that from 1970 to 1973 assaults on students increased by 85.3%. During 1974, the National Association of School Security Directors reported that there were: 12,000 armed robberies; 270,000 burglaries; 204,000 aggravated assaults; and 9,000 rapes in U.S. schools (Blyth, Thiel, Bush, & Simmons, 1980). During the 1980s and early 1990s, reports of violence in schools increased dramatically and violent crimes were at some of the highest levels in history for adolescents (Haugaard & Feerick, 1996; U. S. Department of Justice, 1991). The 1993 National School-Based Youth Risk Behavior

Survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 1993) found that 18% of youth had been in a fight at school. In the 30 days preceding the survey, 6% reported carrying a gun, knife, or club to school and 8.5% reported being threatened with a weapon. Among students surveyed in a 1999 CDC study: 14% had been in a physical fight on school property one or more times in the preceding 12 months, 8% had been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property during the preceding 12 months, 7% carried a weapon on school property during the preceding 30 days, and 5% had missed one or more days of school during the preceding 30 days because they felt too unsafe to go to school (CDC, 2001).

A survey conducted by the U. S. Department of Education (1997) reported that during 1996-1997, 4,170 incidents of rape or other types of sexual battery were reported in our nation's public schools. There were 10,950 incidents of physical attacks or fights in which weapons were used and 7,150 robberies in schools that year. In addition, there were 187,890 fights or physical attacks not involving weapons that occurred at schools in 1996-1997, along with 115,500 thefts and 98,490 incidents of vandalism. *Indicators of School Crime and Safety* (Kaufman, et al., 2001), a joint effort by the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Education Statistics, reported that students age 12 through 18 were victims of 2.5 million crimes of violence or theft in school in 1999. A study conducted by the Justice Policy Institute and the Annie E. Casey Foundation found 55 school shooting deaths in 1992-1993, 51 in 1993-1994, 20 in 1994-1995, 35 in 1995-1996, and 40 in 1997-1998 (Donohue, Schiraldi, & Zeidenberg, 1998). There were 57 violent deaths on school

grounds during the 1998-1999 school year and 32 school-associated violent deaths from July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2000 (Astor et al., 2005; DeVoe et al., 2004).

A change in school violence since the 1950s is the presence and use of weapons, especially guns (Futrell, 1996). The weapons being brought to school have become more potent, increasing the probability that student altercations will end in serious or even fatal injuries (Cirillo et al., 1998). The Children's Defense Fund studied this problem in 1991 and estimated that 135,000 children brought guns to school every day. Another study conducted in 1993 by the National Education Association (1993) estimated that 100,000 children carried guns to school.

A 1999 Gallup poll found that nearly half of the parents surveyed feared for their children's safety when they sent them off to school, whereas only 24% of parents reported this concern in 1977 (Gallup, 1999). While the total number of violent deaths has decreased steadily since the 1992–1993 school year, the total number of multiple victim events has increased (CDC, 2001), heightening parental concern. In May 1999, shortly after the shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, 74% of parents said that a school shooting was very likely or somewhat likely to happen in their community (Gallup, 1999). The Surgeon General's Report on Youth Violence (U. S. Public Health Service, 2001) stated:

> Today's school bullies are still more likely to be carrying guns than those of the early 1980s, and the proportion of students reporting that they felt too unsafe to go to school has not changed since the peak of the violence epidemic in the mid-1990s. These findings add to the concern that the violence epidemic is not yet over. (p. 26)

Data specific to elementary school violence in the United States are considered unreliable, as most national surveys on violence have excluded the elementary school populations (Astor, 1995). Scandinavian researchers have collected data on the prevalence of bullies and victims of bullies in elementary schools in their countries and have used these data to estimate that the bully-victim problem may affect 15% of elementary school children in the United States (Olweus, 1987). If this estimate is accurate, 4.8 million American children are affected: 2.7 million as victims, and 2.1 million as bullies (Astor, 1995).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2004) analyzed data from the national Youth Risk Behavior Survey and published a report summarizing the changes in violence-related behaviors among high school students in the United States during 1993-2003. The number of students who reported carrying a weapon to school dropped from 11.8% in 1991 to 6.1% in 2003, reports of physical fighting on school property declined from 16.2% in 1991 to 12.8% in 2003, while the number of students who reported being threatened or injured by a weapon on school property did not change between 1991 and 2003. In 2003, one in ten high school students reported being injured or threatened with a weapon on school grounds during the preceding 12 months (CDC, 2004).

Encouragingly, *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2004* reported that violent victimizations dropped from 48 incidents per 1,000 students in 1992 to 24 incidents per 1,000 in 2002. Even so, violence is still prevalent in our schools, as this amounted to students aged 12-18 being victims of approximately 659,000 violent

crimes at school during 2002 (DeVoe et al., 2004). Despite this decline in the prevalence of reported school violence, the results of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey indicated that students increasingly reported not going to school because of safety concerns. The proportion of reported absences due to safety concerns rose from 4.4% in 1991 to 5.4% in 2003 (CDC, 2004). Therefore, the problem still remains serious.

Effects of School Violence

Interpersonal violence within the school setting has troubling and long-lasting effects. Children disciplined by teachers for aggressive behavior in the second and third grades are more likely to be in trouble with juvenile authorities at age fifteen and sixteen; they are more likely to serve prison terms in their 20s; and they are more likely to have trouble with their families and jobs at all ages (Hirschi & Gottfredson, 2001). Research demonstrates that aggression in children is escalating and anywhere from 7 to 25% of preschool and early school-age children meet the diagnostic criteria for oppositional defiant disorder and/or conduct disorder, each marked by high rates of aggression (Webster-Stratton, 2000). The early onset of these problems in young children is predictive of substance abuse, depression, juvenile delinquency, antisocial behavior, and violence in adolescence and adulthood (Loeber, 1985). Individuals with a history of chronic childhood aggression are more likely than others to commit robbery, arson, rape, murder, driving under the influence offenses, and to abuse substances (Kazdin, 1995).

Interpersonal violence has the potential to adversely affect the victims' physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development, interfering with the important

developmental milestones of childhood and adolescence (Osofsky, 1999; Stein et al., 2003). Effects of violence on students can include physical injury, emotional withdrawal, depression, lowered self-esteem, feelings of fear, increased aggression, posttraumatic stress disorder, and a sense of danger in their schools (Blyth et al., 1980; Osofsky, 1999; Stein et al., 2003). Violence or the threat of violence also affects the school climate and reduces the ability of students to concentrate and learn. Students exposed to violence are more likely to have a higher number of school absences, poorer school performance, a lower grade point average, as well as decreased IQ and reading ability compared to those not exposed to violence (Stein et al., 2003). Since education is a prerequisite for success in our society, any disruption is damaging to the students' future (Cirillo et al., 1998). Although treating the effects of interpersonal violence on children is an important issue, this dissertation does not deal directly with interventions which are designed to ameliorate the effects of violence, but rather interventions designed to reduce and prevent interpersonal violence in the school setting.

Policy Response

As more attention has been focused on interpersonal violence in the school context, policy makers and gun control lobbyists have become more concerned and have employed strategies to reduce its prevalence (Alexander & Curtis, 1995). The Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 set a zero tolerance policy to keep America's schools gun-free. The goal of this measure was to remove firearms from all public schools in the United States by requiring school districts that received federal funds to adopt a

gun-free school policy and expel for one year students who carried a gun to school (Gray & Sinclair, 2000). In the 1996-1997 school year, there were over 5,000 students expelled for possession or use of a firearm. An additional 3,300 students were transferred to alternative schools for possession of a firearm, while 8,144 were placed in out-of-school suspensions lasting 5 or more days (Kaufman et al., 2001).

In recent years, the media and opinion surveys have focused the attention of the public and politicians on interpersonal school violence, and multiple grant funding sources have targeted school violence as a priority (Astor, 1995). The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1994 was a response to the many thefts and violent crimes occurring on or near school campuses each year. The Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program grants funds to all states each year for developing and implementing effective and research-based programs at the state and local levels that educate communities about violence and drug use and lead to fewer violent or drug-related incidents in or near schools. In 1998, this program spent $556 million on intervention strategies in America's schools (Blank & Vest, 1998).

In fall of 1998, schools in the United States received a document from the U. S. Secretary of Education and the U. S. Attorney General entitled, *Early warning signs, timely response: A guide to safe schools*. The guide outlined the warning signs of violence and recommended solutions to the unacceptable amount of violence and disruptive behavior in American schools (Sugai, Sprague, Horner, & Walker, 2000). A task force of national experts appointed by President Clinton assembled current knowledge related to school safety and prepared the report with the goal of providing

guidance for carrying out school-wide discipline and violence prevention programs. The theme of the guide was that while plans must be made to respond in the event of violence, the real solution lies in prevention of these incidents (Sugai et al., 2000). This report outlined risk factors for violence, such as social withdrawal, feelings of isolation and rejection, low interest in school and poor academic performance, uncontrolled anger, drug and alcohol use, and gang affiliation (Agron, 1999).

In 2001, under the leadership of President George W. Bush, a program called Project Safe Neighborhoods aimed at providing a comprehensive approach to combat gun crime by linking local, state, and federal law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and community leaders in order to implement a multi-faceted strategy to deter and to punish gun crime. A component of this program was Project Sentry. Project Sentry had the objective of prosecuting gun crimes committed at schools and was dedicated to protecting juveniles from gun crimes. Although this program was funded for four years, it was eliminated in the 2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Lacey, 2004).

William Modzeleski, the current Associate Deputy Undersecretary of the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools in the U.S. Department of Education, believes that three factors have contributed to the reduction in school violence. First, Modezeleski credits the requirements detailed in the No Child Left Behind Act for more schools employing programs that are proven to be effective. Second, he believes that schools have become more effective at identifying potentially explosive situations since the Columbine High School shootings in 1999. Third, Modzeleski believes that

schools are better now than in the past at linking with the community, particularly the school-assigned police (Scarpa, 2005).

The federal government has designated the reduction of interpersonal violence in the school setting as a national education priority (Astor, Behre, Wallace, & Fravil, 1998). But violence in our schools is not merely a problem for education. It is also a social problem. For nearly six decades, American communities have been confronted with the task of addressing the problem of violence among students and the effects of this violence on society. Government agencies, school personnel, parents, and community organizations all share concern for the safety of students and have implemented a variety of policies and programs in an attempt to eliminate school violence. School social workers are among these concerned individuals and are in a unique position to deal with violent students.

School Social Workers and School Violence

The practice of social work is distinct from other helping professions because of its location in the interface between people and their environment. The social worker's function is to assist people in strengthening their coping patterns and potential for growth, while striving to improve the quality of the surrounding environment. School social workers help children gain social competence, while influencing the school to be more responsive to the needs of the children (Germaine, 1999). School social workers must have a solid understanding of the environments that make up the child's ecological system, such as school, community, and family. When potential barriers to a child's success are identified, the school social worker has

the opportunity to collaborate with others to improve the quality of this environment (Allen-Meares, Washington, & Welsh, 2000). Germaine (1999) describes the school as a:

> ...real-life ecological unit, beyond the realm of metaphor or analogy. The child clearly is in intimate interaction with the school, second in intensity only to the interaction of the child and family. But the school social worker literally is located at the interface where school and child transact...Actually, the school social worker stands at the interface not only of child and school, but family and school, and community and school. (pp. 35-36)

Astor (1995) declared that school social workers should become leaders in the campaign to reduce interpersonal violence in the school setting. He stated that social workers should promote the deeper awareness of the strong relationship between early violence and later adolescent violence and to advocate for the collection of data on elementary school violence at the district, state, and national levels. Many school social workers focus on casework with a specific child in his or her home, school, and community, however school social workers have historically advocated for all children through school-wide prevention efforts (Huxtable, 1998). Early prevention efforts are necessary since violent behavior occurs along a developmental continuum of severity, and the precursors of more serious violence in adolescence are young children's aggressive behaviors such as hitting and kicking (Flannery et al., 2003). If successful, the reduction of aggression in elementary school children could lead to a reduction in adolescent and adult aggression rates (Astor, 1995).

Until recently, little was known about the current involvement of school social workers with school violence programs. In light of this absence of data regarding school social workers and violence, researchers at the University of Michigan in

collaboration with the National Association of Social Workers undertook the first national study of school social workers that focused explicitly on the topic of interpersonal violence in the schools (Astor, Behre, Wallace, & Fravil, 1998). The findings of this study demonstrated that social workers were involved in interventions such as home visits, crisis intervention, social skills training, and counseling services for aggressive children and their families.

School social workers should be instrumental in disseminating evidence-based information and advocating for the creation of school-based interpersonal violence prevention and intervention programs. The empirical practice movement in the field of social work began during the late 1960s and was a response to the demand for greater accountability in social work practice (Blythe, 1992). "Empirical practice" or "evidence-supported practice" refers to research-based, structured, and manualized practices that have been tested and demonstrated to be effective via controlled studies (Walker, 2004). In order to learn more about effective school violence prevention and intervention strategies, the history of school violence interventions, current practices, and reviews of the effectiveness literature in the area of school violence will be examined.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Interventions: Past and Present

Historically, the issue of school violence was addressed with disciplinary actions. Hyman, Bongiovanni, Friedman, and McDowell (1977) noted that Gallup polls during the 1970s indicated that discipline was considered the single most pressing problem in the schools. For many, at the time, discipline meant physically punishing children in response to their misbehavior (Hyman et al., 1977).

The U. S. Department of Justice (1976) published the results of a 1976 survey of school violence prevention programs. Most of the programs were classified into one of four major categories: security systems, counseling services, curricular/instructional programs, or organizational modifications. The security systems included students patrolling the hallways, alarm and other monitoring systems, and police on the school grounds. The counseling services were primarily directed toward known gang members, children charged with minor offenses, and students who were skipping school. The curricular/instructional programs were used to help students in trouble acquire basic reading and math skills, personal management skills, and conflict resolution skills. Some schools developed general courses on law and law enforcement to make sure that students understood the potential consequences of violent or disruptive behavior. Two examples of organizational modifications that were discussed in this study (U.S. Department of Justice, 1976) include: (a) dividing a school into five independent communities in order to reduce racial tension, and (b)

having students that were "in trouble" sign contracts to have their privileges returned if they fulfilled the terms of the contract over a period of time.

In the past, most strategies to curb violence in the school were designed to respond to violence after it had occurred rather than to prevent it (Futrell, 1996). In the late 1990s, school districts across the country began re-evaluating their school safety plans (Agron, 1999). Procedures for addressing dangerous and disruptive behavior have become the single most common training request of teachers and school administrators, and more and more school districts are implementing strategies to predict risk, monitor behavior, and intervene early, before a situation erupts (Agron, 1999; Sprague & Myers, 2001). During the past two decades, schools have typically addressed the issue of school violence by simultaneously implementing several different strategies including staff monitoring and security guards, suspensions and expulsions, dress codes, and counseling programs (Futrell, 1996). Still today, many schools are taking measures to reduce and prevent violence. Such measures include zero tolerance policies (Skiba & Peterson, 1999), school uniforms (King, 1998; Stanley, 1996), metal detectors (Marcus, Lord, & Wildavsky, 1999; Portner, 2000), school resource officers (Levin-Epstein, 2001), and various violence prevention programs (Kaufman et al., 2001).

Social work services in schools (Allen-Meares et al., 2000, p. 148) described several types of school programs aimed at preventing violence: (a) prevention curriculum, instruction or training for students (e.g., social skills training); (b) behavior modification for students; (c) activities involving individual attention for

students (e.g., tutoring, mentoring); (d) recreational, enrichment, or leisure activities for students; (e) student involvement in resolving conduct problems (e.g., peer mediation, pupil court); (f) training in classroom management for teachers; (g) review, revision, or monitoring of school-wide discipline practices and procedures; (h) community or parent involvement in school violence prevention efforts; and (i) reorganization of school, grades, or schedules for example, school within a school, "teams" of pupils.

While most traditional anti-violence solutions are related to discipline and punishment, these do not address the origin of the students' behavior. Traditional punishments are often ineffective—missed recesses and school suspensions are not solving the problem (Alexander & Curtis, 1995). The crime-focused perspective of the past is a narrow approach to understanding violent student behavior because it views aggressive behavior simply as isolated acts of "bad" students (Dupper, 1995). A study published in 1999 indicated the need for age and developmentally appropriate, culturally sensitive violence prevention programs (Hill & Drolet, 1999). Often, the cultural and ethnic background of students to whom a curriculum is administered is different from that of the students for whom it was originally developed, and programs do not necessarily address issues of racism (Ringwalt, Vincus, Ennett, Johnson, & Rohrbach, 2004). The approach that the same violence prevention programs can be used for boys and girls of all cultures and age levels is not effective.

Effectiveness Studies

Ideally, best practices are based on knowledge derived from rigorous evaluations of interventions. However, because the field of research in youth and school violence is young, few longitudinal and randomized-control studies have been conducted. While studies have evaluated the outcome of interventions, they have not typically evaluated the effectiveness of individual implementation practices. The majority of best practices are based on hands-on, empirical observations by intervention practitioners and evaluators (Thornton, Craft, Dahlberg, Lynch, & Baer, 2000). Types of school violence interventions represented in the effectiveness literature include anger control training, martial arts, discipline referrals, social skills training, zero tolerance policies (e.g. "one strike and you're out"), school-wide programs, peer mediation programs, small groups, classroom-based curriculums, and school uniforms. In addition to a review, this dissertation provides a matrix that summarizes these programs, displaying information about the type of program, theory base of program, method of measurement, data sources, sample size, research design, and outcomes (see Appendix A).

Two of these interventions can be categorized as techniques for merely tracking student behavior, while the remaining programs can be divided into four additional categories: universal interventions, selective interventions, indicated interventions, and combined interventions. The universal, selective, and indicated categories are defined by the level of risk evidenced in the target population (Institute of Medicine, 1994; Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994). The combined category includes programs that are

composed of more than one level of intervention. *Universal interventions* are considered to be beneficial for everyone in the student population, and they are implemented without assessing the risk of individual students. *Selective interventions* target students who have been identified as being at "heightened risk" of developing a problem. *Indicated interventions* target students that are identified as "high-risk" based upon an individual assessment of the student's behavioral functioning. Indicated interventions are directed only toward students with identified problems (Hogue, Liddle, Becker, & Johnson-Leckrone, 2002; Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994). The programs categorized as *combined interventions* include both universal and indicated techniques.

Tracking behavior. School records and discipline referrals were identified as effective ways to assess, monitor, and predict school violence, versus being used as interventions themselves. Tobin and Sugai (1999) conducted a longitudinal research study involving an archival review of a randomly selected sample of 526 students over a six-year period. This research supported the use of records of discipline referrals as a screening device to identify sixth grade students who were at risk for violent behavior, chronic discipline problems, or school failure. Results suggest that a discipline referral in sixth grade, for either violent or nonviolent behavior, should prompt educators and parents to intervene. Tobin and Sugai (1999) do not support the use of traditional punishments, but call for the use of a positive behavior support plan that is likely to change the predicted trajectory of continued anti-social behaviors.

Sugai, Sprague, Horner, and Walker (2000) described how office discipline referrals might be used as an information source to provide an indicator of the extent of school-wide behavior problems. The referrals could be used to improve the precision with which schools manage, monitor, and modify their universal interventions for all students, as well as their targeted interventions for students who exhibit the most severe problem behaviors. Their data for elementary schools suggested that when the proportion of students receiving one or more referrals per year exceeds 20%, the school's universal intervention(s) need to be reformed. Reform of selected behavior support systems would be warranted if the school had more than 10 children with 10 or more referrals, and reform of the targeted intervention systems would be called for if the 5% of students with the most referrals accounted for greater than 60% of all referrals (Sugai et al., 2000).

Universal interventions. School uniforms are one of several universal strategies being used in the public schools to restore order in the classroom and safety in the school. There is much discussion about this intervention among principals, PTA members, and the media, but there is very little research to support the effectiveness of this approach in reducing or preventing school violence. Stanley (1996) discussed the effectiveness of school uniform policies in restoring order in the classroom and safety in the school. Her research was a longitudinal study examining the implementation of mandatory school uniforms in the Long Beach Unified School District. The purpose of the study was to collect empirical data on the impact of school uniforms. Since 1994, when mandatory school uniform policies were adopted in this school district,

district officials have found that violence and discipline problems dramatically decreased. In the first year following implementation overall school crime decreased by 36%; sex offenses by 74%; physical fights between students by 51%; weapons offenses by 50%; assault and battery offenses by 34%; school suspensions by 32%; and vandalism by 18% (King, 1998). Although early research findings indicate that Long Beach schools are "remarkably safer," it is not clear that these results are entirely attributable to the uniform policy (Stanley, 1996). Dick Van Der Laan of the Long Beach Unified School District explained, "We can't attribute the improvement exclusively to school uniforms, but we think it's more than coincidental" (Stanley, 1996, p. 428). The U. S. Department of Education's website (www.ed.gov) currently lists the Long Beach Unified School District among "model school uniform policies."

Zero tolerance policies, where students are suspended or expelled following one infraction of a specific behavior (e.g. bringing a weapon to school) are another school violence intervention strategy that is used commonly across the United States, but that lacks empirical support. In an article entitled, *The dark side of zero tolerance: Can punishment lead to safe schools?* Skiba and Peterson (1999) reported that we really do not know whether zero tolerance policies have worked. The authors raise an important point about accountability. Unlike the domain of academic achievement, in which constant calls for accountability have led to state and national standards and tests, there has been no pressure to test the efficacy of interventions that target school behavior. Perhaps as a result, there are almost no studies that evaluate the effectiveness of zero tolerance strategies. The most comprehensive and controlled

study of zero tolerance policies has been conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The NCES found that schools that use zero tolerance policies are still *less safe* than those without such policies (Skiba & Peterson, 1999).

Another popular way to address school violence is through the use of school-based peer mediation programs. A study conducted by D. Johnson and R. Johnson (1995) addressed the training of elementary school students to manage conflict. A randomized, pretest/posttest design was used in which the experimental group was tested at three points: pretraining, post training, and the end of the school year. The control group, which did not receive any training, was administered the post measures immediately after the training of the experimental group had ended. The results indicated that students successfully learned the negotiation and mediation procedures, were able to apply the procedures in actual conflict situations, and maintained this knowledge throughout the academic school year. Although the results of interviews with teachers and administrators indicated that these adults believed the program reduced the incidence of aggressive student responses to conflict and created a more positive classroom climate, there was no empirical evidence presented to support this. This effectiveness study addressed how well the students learned, retained, and applied the information taught. It did not examine the impact the program had in reducing school violence.

Choi and Heckenlaible-Gotto (1998) examined the effectiveness of a classroom-based social skills training that was co-facilitated by the classroom teacher and a school psychologist. Participants included students from two first-grade classrooms

from two small Midwestern school districts ($n = 25$). The students in the treatment group received four hours of direct intervention. The training sessions, lasting approximately 30 minutes, were held twice per week for 4 weeks. Each week was devoted to learning one prosocial skill, including accepting consequences, problem-solving, avoiding trouble, and using self-control.

The results of a *t-test* showed that the treatment group scores increased significantly between the pretest and posttest measures for the Work With peer rating scale, whereas the treatment group did not exhibit significant increases or decreases between pretest and posttest measures on the Play With peer rating scale. No significant increases or decreases were found for the control group on either the Work With peer rating scale or the Play With peer rating scale. The results from the Work With peer rating scale indicated that the students in the treatment group made statistically significant gains in peer acceptance during work-related activities (Choi & Heckenlaible-Gotto, 1998).

Grossman et al., (1997) used a randomized controlled trial to determine if *Second step: A violence prevention curriculum* (Committee for Children, 1992) led to a reduction in aggressive behavior and an increase in prosocial behavior among elementary school students. The participants consisted of six matched pairs of schools with 790 second-grade and third-grade students. The students were 53% male and 79% Caucasian. The curriculum had 30 lessons, each lasting approximately 35 minutes, and was taught in the classroom once per week. The curriculum consisted of three units geared toward teaching social skills related to empathy, impulse control,

and anger management. Each lesson included a photograph accompanied by a social vignette that created the foundation for discussion, role plays, and other activities. After participation in the curriculum, aggressive and prosocial behavioral changes were measured at two weeks and six months by parent and teacher reports and by observation of a random subsample of students (n = 588) in the classroom, playground, and cafeteria settings.

After adjusting for the demographics of participants, the researchers found that there was no significant difference in the change scores between the intervention and control schools for any of the parent-reported or teacher-reported behavior scales. However, at two weeks, the behavioral observations did reveal an overall decrease in physical aggression and an increase in prosocial/neutral behavior in the intervention group compared with the control group. This study indicated that the majority of these effects persisted six months later (Grossman et al., 1997).

An additional study evaluated *PeaceBuilders* (Embry, Flannery, Vazsonyi, Powell, & Atha, 1996), a school-wide violence prevention program, in order to examine the effects of the program on elementary school student behavior. The program attempts to reduce aggressive student behavior and increase social competence by changing the climate of an entire school. The intervention is woven into the school's everyday routine and consists of five rules that every adult and student in the school must learn: (a) praise people, (b) avoid put-downs, (c) seek wise people as advisors and friends, (d) notice and correct hurts that we cause, and (e) right wrongs. To help students learn these principles, PeaceBuilders includes: (a) daily rituals related to its language and

principles that are meant to foster a sense of belonging; (b) cues and symbols that can be applied to diverse community settings; (c) specific prompts to "transfer" across people, behaviors, and time; and (d) new materials or strategies introduced for times and circumstances when positive behavior might otherwise decay (Flannery et al., 2003). PeaceBuilders attempts to provide models and prosocial cues that are consistently reinforced. Consistent with social cognitive theory, the basic premise of the program is that if prosocial behavior is consistently rewarded over time, then the students' social competence will increase and the intensity and frequency of aggressive behaviors will decrease.

The participants in the study included over 4,000 students in grades K-5. Eight matched schools were randomly assigned to either immediate post-baseline intervention (Year One) or to a delayed intervention one year later (Year Two). Hierarchical linear modeling was utilized in the data analysis process. The results indicated that students in grades K-2 in the immediate-intervention schools were rated significantly higher by teachers on social competence than control students, while students in grades 3 to 5 exhibited moderate effects. Third- to fifth-grade students in the immediate-intervention schools were also rated by teachers as significantly less aggressive than students in non-intervention schools (Flannery et al., 2003). These effects were maintained for all students in grades K through 5 in immediate-intervention schools at the beginning of Year Two of the study.

The *PATHS* (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) Curriculum (Kusche & Greenberg, 1994) is a comprehensive program for promoting emotional and social

competencies and reducing aggression and behavior problems in elementary school children, while simultaneously enhancing the educational process in the classroom. This curriculum primarily focuses on the school and classroom settings, but information and activities are also included for use with parents. The *PATHS* Curriculum provides teachers with systematic, developmentally-based lessons for teaching their students emotional literacy, self-control, social competence, positive peer relations, and interpersonal problem-solving skills. A key objective of promoting these developmental skills is to prevent or reduce behavioral and emotional problems. Three controlled studies with randomized control versus experimental groups (using one year of *PATHS* implementation with pretest, post test, and follow-up data) have been conducted with typical students ($n = 236$), students with special needs ($n = 126$), and students who were classified as deaf and hearing impaired ($n = 57$).

The *PATHS* Curriculum has been shown to improve protective factors and reduce behavioral risk factors. Evaluations have demonstrated significant improvements for program youth (regular education, special needs, and deaf) compared to control youth in the following areas improved self-control; improved understanding and recognition of emotions; increased ability to tolerate frustration; use of more effective conflict-resolution strategies; improved thinking and planning skills; decreased anxiety/depressive symptoms (teacher report of students with special needs); decreased conduct problems (teacher report of students with special needs); decreased symptoms of sadness and depression (child report – special needs); and decreased

report of conduct problems, including aggression (Greenberg, Kusche, & Milhalic, 1998).

FAST Track – Family and Schools Together (McDonald, 1992) is a multifaceted program that uses five intervention components: (a) parent training, (b) home visiting/ case management, (c) social skills training, (d) academic tutoring, and (e) teacher-based classroom intervention. Since the early 1990s there has been a large-scale, multi-site research evaluation project underway that is examining whether *FAST Track* can reduce children's disruptive behavior (including aggression) in the home as well as at school. The program is being evaluated using a randomized design with a nonintervention control group (McDonald et al., 1997).

The *FAST Track* program aims to enhance children's social-cognitive skills related to affect regulation and interpersonal problem solving. Although the program is not simply "social cognitive," many of its interventions derive from Dodge's social-cognitive model of aggression. For example, the children's social skills training component is centered on improving social-cognitive skills, such as friendship and play skills, anger and self-control strategies, and interpersonal problem solving. The final evaluation of the *FAST Track* program will not be complete until the children participating in the study grow into adolescence and young adulthood. The preliminary results are mixed, with clear indications that the intervention is changing social-cognitive information processing and reducing some aggressive behaviors, but the effect sizes are not large (Huesmann & Reynolds, 2001).

Another intervention that builds upon the framework of social cognition and information-processing skills is *Making Choices*, (Fraser, Nash, Galinsky, & Darwin, 2000) a teacher-directed, skills-training program for students in grades 3 through 6. The program is designed to assist students in making friends and avoiding peer rejection. The lessons teach skills to help students accurately process social information, set social goals and problem-solve with peers. Nash, Fraser, Galinsky, and Kupper (2003) conducted a pilot study of *Making Choices*, examining three units of the program: encoding social cues, interpreting cues, and setting social goals. The study used convenience sampling and participants included 70 sixth-grade students from five regular education classrooms. The students participated in approximately 28 program sessions for this study, with the teachers presenting the 20 to 25 minute units two times per week.

The students completed pre and post test measures of skills addressed in each of the three units and paired sample t tests were used to assess the proximal effects. In addition, the homeroom teachers completed pre and post test measures of students' behavior. Based on the information obtained from the teachers' ratings of student behavior, the participants were categorized into four subgroups: nonaggressive-accepted by peers; nonaggressive-rejected by peers; aggressive-rejected by peers; and aggressive-accepted by peers. The results of this pilot study of *Making Choices* are promising, evidenced by an increase in the ability of students in the non-aggressive-accepted and aggressive-accepted subgroups to encode social cues and to distinguish prosocial goals. It should be noted, however, that the aggressive-rejected and non-

aggressive rejected students failed to demonstrate significant gains at post test (Nash et al., 2003).

Selective interventions. A common approach to addressing student behavior problems and issues of school violence is through the use of small groups. Review of the effectiveness literature related to school violence reveals that this frequently-used approach may be popular, but not necessarily effective. A research study by Cirillo et al., (1998) examined the effectiveness of a 10-week social cognitive intervention with high school students. During the 10-week program, participants engaged in group and individual problem solving, cognitive restructuring, and social skills training. The intervention focused on enhancing: (a) coping and problem-solving skills; (b) relationships with peers, parents and other adults; (c) conflict resolution and communication skills, and methods for resisting peer pressure related to drug use and violence; (d) consequential thinking and decision-making abilities; (e) prosocial behaviors, including cooperation with others, self-responsibility, respecting others, and public speaking efficacy; and, (f) awareness of feelings of others (Cirillo et al., 1998).

The researchers conducted a two-way ANOVA that revealed no significant differences between the experimental and control groups in mean scores on violence avoidance beliefs. Differences between pre test, post test, and follow-up mean scores revealed that both groups experienced a slight decrease in violence avoidance beliefs from pretest to posttest and a slight increase from posttest to follow-up (Cirillo et al., 1998). The efficacy of a 10-week social-cognitive group intervention for the

enhancement of violence avoidance beliefs in at-risk high school students was not substantiated by this study.

Indicated interventions. A similar study that examined the effectiveness of a cognitive-behavioral approach to reduce school violence concluded with mixed results. A 12-session anger control training program was implemented as the independent variable in this study and it included five basic components: self-instruction, self-assessment, self-evaluation, arousal management, and adaptive skills development (Whitfield, 1999). The participants were students (n = 16) attending an adolescent day treatment program in a public school system. Whitfield's (1999) analyses revealed that, in general, the students receiving anger control training presented fewer behavioral problems on a weekly basis when compared with the students not receiving the anger control training, but his results indicated that only four of the eight students presented favorable response patterns following the intervention. Of the remaining four students in the experimental group, two displayed general patterns of deterioration and the other two participants' data reflected unchanged patterns of behavior.

Another study examined the effectiveness of an intervention including teachers' classroom management techniques, social skills, and peer tutoring in reading for at-risk students and those identified as having emotional and behavioral disorders (Kamps, Kravits, Stolze, & Swaggart, 1999). The target group included 28 students from three elementary schools, 11 of whom were identified as having emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). The control group included 24 students from five

elementary schools, with 6 students identified as having EBD. Findings indicated that the program supported improved student performance across key behaviors for members of the target group, as compared to the control group. Direct observation measures showed significant differences between the two groups in on-task, positive recess interaction and play, aggression, and out-of-seat behaviors. Teacher reports indicated significant differences for appropriately requesting attention, following directions, and reduced disruptive behaviors (Kamps et al., 1999).

An approach to school violence prevention that stood out in the literature on effectiveness was the use of traditional martial arts to prevent violence and delinquency in middle school (Zivin et al., 2001). In this study, 60 juvenile boys at high risk for violence and delinquency showed decreased violence and positive changes in psychological risk factors after being required to take a school-linked course in traditional martial arts. The researchers identified three factors that deserve mention as potent and unique components of the intervention: (a) self-respect and respect for others, regardless of status or skill, was embodied in the discussed philosophy, exemplified by the teacher, and required of the students; (b) the moving meditation gave three-times-weekly practice in calming; and (c) the instructor showed genuine interest and concern for each student (Zivin et al., 2001). Fourteen variables were examined and the study found a clear pattern of improvement. The boys who took the course in the first semester improved over baseline on 12 variables. The boys who were placed on a waiting list improved over baseline on only five variables, and to a comparatively lower degree.

Combined interventions. The *Incredible Years Series* (Webster-Stratton, 1991a, 1991b, 1995) is a set of three comprehensive, multi-faceted, and developmentally-based curricula for parents, teachers, and children. The program is designed to promote emotional and social competence and to prevent, reduce, and treat emotional and behavioral problems, including aggression, in young children. This series addresses multiple risk factors across settings known to be related to the development of conduct disorder in children. In all three training programs, trained facilitators use videotape scenes to encourage group discussion, problem solving, and sharing of ideas. The training for parents targets those who have high-risk children or children with behavior problems and emphasizes parenting approaches designed to promote children's academic skills. The training for teachers is universal, emphasizing effective classroom management skills, including how to teach empathy, social skills, and problem solving in the classroom. The training for children is designed for use as a pull-out program, targeting only the most aggressive or high-risk children, emphasizing concepts such as empathy, friendship skills, and anger management.

In a research evaluation project for this series, the research design consisted of randomized control group evaluations. The outcomes for this program indicated significant: (a) increases in children's positive affect and cooperation with teachers, positive interactions with peers, school readiness, and engagement with school activities; (b) reductions in peer aggression in the classroom; (c) increases in children's appropriate cognitive problem-solving strategies and more prosocial

conflict management strategies with peers; and, (d) reductions in conduct problems at home and school (Webster-Stratton et al., 2001).

Finally, the *Bullying Prevention Program* (Olweus, 1993; Olweus, Limber, & Mihalic, 1999) is an intervention for the reduction and prevention of bullying problems. The main arena for the program is the school, and the school staff has the primary responsibility for the introduction and implementation of the program. The program includes school-wide components, classroom components, and an individual component. School-wide components include the administration of a questionnaire to assess the type and prevalence of bullying at the school, a conference day to discuss the issue of bullying and plan interventions, the formation of a committee to coordinate all aspects of the program, and increased supervision of students for bullying. Classroom components include the establishment and enforcement of class rules against bullying, and holding regular class meetings with students. Individual components include interventions with children identified as bullies and victims, and discussions with parents of involved students.

The first systematic evaluation of the *Bullying Prevention Program* within the United States involved 6,388 elementary and middle school children from non-metropolitan communities in South Carolina. The researchers used an "age-cohort" design with time lagged contrasts between adjacent, but age-equivalent cohorts. Results from this quasi-experimental study revealed: (a) a substantial reduction in students' reports of bullying and victimization; (b) a significant reduction in students' reports of general antisocial behavior such as vandalism, fighting, theft, and truancy;

and (c) significant improvements in the "social climate" of the class, as reflected in students' reports of improved order and discipline, more positive social relationships, and a more positive attitude toward school work and school (Olweus, Limber, & Mihalic, 1999).

Summary of Outcomes

This review of school violence intervention programs included strategies that simply monitor student discipline problems by tracking school records and discipline referrals. While most schools have this process in place, this research does not indicate *how* the social worker or school personnel should intervene when a problem does arise. Research outcomes related to the use of school uniforms and zero tolerance policies are unclear, at best, and do not provide convincing evidence that a school social worker should advocate for or support the use of such programs.

The study of the peer mediation program revealed no empirical evidence to support its effectiveness, while the studies examining small group interventions likewise did not indicate substantial evidence to support a positive change in student behavior. These two types of interventions are commonplace in our schools, yet research evidence does not support their use. Although the martial arts class exhibited more promising results, it is a rather unique intervention that may be difficult to "package" or replicate on a large scale. Finally, the whole-classroom and combined interventions all indicated some significant gains in students' ability to get along with peers. The promising evidence from these studies may be further supported by the

fact that all of the techniques identified as model school violence intervention programs contained some type of a classroom-based or universal component.

Chapter Three: Major Research Questions

This chapter considers the dissemination and use of evidence-supported school violence programs. Greenberg (2004) believes that there will be broad dissemination of an increasing number of evidence-supported school-based prevention and intervention programs during the next decade. Dissemination refers to the directed and planned diffusion of ideas and information (Greenberg, 2004). In the past few years federal agencies, such as the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, have attempted to promote the dissemination of violence prevention and intervention programs by sponsoring initiatives designed to disseminate interventions with established efficacy (Schoenwald & Hoagwood, 2001). Individual researchers have also made efforts toward dissemination through publication of literature reviews of school violence programs.

Two of these research summaries have established a peer-reviewed standard for evidence-supported practice. Herrenkohl and colleagues considered a wide range of school and community interventions intended to reduce or prevent antisocial behaviors in children (Herrenkohl, Hawkins, Chung, Hill, & Battin-Pearson, 2001). The review identified 20 different approaches to interventions in schools that demonstrate positive effects, including classroom- and school-wide behavior management programs, social competence promotion curricula, violence prevention and conflict resolution curricula, bullying prevention efforts, and multi-component classroom-based programs that improve skills of teachers and parents in managing, socializing, and educating students as well as improve the cognitive, social, and

emotional competencies of students. Programs were included in the review if they used a comparison group or randomized control group to test the effects of the intervention and examined, as an outcome, some measure of antisocial or aggressive behavior (Herrenkohl et al., 2001).

Astor and colleagues also reviewed the school violence program research literature and identified the following six core implementation characteristics of successful school-wide intervention programs: (a) They raise the awareness and responsibility of students, teachers, and parents regarding the types of violence in their schools and create clear guidelines and rules for the entire school; (b) they generally target the various social systems in the school and clarify, to the entire school community, what procedures should be followed before, during, and after violent events; (c) they focus on involving the school staff, students, and parents involved in the program; (d) the interventions often fit easily into the normal flow and mission of the school setting; (e) they utilize faculty, staff, and parents in the school setting in order to plan, implement, and sustain the program; and (f) they increase monitoring and supervision in non-classroom areas (Astor, Pitner, Benbenishty, & Meyer, 2002; Astor, Meyer, Benbenishty, Marachi, & Rosemond, 2005). Astor et al. (2002) compiled a list of empirically-based school violence prevention and intervention programs, that were evaluated or widely used, and also highlighted several programs that show promise or have demonstrated their effectiveness in at least one study.

Major Concepts

The aforementioned reviews provide a foundation for assessing current social work practice in the area of school violence and the barriers to implementing evidence-supported programs. Key concepts in the current study include practitioner capabilities, reported level of violence, awareness of evidence-supported intervention programs, and use of evidence-supported intervention programs. These major factors are presented in the table of measures found in Appendix B. Additionally, intervention programs are defined and distinction made between evidence-supported programs and non-evidence supported programs, or programs that lack support.

The concept *practitioner capabilities* is defined as the skills, experience, and training of the school social worker, such as level of education, years of experience, and ability to address school violence. *Reported level of violence* refers to the social worker's assessment of violence as a problem on school grounds, such as types of violence observed and time spent addressing violence.

An *intervention program* is defined as an intervention aimed at reducing or eliminating violence in the school setting. This study did not examine interventions designed to address the mental health effects of violence (Stein et al., 2003). Intervention programs were divided into two categories: evidence-supported and non-evidence supported. The term *evidence-supported* indicates that a program or intervention approach has been shown to be effective in reducing school violence through systematic evaluation. A *non-evidence supported program* refers to a program that is implemented, but has not been proven by research to be effective.

Evidence-supported programs were identified through the process of examining the literature review in this dissertation and the two previously mentioned reviews of empirically supported programs (Astor et al., 2002, 2005; Herrenkohl et al., 2001). For the purpose of this study, any "packaged" program that is considered effective by at least one of the three literature reviews (current literature review, Astor et al., 2002, and Herrenkohl et al., 2001) was classified as an evidence-supported program. In addition, each of these programs has been listed as a "promising," "model," or "effective" program by at least one of the following organizations: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the U. S. Department of Education. Appendix C provides a complete listing of these 17 evidence-supported programs, including a brief description of each curriculum.

ESP awareness refers to a social worker's awareness of one or more evidence-supported programs, while *utilization* refers to the social worker's use of one or more evidence-supported programs. To date, no studies about social workers' awareness or use of evidence-based school violence intervention or prevention programs have been located. The gap between social work research and practice has long been a problem (Herie & Martin, 2002).

The research group ORC Macro recently completed a study examining evidence-based practices in community-based mental health service settings (Sheehan, 2005; Walrath, Sheehan, Holden, Hernandez, & Blau, 2006). The purpose of the ORC Macro study was to gain a better understanding of what clinicians know about

evidence-based practices, the type of training that they received in evidence-based practices, and the extent to which evidence-based treatments are practiced with children (Sheehan, 2005).

Ringeisen, Henderson, and Hoagwood (2003) argue that there is a gap between mental health research and the delivery of mental health services in the school setting. DuPaul (2003) supports this claim: "The gap between research on mental health interventions and strategies that are actually used in schools continues to plague education, school psychology, and related fields" (p. 180). The rationale for research utilization is encapsulated by the adage, "research, if it is to be important, must be used" (Rehr, Morrison, & Greenberg, 1992, p. 361).

Questions and Hypotheses

It is from this mandate that this dissertation proceeds. The study examined four major research questions and two formal hypotheses. Each of the research hypotheses is represented in a diagram found in Figure 3.1. The four major research questions for this study are as follows:

1. ***To what extent do school social workers know about evidence-supported school violence intervention programs?;***

2. ***To what extent are school social workers implementing evidence-supported school violence intervention programs?;***

3. ***Aside from evidence-supported programs, what services and programs are being implemented?;*** and

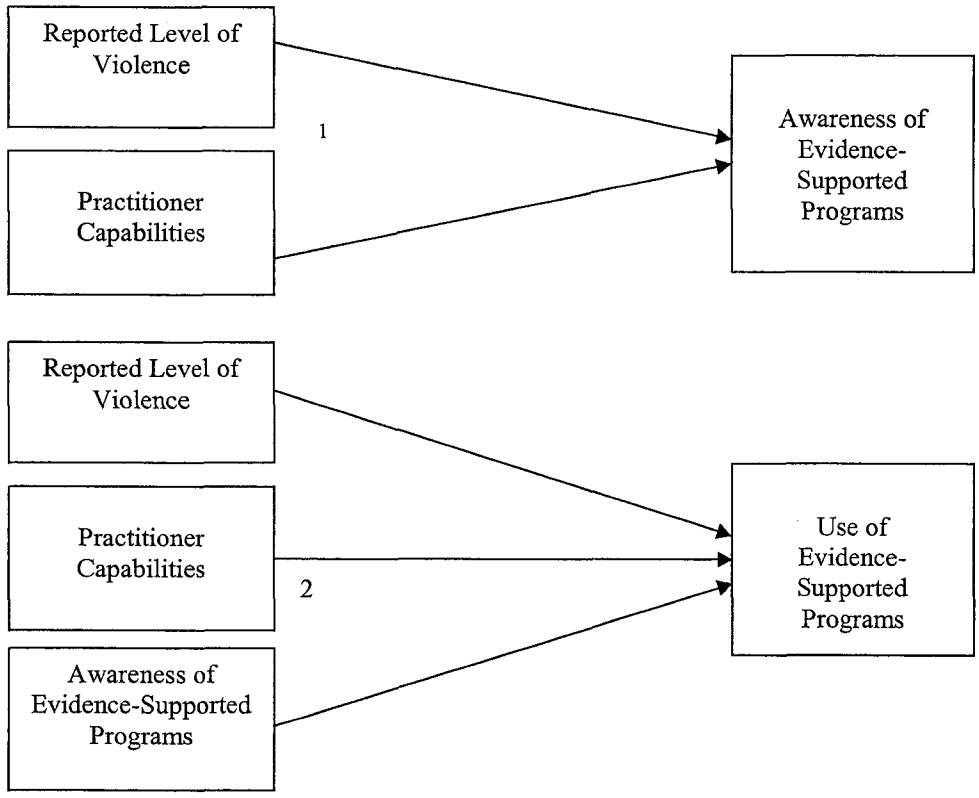
4. ***What are the factors at the district, school, and practitioner level that inhibit the implementation of evidence-supported programs?***

The following two hypotheses were tested:

1. ***Reported level of violence and practitioner capabilities will predict practitioner awareness of evidence- supported programs;*** and

2. ***Reported level of violence, practitioner capabilities, and awareness of evidence-supported programs will predict the use of evidence-supported programs.***

Figure 3.1. A model for the awareness and utilization of evidence-supported school violence intervention programs.



Hypothesis 1 – Reported level of violence and practitioner capabilities will predict practitioner awareness of evidence-supported programs (ESP).
Hypothesis 2 – Reported level of violence, practitioner capabilities, and awareness of ESP will predict the use of ESP.

Question one: Awareness of ESP. To date, there has been no published study examining social workers' awareness of evidence-supported school violence intervention programs. The first research question is: ***To what extent do school social workers know about evidence-supported school violence intervention programs?*** This study not only investigates which evidence-supported programs (ESP) school social workers had awareness of, but whether or not the social workers even knew what evidence-supported programs are.

Question two: Utilization of ESP. Research has not examined social workers' utilization of evidence-supported school violence intervention programs. The second major research question for this study addresses this issue: ***To what extent are school social workers implementing evidence-supported school violence intervention programs?*** Findings will identify which evidence-supported programs school social workers are using to address violence among students, establishing the school violence programs or interventions that are most frequently used by school social workers, whether the interventions were evidence-based, and how effective the social worker believed the interventions were.

Fidelity, referring to how closely the social worker followed the original curriculum/protocol when implementing the intervention will be examined. Fidelity has to do with the substance of a program session. It examines the question of whether or not the content of the program curriculum is being administered as it was originally intended. Fidelity is related to both the materials of the curriculum, as well as the methods used to implement the curriculum (Bellg et al., 2004). Prior studies

with teachers implementing classroom-based substance abuse curricula have found that as few as 15% report that they follow curriculum guides very closely, often omitting key points or entire lessons and failing to follow prescribed instructional strategies (Ringwalt et al., 2004).

Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they utilize the full curriculum/protocol of the interventions they implement. Respondents who were not implementing the full curriculum/protocol were asked to explain the lack of fidelity. Greenberg (2004) believes that many American schools are not using empirically-validated programs or are using them with low levels of fidelity. As the pressure to adopt evidence-based practices intensifies, fidelity becomes extremely important (U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2002). This examination of fidelity helped reveal the extent to which school social workers were implementing evidence-supported programs to address school violence as they were intended.

Question three: Non-evidence supported services and programs. Astor's research (1997) stands as the only study examining how school social workers are addressing school violence. Astor and his colleagues investigated the antiviolence programs and services offered in the school setting. The third research question: ***Aside from evidence-supported programs, what services and programs are being implemented?*** builds upon Astor's work, investigating non-evidence supported programs and services implemented by social workers to address school violence.

Question four: Barriers. Finally, barriers to implementation of evidence-supported school violence interventions are explored through the fourth major research question:

What are the factors at the district, school, and practitioner level that inhibit the implementation of evidence-supported programs? In order to answer this question, I applied Ennett's (Ennett et al., 2003) idea of barriers to this investigation. Ennett et al. (2003) surveyed school-based practitioners about the barriers to implementing substance use prevention programs. Similarly, the current study includes the impediments to successful use of evidence-based school violence prevention programs.

Hypothesis one: Predicting awareness of ESP. The rationale behind the first hypothesis: ***Reported level of violence and practitioner capabilities will predict practitioner awareness of evidence-supported programs*** is that a social worker who works at a school with a low reported level of violence will not have the need to seek out evidence-supported school violence programs. Astor and his colleagues found a link between social workers' knowledge of school violence interventions and reported level of violence at their schools (Astor et al., 1997). It was expected that a school social worker who does not confront a high level of violence will not have the occasion to become aware of effective school violence intervention programs, whereas the social worker who works at a school with a high level of reported violence will seek out effective programs in an attempt to address the high levels of school violence.

It was also expected that social work practitioners with greater abilities will be more likely to know about evidence-supported programs. Modeled after the Ennett (2003) project, practitioner capabilities in this study were assessed by measuring the number of years the practitioner has worked as a school social worker, the

practitioner's highest degree, the practitioner's self-estimate of preparedness to respond effectively to school violence, and the practitioner's confidence that s/he is doing a good job teaching school violence intervention lessons. The ORC Macro (Sheehan, 2005) study found a relationship between the capabilities of mental health practitioners and knowledge of evidence-based treatment programs for children. It was expected that the higher level of training, experience, and skills the practitioner has, the more likely the practitioner will seek out and have awareness of evidence-supported programs.

Hypothesis two: Predicting utilization of ESP. The justification for the second hypothesis: ***Reported level of violence, practitioner capabilities, and awareness of evidence-supported programs will predict the use of evidence-supported programs*** is that, similar to reported level of violence and awareness of evidence-supported programs, it seems reasonable that there is a relationship of some kind between reported level of violence and the use of evidence-supported programs. It was possible that the higher the reported level of violence, the more likely a social worker will use evidence-supported programs because the need for an effective intervention exists. Likewise, the lower the reported level of violence, the less likely a social worker would use an evidence-supported program, as the need for the program does not exist. Additionally, there was a third possibility, where the lower the reported level of violence, the *more* likely the social worker will use an evidence-supported program. In this situation, the social worker may be implementing the evidence-

supported program in response to a high level of violence and as a result, the reported level of violence has decreased because the intervention is effective.

It was expected that the higher level of training, experience, and skills the practitioner had, the more likely the practitioner will implement evidence-supported programs. There is evidence in the mental health and substance abuse literature that schools and treatment organizations use a greater number of research-based treatment techniques when they have a highly trained and professional workforce (Knudsen & Roman, 2004; Ringeisen et al., 2003). Ennett et al., (2003) also found a relationship between practitioner capabilities and the implementation of effective substance use prevention programs. It was also expected that social workers who know about evidence-supported programs would be more likely to use these programs. Herie and Martin (2002) remind us that where empirically validated interventions exist, social work practitioners are ethically bound to use them. These questions were answered and the hypotheses were tested through the use of a web-based survey of school social workers.

Chapter Four: Methodology

The study's cross-sectional, web-based survey extends the work of Astor and his colleagues with school social workers on school violence (Astor et al., 1997; 1998; 2000). Astor has contributed significantly to this area of inquiry, and this study builds upon his work that examined the school social worker's perception of violence as a problem, reports of violent events, the personal safety and training of the practitioner, and the antiviolence programs and services offered in the school setting. This study represents a response to the research-practice gap that exists in school settings and is discussed in the dissemination research (DuPaul et al., 2003; Ringeisen et al., 2003). The survey itself incorporates elements from three different surveys utilized in the previously mentioned work of Astor, Ennett, and ORC Macro in order to answer the research questions.

The survey was available on-line, and participants completed and submitted the survey via the World Wide Web (WWW). I selected the methodology of a web-based survey because I wanted a national sample of school social workers, and I wanted to be able to reach them in a way in which they would be most likely to respond. Approximately 60% of the adult population in the United States now has access to the internet either at home or at work (Tourangeau, 2004). Social workers in a school setting are extremely likely to have internet access, as the vast majority of schools across the nation are connected to the Web. Web-based surveys sharply reduce the cost of data collection as compared to face-to-face, telephone, and mail surveys, while achieving large samples that make statistical tests very powerful and

model fitting very clean. Web surveys also enable the researcher to recruit specialized types of participants that otherwise would be quite rare (Birnbaum, 2004; Tourangeau, 2004).

The 2005 ORC Macro study on evidence-based practices provides an example of a successful web-based survey (Sheehan, 2005; Walrath et al., 2006). The ORC Macro researchers recruited participants from 1,402 service providers, requesting that they complete a 65-item web survey. A total of 616 providers from 28 communities responded, amounting to a 43% response rate. After taking all of this information into account, it was concluded that a web-based survey was the most promising and feasible option for reaching the desired population.

Participants

The participants were 250 school social workers representing 31 different states. The subject population included members of the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA). As can be seen in Table 4.1, the sample was primarily composed of white women with a mean age of 44.9 years, $SD = 10.8$, with a mean of 13.2 years, $SD = 9.8$ since completing their highest degree. Overall, the respondents had significant work experience within their current district and served a mean of 1.7 schools, $SD = 1.1$.

Table 4.1

Practitioner Characteristics ($N = 250$)

	n	%	*M*	*SD*
Gender *				
Male	26	10.4		
Female	222	88.8		
Race/Ethnicity**				
White, not of Hispanic origin	220	88.0		
African American	14	5.6		
Hispanic American/Latina(o)	5	2.0		
Other	4	1.6		
Mexican American	3	1.2		
Native American	3	1.2		
Asian American or Pacific Islander	2	0.8		
Age			44.9	10.8
Number of Schools Served			1.7	1.1
Time Since Highest Degree			13.2	9.8
Years Worked in Current District			9.3	7.3

Note. *Numbers do not add to 250, as not all participants provided a response. **Numbers do not add to 250, as participants were able to indicate more than one response.

Procedure

The process of recruiting subjects began with contacting the President of SSWAA by an e-mail letter and attempted to enlist the assistance of the organization

in the recruitment of subjects (Appendix D). The literature on web research recommends that one seek cooperation from a relevant organization with an internet presence. If an organization vouches that a researcher is a serious scientist and that the research will be of interest or benefit to its members, the organization can provide excellent help in increasing participation (Birnbaum, 2004). I submitted a letter (Appendix E) and brief description of the research study to the organization and requested access to the membership e-mail list (Appendix F). Explicit criteria for participants included the following: participants must have a degree in social work, be associated or full members of SSWAA, as well as be practitioners currently employed in a school setting.

After approval was obtained from the organization, potential participants were contacted via e-mail with an introductory letter telling about the research study and providing a link/internet address that directed the participants to a website that contained the survey (Appendix G). By sending the introductory letter and link to the survey directly to school social workers, I dealt with the concern that someone other than the intended respondent completed the survey. I also requested that only school social workers complete the survey and removed any incentive for someone other than a school social worker to participate in the study. I attended to the potential issue of multiple submissions by asking people not to participate more than once, removing any incentives to participate more than once, and filtering identical and nearly identical records.

The survey was constructed using the program WebSurveyor and was published on the internet by the Department of Information Technology at Portland State University. The web survey was an electronic version of a mailed questionnaire consisting of 65 questions. It took approximately 20 minutes to complete. After the social worker read the introductory e-mail letter and informed consent (Appendix H), the participant clicked on a button that read, "I agree to participate," in order to gain access to the research survey (Appendix I). The respondents scrolled through the instrument much as they would page through a paper questionnaire. Until the respondent pressed the "submit" button at the end of the survey, he or she could back up and change answers at will. Participants were able to elect to stop answering questions at any time. A waiver for *signed* informed consent was obtained from the Human Subjects Committee since the social workers used a portal to access the survey.

Data were collected over a period of 12 weeks. E-mails were sent to 2,097 school social workers on the SSWAA membership list. Of those e-mails, 128 were undeliverable, leaving a total of 1,969. The subject population received the introductory letter via e-mail on November 7, 2005 (Appendix H). A total of 82 responses were received during the first three weeks. On November 28, 2005, a reminder e-mail was sent out and 93 completed surveys were received in the 7 weeks following this second e-mail (Appendix J). A third and final "last chance" e-mail was sent out on January 17, 2006 (Appendix K). During the final two weeks of data collection, 76 responses were received, making a total of 252 completed surveys. Two

respondents were dropped from the study because they were retired and no longer working in a school setting, resulting in 250 respondents and a 12.7% response rate.

Completed surveys were submitted through a website, and the survey data itself contained no web addresses or other identifiers that could link the subject to the study. The data were entered and stored in mySQL database on a UNIX database server maintained by Portland State University's Office of Information Technology. The database is highly restricted and accessible only by the proper account and password. When the data were collected, they were exported through another restricted account using a Microsoft Access ODBC link. From there the table was exported into SPSS for analysis and stored in an SPSS data file. The SPSS file resides on my C: drive with access restricted by password. A back up disk also contains the SPSS file and is stored in a locked filing cabinet. This disk and any printed versions of the data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and retained for a minimum of three years following the completion of the research.

Human subject protection was assured, although it is highly unlikely that any psychological risks were posed for the participants who answered the survey questions (Appendix L). The survey questions may have reminded participants of negative work experiences or the difficult challenge of addressing school violence, but it was anticipated that any negative emotions would be countered by the knowledge that the research gives attention to their concerns and experiences.

Measurement

Many survey questions were adapted from Astor's National School Violence Survey and the survey used in Ennett's school-based substance use prevention study (Astor et al., 1998; Ennett et al., 2003). Several questions were taken from the ORC Macro (Sheehan, 2005) evidence-based treatment survey, while some questions were developed for this study. The survey was divided into the following seven sections: practitioner capabilities, evidence-supported programs addressing violence, violence in your school, barriers to addressing school violence, practitioner characteristics, school characteristics, and school climate (Appendix G).

Practitioner Capabilities

Practitioner capabilities could be a major contributor to the implementation of evidence-supported programs. Consequently, this study examined the education and experience of the social worker, the social worker's level of preparedness for dealing with school violence, and the social worker's confidence in her performance of administering anti-school violence programs. This section of the survey had five questions.

Education and experience. Respondents were asked, "Years worked as a school social worker?" and "Your highest degree?" Both of these questions were taken from the Astor survey. For the first question, the respondent typed in the number of years she had been employed as a school social worker. The second question required the respondent to choose from four listed categories: (a) BSW, (b) MSW, (c) Ph.D./DSW, or (d) other.

Self-estimate of preparedness. The question that was asked is, "How prepared are you to effectively respond to violence at your school?" A 7-point scale was used, ranging from 1 = "totally unprepared" to 7 = "totally prepared."

Confidence teaching. Respondents were asked, "How confident are you that you are doing a good job teaching violence prevention/intervention lessons?" A 4-point scale was used: 1 = "very confident," 2 = "somewhat confident," 3 = "not too confident," and 4 = "not at all confident." This same question was used in the Ennett survey.

Familiarity with the term ESP. Similar to the ORC Macro study, respondents were asked, "Are you familiar with the term 'evidence-supported program'?" Respondents were asked to choose from three categories: 1 = "yes," 0 = "no," and 2 = "don't know."

Defining ESP. As with the ORC Macro study, participants answered one of the following open-ended questions as a follow up to the last question: "How do you define 'evidence-supported program'?" or "Even though you are unfamiliar with the term, how might you define 'evidence-supported program'?" The definition used by the ORC Macro (2005) researchers was also used as the standard by which responses were measured in this study: "Proven effective through research." Responses were coded using paper and pencil technique. Inter-rater reliability was obtained by having a second coder with a graduate degree in counseling independently code the answers, with a third researcher reconciling the differences.

Evidence-supported Programs Addressing School Violence

The section on intervention programs examined the school violence interventions being utilized, school and district policies surrounding the implementation of programs, awareness of programs, and perceived levels of effectiveness.

Awareness and use. This question was related to awareness and use and had two parts. The awareness measure was developed for this study and was "Which, if any, of the following curricula are you aware of?" and the utilization measure was taken from Ennett and was "Over the past three years, which, if any, of the following curricula, available commercially or because your school participated in a research study, did you use?" The respondents were provided with a list of 17 evidence-supported school violence intervention/prevention programs and asked to "select only one response" for each program from each of the following two sets of options: 1 = "aware of program" or 0 = "not aware of program" and 1 = "used" or 0 = "did not use."

Perceived program success. This question was adapted from the ORC Macro study and was, "In general, what three (3) intervention techniques or programs do you utilize that you perceive to be the most successful in helping students decrease their violent behaviors?" The respondents were asked to list three programs or techniques in order of frequency of use. The WebSurveyor software was then programmed to use a technique called "piping." This process permitted each of the respondents' three

answers to be separately "piped" into the following sets of questions, allowing the participants' answers to appear within the text of the relevant questions.

Effectiveness rating. The question "How effective is the school violence prevention/intervention program?" was developed for this study. It was asked in regard to each of the three programs or techniques that the respondent listed for the previous question and a 4-point scale was used, ranging from 4 = "very effective" to 1 = "not at all effective."

Fidelity. A question regarding fidelity was from the ORC Macro survey: "When you use the school violence prevention/intervention program, to what extent do you implement the FULL curriculum/protocol?" A 5-point scale was used, ranging from 1 = "Never use the full protocol" to 5 = "Always use the full protocol." The respondents were asked this question in regard to each of the three programs or techniques that they listed for the previous question related to perceived program success. Respondents were also asked an open-ended follow-up question regarding fidelity: "If you don't implement the full curriculum/protocol, why not?"

Program training. The question "How did you receive your initial training?" was taken from the ORC Macro study and was asked regarding each of the three programs or techniques that the respondent listed in the previous question related to perceived program success. The respondents were asked to choose one of the following responses: (a) graduate school course, (b) conference workshop, (c) free-standing workshop, (d) self-training/instruction, (e) agency sponsored or in-service, (f)

continuing education, (g) other training/instruction, or (h) no formal training/instruction received.

Checklist of services and programs. This question was an extended version of a survey question used by Astor. The respondents were presented with a checklist representing 34 types of programs and services provided by various districts across the country. The respondents were asked if their schools have any of these programs or services. If they answered yes, they were asked about their personal involvement with any of the listed programs. They were also asked to check a box next to the programs and services they believed were effective in reducing school violence.

Perceived level of effectiveness. A question that was asked is "How successful do you think your violence prevention/intervention lessons are in preventing of reducing violence by students in your school?" A 4-point scale was used, ranging as follows: 1 = "not at all successful," 2 = "not too successful," 3 = "somewhat successful," or 4 = "very successful." This question was taken from the survey developed by Ennett.

Characteristics of evidence-supported programs. Astor identified several characteristics of evidence-supported school violence intervention programs. A question developed for this study listed those characteristics and asked, "How often did your school-wide interventions do the following?" A 3-point scale was used, ranging as follows: 1 = "always," 2 = "sometimes," or 3 = "never."

Locating ESPs. The question was, "Have you had any difficulty locating school violence interventions that have been proven by research to be effective?"

Respondents were asked to choose from three response options (1 = "yes," 0 = "no," or 2 = "I haven't tried").

Violence in Your School

This section asked the respondents questions about the size and scope of the problem with violence in their school.

Global perceptions of violence on school grounds. Global perceptions of violence was measured by the question, "How big of a problem is violence at your school?" A 5-point scale was used (1 = "very big problem," 2 = "big problem," 3 = "middle size problem," 4 = "little problem," and 5 = "very little or no problem"). However, without asking for specific events, Astor found that this question was problematic, as professionals have differing concepts of what constitutes a problem. Without a question about specific behaviors, it would be difficult to interpret this question because the researchers would have no knowledge of which violent events were viewed as a big problem by respondents. Therefore, this survey asked respondents to identify specific behavioral events as well as asking them for a global assessment of the problem. This allowed for a thorough analysis of which types of violent events were associated with the respondent's perception of the problem.

Types of violence. The respondents were asked to indicate if the social workers themselves, the students, and the staff at their schools have been victims of any of the 23 types of aggressive behaviors presented as a checklist that will be called "types of violence." This scale was previously used by Astor and provides a continuum of behaviors ranging from an intimidating look to homicide. The Astor

study analyzed the 23 types of incidents using a principal-components factor analysis with varimax rotation. Astor reported that four factors emerged each with eigenvalues of 1.0 or higher and together they accounted for 53.6% of the variance in the matrix (Astor et al., 1997). The subscale categories were as follows: factor 1, low-level aggression (scale alpha = .87); factor 2, physical assault (scale alpha = .76); factor 3, intimidating acts (scale alpha = .78); and factor 4, potentially lethal event (scale alpha = .70). Similarly, Cronbach's alphas were obtained for these four types of violence subscales for this study and are as follows: low-level aggression (scale alpha = .834); physical assault (scale alpha = .846); intimidating acts (scale alpha = .819); and potentially lethal event (scale alpha = .781).

Time addressing violence. Respondents were asked a question developed for this study, "On average, what percentage of your day is devoted to addressing (intervention *and* prevention efforts) violent student behaviors?" Respondents were provided a range of choices from "0 - 10%" to "91 – 100%."

Hazing. Two additional survey questions were created for this study: "Does hazing regularly occur in your school?", and "Do you perceive hazing as a problem in your school?" Respondents were simply required to answer "yes" or "no" to each of these questions.

Barriers

Barriers to the use of evidence-supported programs were an important aspect of this study. A question examining barriers was taken from Ennett: "Which, if any, of the following have been barriers to your teaching violence prevention/intervention

lessons?" The respondents were asked to answer "yes" or "no" to each item in a list of 11 statements ranging from "lack of adequate instructional materials" to "resistance from school board and/or parents for teaching violence prevention/intervention." Respondents were then asked, "Please describe any other barriers to your teaching/leading violence prevention/intervention sessions."

Resources. There was one question that addressed the issue of resources for teaching school violence prevention/intervention lessons. This question was developed for this study, was open-ended and required the respondent to answer, "What would help you address school violence more effectively?" Respondents were also given an opportunity to give comments, suggestions, or recommendations for overcoming barriers to the use of evidence-supported programs.

Practitioner Characteristics

Practitioner characteristics were measured by eight survey questions. Five of those questions taken from Astor's survey that addressed the qualities and background of the social worker. The questions designed to measure characteristics of the practitioner were: (a) "Your gender?" (b) "Your age?" (c) "Your race/ethnicity?" (d) "Number of years working in current district?" and (e) "Number of schools currently served?" A question created in response to the results of the ORC Macro study was: (f) "Length of time since you received your highest degree?" The ORC Macro study (Sheehan, 2005) found that the younger the respondent and the more recently the respondent finished his or her degree, the more likely he or she was to use evidence-supported programs. Two additional questions created for this study related to the

respondents' affiliation with SSWAA and their local professional organization: (g) "Are you a member of the School Social Work Association of America?" and "Are you a member of your state school social work association?"

School Characteristics

School characteristics were measured by nine questions. The aim of these questions on school characteristics was to describe the conditions and distinctiveness of the social worker's school setting.

Number of students. Respondents were asked, "Size of current district (students)?" Just as this question was presented in the Astor survey, respondents were given a choice of number ranges, from "under 1,000" to "300,000+." The following question was also asked: "Size of schools (# of students) where you are a social worker?" This survey item was also borrowed from Astor's survey. For this question, respondents received the following instructions: "If you have more than one school within a given range, check the box and write down the number of schools falling in that range. For example, if I have three schools within the range of 401-500 children each, I would mark that box and write '3' on the line next to it." Respondents were given a choice of number ranges, from "under 100" to "3,000+."

Student descriptors. These survey questions provided information about the students served by the social worker. The first question was taken from Astor's survey and the second question was taken from Ennett. The questions were: "Age/grade levels you serve?" and "Approximately what percentage of students in your school belongs to each of the following racial/ethnic groups?" A third question

related to student descriptors was created for this study: "What percentage of violence of all types and in all categories is perpetrated by girls at your school?"

Community setting. Respondents were asked another question from Astor's survey, "Which of the following best describes the community setting of the school(s) you work in?" Five checklist categories were presented: (a) inner city, (b) urban, not inner city, (c) suburban, (d) rural, and (e) other (specify). Respondents were also asked to provide their school's zip code.

Economic resources. Respondents were asked two questions regarding the economic resources of the students they serve. The first question is from Astor's survey, "What is your estimate of the economic resources of the children/families attending the school(s) you work in?" Five checklist categories were presented: (a) poor – very low income, (b) lower middle income, (c) middle income, (d) upper middle income, and (e) upper income. Respondents were also asked a question from Ennett's survey, "Approximately what percentage of students in your school(s) are eligible to receive free or reduced cost lunch as part of a federal assistance program?"

School Climate

Finally, there were survey questions on school climate that examined the attitudes of school personnel and described the experience of the school environment. These two questions related to school climate were taken from Ennett's survey. The data gathered from these questions were not used in this study, but will be saved for use in future research.

Pilot Testing

As it was possible that several hundred people could complete this web survey in a short period of time, it was crucial that this survey be thoroughly checked before launching the study. This survey was pilot tested by three former school social workers. These social workers were from diverse backgrounds, having worked in various school settings, spanning from kindergarten to high school.

Cognitive interviews were conducted with participants to determine whether survey items were understandable, were answerable, and evoked the anticipated responses (Radwin, Washko, Suchy, & Tyman, 2005). Probes and/or asking the participant to "think aloud" are two cognitive interviewing techniques that were used to elicit the ways the participants interpreted key concepts, their abilities to recall the requested information, and the appropriateness of response categories (Miller, 2003; Presser et al., 2004). The goal of the cognitive interview was to uncover the participant's thought processes involved in interpreting a question and deciding upon an answer (Presser et al., 2004). The cognitive interviews were analyzed to reveal problems with the questionnaire, including potential response errors, allowing these errors to be corrected prior to the actual study. In several cases, respondents misunderstood the meaning of a question, requested more detailed information be provided, as well as offered suggestions to make the survey more visibly appealing.

The pilot testing also included sending test data to make absolutely sure that each button and each response field was functioning properly and that the researcher knew where the data went in the file. The participants viewed the survey using several

types of computers, monitors, and browsers to preview the different experiences that participants had with these variations. Finally, the pilot study was used to check the programming of the study, including coding of the data, and the exporting of the data for analysis and to make sure the planned data analysis was able to be accomplished.

Analysis

Following data collection, the data were coded, entered into SPSS, and examined for any problems. The distribution of frequencies of variables were examined and appropriate descriptive statistics were obtained. The following analyses were conducted with SPSS software, unless stated otherwise.

Participant and School Characteristics

Data related to participant characteristics, participant capabilities, and school characteristics were examined. Descriptive analyses involved obtaining frequencies and percentages of nominal level variables and means and standard deviations of scale variables. Practitioner characteristics that will be reported include: *gender, age, race/ethnicity, length of time since highest degree, number of years working in current school district,* and *number of schools currently served.* Practitioner capabilities include: *number of years worked* as a school social worker, *highest degree, self-estimate of preparedness,* and *confidence teaching.* The following school characteristics were descriptively analyzed: *size of current district, size of school(s), age/grade levels served, community setting, socioeconomic status* of students, *and racial/ethnic background* of student body.

ESP Awareness

To address the first major research question, "To what extent do social workers have awareness of evidence-supported school violence intervention programs?" descriptive statistics were obtained for the variables *familiarity with the term evidence-supported program (ESP), defining ESP, ESP awareness,* and *ESP acquisition.* The number and percentage of social workers who were familiar with the term ESP and those who provided a correct definition was determined. The ORC Macro (2005) survey asked respondents to define this term and the definition used by those researchers is the standard by which responses were measured in this study: "Proven effective through research." Descriptions of the measures for *familiarity with the term ESP* and *defining ESP*, survey questions 5 and 5a, are listed in the table of measures found in Appendix B. A description of the measure for the *ESP awareness* variable is also provided in the table of measures and is survey question 6a, while *ESP acquisition* is measured by survey question 11: *Have you had any difficulty locating school violence interventions that have been proven by research to be effective?* If the respondents answered "yes," they were asked to explain. This second part of the question was analyzed qualitatively.

Utilization

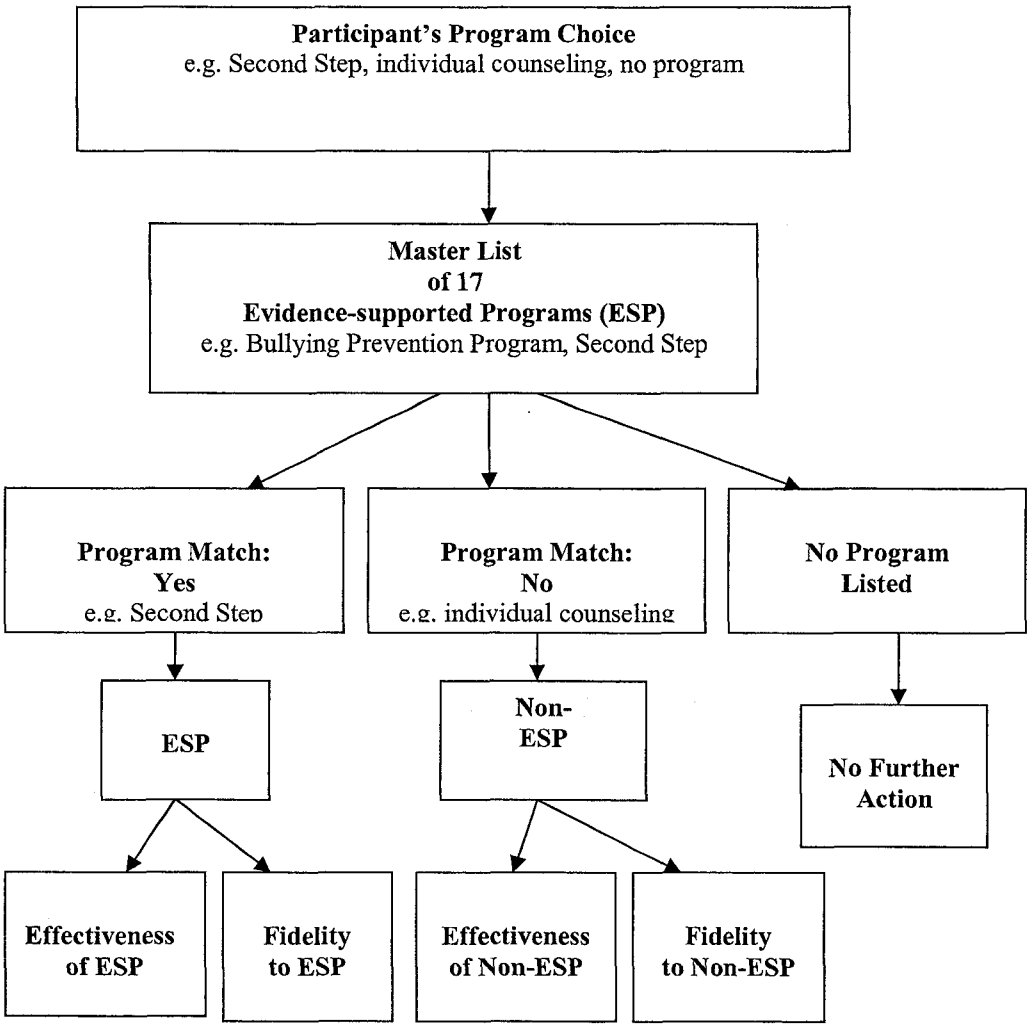
To address the second major research question, "To what extent are school social workers implementing evidence-supported school violence intervention programs?" descriptive statistics were determined for *program characteristics, services/programs – utilization, utilization, fidelity,* and *effectiveness rating. Program*

characteristics is measured by survey question 10, *How often did your school-wide interventions do the following?* and *services/programs – utilization* is measured by survey question 8, *Does your school have any of these programs?* A description of the utilization measure, survey question 6b, is provided in the table of measures (Appendix B).

In addition, each practitioner was asked to list three programs or intervention techniques that they utilize and perceive to be the most successful in decreasing violent student behaviors. The social workers were asked to list the programs in order of frequency of use. The schema in Figure 4.1 outlines the process of categorizing the program choices provided by the respondents and the action taken.

The respondents' answers were compared to the names of 17 evidence-supported interventions identified for this study (Appendix C). If the program name listed by the respondent appeared on the list of evidence-supported programs, it was counted as evidence-supported. For those that were evidence-supported, the number and percentage of the respondents that use each technique was calculated.

Figure 4.1. A schema for categorizing each violence intervention technique reported to be used and perceived to be most successful by school social workers ($N = 250$)



Note. Each practitioner was asked to list three programs or intervention techniques that they utilized and perceived to be the most successful in decreasing violent student behaviors. The web survey software was programmed to use a technique called "piping." This process permitted each of the respondents' three answers to be separately "piped" or carried into the next sets of questions regarding effectiveness and fidelity, allowing the participants' answers to appear within the text of the relevant questions that followed. Finally, data were categorized according to the schema, which was repeated for each of the three programs reported.

The WebSurveyor software was programmed to use a technique called "piping." This process permitted each of the respondents' three answers to be separately "piped" or carried into the next sets of questions regarding effectiveness and fidelity, allowing the participants' answers to appear within the text of the relevant questions that followed. *Effectiveness rating* is measured by survey question 7-1a, *How effective is the school violence prevention/intervention program*?, while *fidelity* is measured by survey question 7-1b, *To what extent do you implement the FULL curriculum/protocol?* The average effectiveness and average fidelity reported by the respondents for each evidence-supported program or service was calculated.

Non-evidence Supported Interventions

In order to answer the third major research question, "Outside of evidence-supported programs, what services and programs are being implemented?" descriptive statistics for the variable *checklist of services and programs* was calculated, reporting the data for the programs utilized that are non-evidence supported, as well as the results of a content analysis for *perceived program success*. Respondent's answers to the open-ended survey question 7, "In general, what three intervention techniques or programs do you utilize that you perceive to be the most successful in helping students decrease their violent behaviors?" were content analyzed. Coding of program names were done employing established pencil and paper techniques for content analysis.

Barriers

The fourth major research question, "What are the factors at the district, school, and practitioner level that inhibit the implementation of evidence-supported

programs?" was answered by reporting descriptive statistics for the *barriers* variable. The number of social workers who identified barriers to implementing evidence-supported programs and the percentage of social workers that confront each barrier are reported. The responses to the qualitative survey question addressing *resources* will also be reported. Survey question 16, *"Please give any other comments, suggestions, or recommendations for overcoming barriers."* and question 17, *"What would help you address school violence more effectively?"* were content analyzed and coded by pencil and paper.

Preparation for Hypothesis Testing

In addition to running the above mentioned descriptive statistics, intercorrelations on key scale variables were obtained, and scatter plots were examined to determine whether there are linear relationships among those variables. Before running the statistical and multiple regression analysis proposed below, it was determined whether the variables concerned meet the assumptions of the test, through the use of the appropriate diagnostic procedures. The hypotheses set forth in this dissertation are diagrammed in the models for the awareness and utilization of evidence-supported school violence intervention programs (Figure 3.1).

Hypothesis One

A multiple regression model was used to test the hypothesis, ***reported level of violence and practitioner capabilities will predict practitioner awareness of evidence-supported programs***. The variables were entered as blocks, with the *reported level of violence* variables being entered first and the *practitioner capabilities*

variables entered second. The first block included the four predictor variables of *reported level of violence, time addressing violence, types of violence - student/staff,* and *types of violence – practitioner.* For the variables *types of violence - student/staff* and *types of violence – practitioner,* Astor's procedure were used for calculating the intensity of violence. The second block included the following six predictor variables related to *practitioner capabilities*: *number of years worked, highest degree, self-estimate of preparedness, confidence teaching, familiarity with the term ESP,* and *defining ESP* (1 = correct definition of ESP or 0 = incorrect definition of ESP). *ESP awareness* was the outcome variable. For this analysis, *ESP awareness* was the number of ESPs the social worker reports having awareness of.

Hypothesis Two

Multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis, ***Reported level of violence, practitioner capabilities, and awareness of evidence-supported programs will predict the use of evidence-supported programs.*** Again, the variables were entered as blocks, with the *reported level of violence* variables being entered first, the *practitioner capabilities* variables entered second, and the *ESP awareness* variables entered third. The first block included the four predictor variables of *reported level of violence, time addressing violence, types of violence - student/staff,* and *types of violence – practitioner.* The second block included the following six predictor variables related to *practitioner capabilities*: *number of years worked, highest degree, self-estimate of preparedness, confidence teaching, familiarity with the term ESP,* and *defining ESP* (1 = correct definition of ESP or 0 = incorrect definition of ESP). The

third block contained the predictor variable *ESP awareness*. *Utilization* was the outcome variable (*utilization* was the number of ESPs the social worker reported having used).

Other Measures

The table of measures in Appendix B presents the concepts, variables and measures that were used to test the research hypotheses presented in this study. Although all of the variables found in the table are represented in this plan for analysis, there are some survey questions which were not used for this study. Survey questions included under the concept *school characteristics*, for example, were primarily used for descriptive purposes in this study, but can be used to answer new research questions in a future study. Likewise, questions addressing school climate, practitioner training, and district policies regarding the implementation of school violence interventions were not analyzed for the purposes of this study, but will be valuable for future research.

Chapter Five: Results

The results reveal a comprehensive picture of the social workers' awareness of and use of evidence-supported school violence intervention programs. First, a description will be provided of the general characteristics of the respondents' capabilities and the school environments in which they work. Secondly, the results of the first two research questions will be presented: (1) *To what extent do school social workers know about evidence-supported school violence intervention programs?*; and (2) *To what extent are school social workers implementing evidence-supported school violence intervention programs?* The social workers' level of awareness and utilization of evidence-supported programs will be described. Thirdly, the results of the multiple regression analysis will be presented for hypotheses one and two: (1) *Reported level of violence and practitioner capabilities will predict practitioner awareness of evidence- supported programs*, and (2) *Reported level of violence, practitioner capabilities, and awareness of evidence-supported programs will predict the use of evidence-supported programs.* Finally, the results will be presented for the third and fourth research questions: (3) *Aside from evidence-supported programs, what services and programs are being implemented?*; and (4) *What are the factors at the district, school, and practitioner level that inhibit the implementation of evidence-supported programs?* The respondents' use of non-evidence supported programs and the barriers to the utilization of evidence-supported interventions will be described.

Participant Capabilities

To begin, it was important to learn about the social workers' capabilities (see Table 5.1). The majority of the respondents (91.6%) held a Masters in Social Work as their highest degree and they had a mean of 11.4, *SD* = 8.1 years of experience as a school social worker. More than half of the respondents (53.6%) reported feeling "somewhat confident" teaching/leading school violence prevention/intervention lessons. On a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 being "totally prepared," the respondents reported a mean of 4.7, *SD* = 1.2, indicating a moderate degree of assurance in their level of preparedness in addressing the problem of school violence.

Table 5.1
Practitioner Capabilities (*N* = 250)

Source	*n*	%	*M*	*SD*
Highest Degree*				
BSW	6	2.4 %		
MSW	229	91.6 %		
DSW/Ph.D.	11	4.4 %		
Other	3	1.2 %		
Number of Years Worked as School Social Worker			11.4	8.1
Confidence Teaching*				
Not at all confident	10	4.0 %		
Not too confident	69	27.6 %		
Somewhat confident	134	53.6 %		
Very confident	35	14.0 %		
Self-estimate of Preparedness**			4.7	1.2

Note. *Numbers do not add to 250, as not all participants provided a response. **On a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 being "totally prepared"

School Characteristics

Survey participants worked in a variety of geographical regions (Table 5.2) and diverse communities. The most highly represented region was the Midwest (44.8%), the least represented (7.9%) was the Southeast.

Table 5.2
Geographical Areas Represented ($N = 239$)

Regions	*n*	%
Midwest	107	44.8
Illinois	44	18.4
Indiana	7	2.9
Iowa	11	4.6
Kansas	17	7.1
Minnesota	14	5.9
Missouri	8	3.4
Wisconsin	6	2.5
Northeast	71	29.7
Maine	2	.8
Maryland	1	.4
Massachusetts	1	.4
Michigan	16	6.7
New Hampshire	2	.8
New Jersey	8	3.4
New York	32	13.4
Ohio	6	2.5
Virginia	3	1.3
West	42	17.6
Arizona	6	2.5
California	17	7.1
Colorado	2	.8
Idaho	1	.4
New Mexico	1	.4
Oregon	2	.8
Texas	1	.4
Washington	11	4.6
Wyoming	1	.4
Southeast	19	7.9
Florida	3	1.3
Georgia	4	1.7
Kentucky	5	2.1
Louisiana	1	.4
North Carolina	3	1.3
Tennessee	3	1.3

Note. Geographical regions were obtained through the use of zip codes. Numbers do not add up to 250 due to non-response or invalid zip code.

On average, the social workers reported half of all the students attending the schools in which the respondents worked qualified for free or reduced lunch (Table 5.3). The majority of students came from lower income families, with the respondents' estimated percentage indicating that the majority of students were white ($M = 54.3$, $SD = 33.5$). Using the zip codes provided by the respondents, the poverty level for each neighborhood and community was obtained from the United States Census Bureau (www.census.gov).

Table 5.3
Student Characteristics

Source	*n*	%	*M*	*SD*
Socioeconomic Background of Students*				
Poor- Very Low Income	90	36.0		
Lower Middle Income	86	34.4		
Middle Income	47	18.8		
Upper Middle Income	20	8.0		
Upper Income	3	1.2		
Practitioner estimate of percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch			49.5	32
Practitioner estimated percentage of race/ethnicity of students				
White, not of Hispanic origin			54.3	33.5
African American			22.3	26.8
Hispanic American/Latina(o)			9.4	17.4
Mexican American			7.8	15.8
Asian American or Pacific Islander			3.2	4.9
Native American			2.1	10.8
Other			1.0	4.9

Note. *Numbers do not add to 250 since not all participants provided a response.

A mean of 11.6% of the population lived below the poverty level within the communities where the respondents' schools were located ($SD = 7.3$), with percentages ranging from 1.6% to 44.6%. These are comparable to the national

average of 12.5% of the total United States population currently living below the poverty level.

Nearly 35% of the schools were located in a suburban setting (Table 5.4). More than 50% of the districts represented had less than 13,000 students, with 90% of the schools enrolling no more than 2,000 students. Nearly half of the respondents worked with students in kindergarten through grade 6.

Table 5.4
School Characteristics

Source	*n*	%
Community Setting*		
Inner City	49	19.6
Urban, Not Inner City	55	22.0
Suburban	87	34.8
Rural	38	15.2
Other	18	7.2
Size of Current School District* (Number of Students)		
Under 1,000 -12,999	133	53.2
13,000 – 49,999	68	27.2
50,000 – 300,000+	38	15.2
Size of School (Number of Students)*		
Under 100 -400	72	28.8
401- 800	83	33.2
801- 2,000	70	28.0
2,001- 3,000+	20	8.0
Grade Levels Served**		
0 – 3 years	15	6.0
3 – 5 years	56	22.4
K – 6	123	49.2
7 – 8	75	30.0
9 – 12	74	29.6
12+	7	2.8
All ages/grades	23	9.2
Other ages/grades	46	18.4

Note. *Numbers do not add to 250 since not all participants provided a response.
**Adds to more than 100% since respondents could check more than one category.

Nearly 50% of the social workers (n = 123) reported that they only spent 0-10% of the school day addressing violent student behaviors (Figure 5.1), yet more than 40% of the respondents (n = 107) reported that violence is a middle size problem at their school (Table 5.5).

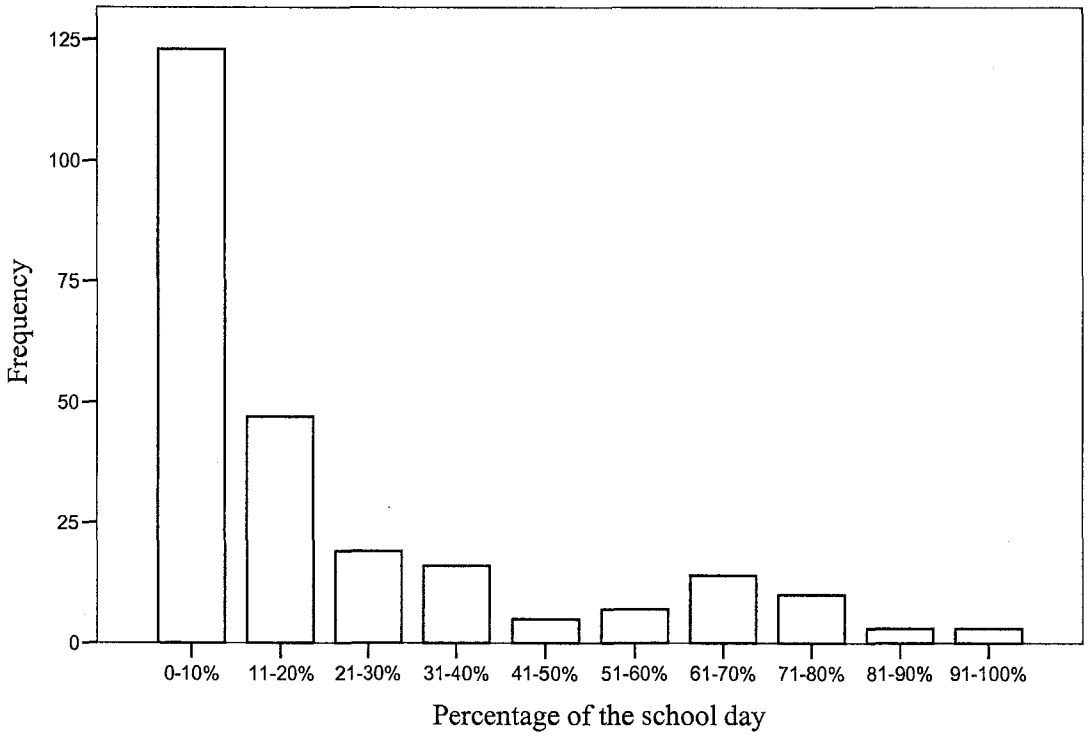


Figure 5.1. School social workers' estimates of time addressing violence.

Table 5.5
Social Workers' Perception of the Problem of Violence in their Schools

Source	*n*	%	Astor et al. (1997) %
Scale categories*			
Very big problem	13	5.2	
Big problem	34	13.6	
Middle size problem	107	42.8	
Little problem	68	27.2	
Very little or no problem	23	9.2	
Condensed categories**			
Big problem		18.8	20.5
Moderate problem		42.8	37.0
Small problem		36.4	42.6

Note. *Numbers do not add to 250 since not all participants provided a response **The scale categories were collapsed to big (categories 1 and 2), moderate (category 3), and small (categories 4 and 5).

In order to facilitate comparison of these results to that of Astor et al. (1997), the categories for the perception of the level of violence were combined, as in the Astor study (Table 5.5). The categories were collapsed by size: big (categories 1 = very big and 2 = big), moderate (category 3 = middle size), and small (categories 4 = little and 5 = very little or none). The majority of the social workers described violence as a moderate problem, whereas the majority of Astor's respondents reported it was only a small problem. Table 5.6 reports the percentage of school social workers who reported specific violent events occurring at their schools. These results were compared to the results from Astor et al. (1997). Nearly ten years later, levels of most types of violence remain high, although it is encouraging that there appears to be some reduction in lethal violence

Table 5.6

Percentage of School Social Workers who Reported Violent Events at their Schools in Present Study ($N = 250$) *Compared with Astor et al.* (1997; $N = 576$)

	% Reporting Event in School		% Who Experienced Event	
Event	Cawood (2006)	Astor et al. (1997)	Cawood (2006)	Astor et al. (1997)
Low-level aggression				
Grabbed, shoved	95.6	92	10.0	13
Punched, kicked	93.2	90	12.8	10
Personal property stolen, no force	83.6	88	9.6	18
Physically threatened	87.2	88	18.0	20
Cursing	95.2	96	45.2	47
Racial or ethnic personal insults	91.6	85	15.6	20
Fistfight participated in or observed	76.4	85	17.2	31
Physical assault				
Cut with sharp object	32.0	28	0.4	1
Hit with object	59.2	53	3.2	3
Attack requiring medical care	51.6	65	1.2	2
Personal property stolen by force	38.0	33	0.4	1
Assault by group of students	42.0	49	0.8	1
Assault by teacher or staff	14.4	22	0.4	1
Intimidating acts				
Intimidation through staring	88.0	78	16.4	19
Sexual harassment	75.6	66	6.0	11
Gang intimidation	36.8	51	1.2	3
Bothered by drug use	42.4	52	7.2	10
Racial or ethnic conflict	67.6	62	7.6	13
Car vandalized, broken into	32.4	46	2.1	7
Potentially lethal event				
Threatened with gun, other weapon	27.6	44	0.8	3
Sexual attack	21.2	24	0.0	1
Shooting on or near campus	18.4	24	2.0	8
Homicide observed on or near campus	13.6	21	2.0	2

Note. Low-level aggression scale alpha = .834, Cawood (2006); scale alpha = .87, Astor et al. (1997)
Physical assault scale alpha = .846, Cawood (2006); scale alpha = .76, Astor et al. (1997)
Intimidating acts scale alpha = .819, Cawood (2006); scale alpha = .78, Astor et al. (1997)
Potentially lethal event scale alpha = .781, Cawood (2006); scale alpha = .70, Astor et al. (1997)

Respondents were asked to report the percentage of violence perpetrated by girls. The mean estimated percentage of violence perpetrated by girls was 27.6, *SD* = 18.3. Nearly 95% of the social workers indicated both that hazing did not regularly occur in their schools and that hazing was not a problem in their schools.

Question One: ESP Awareness

To address the first research question, "To what extent do social workers have awareness of evidence-supported school violence intervention programs?" descriptive statistics for the variables *familiarity with the term evidence-supported program (ESP), defining ESP, ESP awareness,* and *ESP acquisition* were compiled. Results indicated that 69.6% of the respondents (n = 174) were familiar with the term "evidence-supported program" and 61.6% provided a correct definition of the term (n = 154). Social workers reported awareness of a mean of 5.4 evidence-supported programs, *SD* = 2.9, while 98.8% of the respondents reported awareness of at least one evidence-supported program (n = 247). The social workers were asked whether they had difficulty locating ESPs. If the respondents indicated "yes," they were then asked to explain. Forty-four percent of the respondents (n = 111) reported no difficulty locating evidence-supported programs, while 36% (n = 90) had not tried to locate evidence-supported programs. Nearly 18% of the respondents provided a reason for having difficulty locating ESPs (n = 44). The top three reasons given were as follows: the effectiveness of programs is not clear, programs are cost prohibitive, and social workers do not know where to look for ESPs.

Effectiveness unclear. Several respondents explained the challenge of not knowing which programs are effective ($n = 15$). One social worker wrote, "It is difficult to understand what the efficacy is when programs are advertised. It is not always clear in advertisement information nor emphasized if there is research to back up the program." Another social worker noted, "I get lots of ads for curricula, but there is not a lot out there on what is really effective." Another respondent described her reluctance to try programs without knowing the effectiveness, "Many programs appear good, but without research base, not wanting to try."

Cost prohibitive. The constant concern related to the expense of purchasing ESPs was identified by some of the respondents ($n = 9$). One social worker responded, "Cost is always an issue." Another social worker discussed the issue of limited funding in her district, saying, "The school system does not have funds for behavior interventions."

Difficult to locate. A few of the respondents said they just simply did not know where to locate ESPs ($n = 5$), including the comment, "I don't know where to access the information." Another social worker asked, "Where is the best place to find research based interventions? Are they located in an easily accessible place?"

Question Two: Utilization

Program Characteristics

The second research question, "To what extent are school social workers implementing evidence-supported school violence intervention programs?" was addressed by compiling descriptive statistics on *program characteristics, fidelity,*

effectiveness rating, and *utilization*. Program characteristics were measured by using the question, *How often did your school-wide interventions do the following*? This survey question presented a list of 12 characteristics of evidence-supported programs (Table 5.7).

Table 5.7
Characteristics of Evidence-supported Programs Implemented by School Social Workers

Characteristics	% Always	Sometimes	Never
1. Raise the awareness and responsibility of students regarding the types of violence in their schools.	19.6	68.8	8.8
2. Raise the awareness and responsibility of teachers regarding the types of violence in their schools.	27.2	62.8	6.8
3. Raise the awareness and responsibility of parents regarding the types of violence in their schools.	10.4	61.6	24.4
4. Create clear guidelines and rules for the entire school.	48.4	40.4	8.4
5. Clarify, to the entire school community, what procedures should be followed before, during, and after violent events.	26.8	52.8	17.2
6. Focus on getting the school staff involved in the program.	32.8	52.8	10.8
7. Focus on getting the students involved in the program.	34.4	51.6	10.4
8. Focus on getting the parents involved in the program.	16.8	54.4	24.8
9. Fit easily into the normal flow and mission of the school setting.	34.4	51.6	10.4
10. Utilize faculty and staff in the school setting in order to plan, implement, and sustain the program.	31.6	54.0	10.0
11. Utilize parents in the school setting in order to plan, implement, and sustain the program.	16.4	53.6	26.0
12. Increase monitoring and supervision in non-classroom areas.	33.2	50.8	12.8

Respondents were asked to indicate whether their school violence interventions "always," "sometimes," or "never" encompassed these strategies. Of the respondents, 96% "sometimes" or "always" implemented an intervention that has at least one of the characteristics of an evidence-supported program ($n = 240$). The mean number of evidence-supported program characteristics that the respondents "always" implemented was 3.3, $SD = 3.1$.

Nearly 50% of the respondents used interventions that always created clear guidelines and rules for the entire school. More than one third of the respondents always implemented interventions that focused on getting the students involved in the program and fit easily into the normal flow and mission of the school setting. Surprisingly, parents were only sometimes being involved in the intervention programs.

Perceived Program Success

Each practitioner was asked to list, in order of frequency of use, three programs or intervention techniques that they utilized and perceived to be the most successful in decreasing violent student behaviors. The respondents' answers were compared with previously identified evidence-supported interventions (see Appendix C). If the program name listed by the respondent appeared on the table, it was considered as evidence-supported.

The social workers were requested to list the programs in order of frequency of use: 85.2% of the total respondents provided an answer for the first program request ($N = 213$), 67.2% gave an answer for the second program request ($N = 168$), and

47.2% gave an answer for the third ($N = 118$). Of the answers provided, almost three quarters (72.4%) of the respondents reported using at least one evidence-supported program during the past three years ($n = 181$). Table 5.8 shows the total percentage of the practitioners that used each of the ESPs and what percentage of the social workers used each program as their first, second, and third choice.

Table 5.8
Percentage of Practitioners that Reported Using an Evidence-Supported Program ($N = 250$)

Program	First Mention	Second Mention	Third Mention	Total
		%		
Aggression Replacement Training	5.6	3.2	0.4	9.2
Bullying Prevention Program	10.4	3.6	1.6	15.6
FAST Track	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.4
Good Behavior Game	1.6	1.2	1.6	4.4
I Can Problem Solve	1.2	3.6	1.6	6.4
Incredible Years Series	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.8
PATHS	0.8	0.0	1.2	2.0
Peacebuilders	1.2	0.8	0.8	2.8
Positive Adolescents Choices Training (P.A.C.T.)	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.4
Behavioral Monitoring and Reinforcement Program	0.4	1.6	0.0	2.0
Resolving Conflict Creatively	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.4
School Transitional Environmental Program (STEP)	0.0	0.8	0.4	1.2
Seattle Social Development Project	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Second Step	16.8	5.6	2.0	24.4
Social Competence Promotion Program for Young Adolescents	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Training and Implementation Guide for Student Mediation in Elementary Schools	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4
Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents	1.2	0.4	0.4	2.0
Total	40.0	21.2	11.2	72.4

The three most frequently used evidence-supported programs are Second Step (Committee for Children, 1992), Bullying Prevention Program (Olweus, 1993), and Aggression Replacement Training (Goldstein, Glick, Reiner, Zimmerman, & Coultry, 1985). Generally, the percentage of social workers implementing at least one ESP decreased as age/grade levels served by the social workers rose (see Figure 5.2).

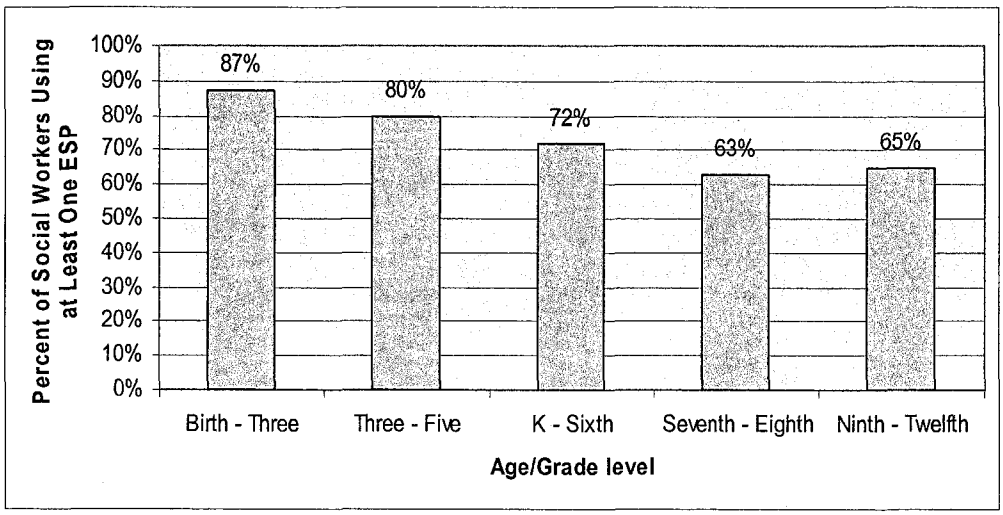


Figure 5.2. Social workers' utilization of ESPs by age/grade level

Fidelity and Effectiveness

A content analysis for *perceived program success* revealed that of the most frequently used techniques perceived to be most successful by the respondents, 39.6% of the techniques were ESPs ($N = 99$). Of the ESPs most frequently used, 37.4% of the respondents reported that the technique was "very effective" ($n = 37$) and 59.6% of the respondents reported that the technique was "somewhat effective" ($n = 59$). Table 5.9 displays the means and standard deviations for program effectiveness.

Table 5.9

Fidelity and Effectiveness Ratings for Most Frequently Used Techniques Perceived to be Successful ($N = 250$)

	Total	Fidelity*			Effectiveness**		
ESPs	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*
Most frequently used	99	3.4	1.1	98	3.4	.5	97
Second most frequently used	54	2.8	1.5	53	3.3	.6	53
Third most frequently used	30	3.0	1.4	29	3.0	.6	29
Non-ESPs							
Most frequently used	114	2.9	1.8	112	3.4	.6	111
Second most frequently used	114	2.9	1.8	109	3.3	.6	110
Third most frequently used	88	2.8	1.9	79	3.4	.6	80

Note. * On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being "always use the full protocol. ** On a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being "very effective."

Of the second most frequently used techniques perceived to be most successful by the respondents, 21.6% of these techniques were ESPs ($n = 54$). Of these second most frequently used ESPs, 31.5% of the respondents reported that the technique was "very effective" ($n = 17$) and 59.3% of the respondents reported that the technique was "somewhat effective" ($n = 32$). Of the third most frequently used techniques perceived to be most successful by the respondents, 12% of these techniques were ESP ($N = 30$). Of these third most frequently used ESPs, 13.3% of the respondents reported that the technique was "very effective" ($n = 4$) and 66.7% of the respondents reported that the technique was "somewhat effective" ($n = 20$).

Fidelity was also examined. Of the ESPs most frequently used, 19.2% of the respondents "always use the full protocol" ($n = 19$). Of the second most frequently

used ESPs, 18.5% of the respondents "always use the full protocol" (n = 10). Of the third most frequently used ESPs, 23.3% of the respondents "always use the full protocol" (n = 7). Table 5.9 displays the means and standard deviations for program fidelity. If they did not always use the full protocol, respondents were asked to identify possible reasons for adapting the intervention programs. The survey provided a list of possible reasons for adaptation, as well as an open-ended opportunity for the respondents to explain why they did not follow the full protocol.

Table 5.10 presents the data for respondents' curricular adaptation of evidence-supported programs due to student culture, socioeconomic status, and disabilities for the three most frequently used programs. These results were obtained using a checklist in which the respondents were asked to indicate which of these three factors influenced their decision to adapt the curriculum. Responses indicated that socioeconomic status is less likely to be a reason for adaptation, while nearly one quarter to one third of the respondents indicated they adapt the curriculum of the three evidence-supported programs due to student culture or disability.

Table 5.10
Percentage of Respondents Adapting Curricula Due to Culture, SES, and Disability

		Culture		SES		Disability	
		n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
ESPs							
Most frequently used ($N = 99$)	33	33.3	19	19.2	30	30.3	
Second most frequently used ($N = 54$)	13	24.1	9	16.7	18	33.3	
Third most frequently used ($N = 30$)	9	30.0	5	16.7	8	26.7	
Non-ESPs							
Most frequently used ($N = 114$)	29	25.4	21	18.4	30	26.3	
Second most frequently used ($N = 114$)	24	21.1	19	16.7	31	27.7	
Third most frequently used ($N = 88$)	22	25.0	20	22.7	23	26.1	

Time constraints. A content analysis revealed time constraints was the top reason for curriculum adaptation. Adaptation due to time constraints was indicated by 56 of the respondents for their first most frequently used strategy or program, 41 for their second most frequently used program, and 17 for their third most frequently used program.

"Lack of time" was the foremost reason that respondents gave for not implementing the full protocol. One social worker wrote, "Time constraints in the current schedule don't allow a full implementation," while another noted, "There's not enough time available during the school day to fully implement." One social worker short on time, explained how she adapted the curriculum, "Sometimes because of time

some lessons get incorporated into one session." Another social worker with time constraints described how she adapted her program, "Because of time factors, the most appropriate lessons to the needs of our building are implemented."

Individualization. The second most common reason for curriculum adaptation was the need to individualize the program. Individualization was indicated by 45 of the respondents for their first program, 22 for their second program, and 15 for their third program. Several of the social worker respondents altered the curricula to address the specific needs and issues of the students. One respondent wrote, "I modify the program to fit the needs of our school and make it more user-friendly," while another respondent noted, "I pick and choose which ones will fit the class." Other respondents described how individualization was necessary in order to serve students of different cultural backgrounds. According to one social worker, "I had to adapt for English Language Learners." Other respondents were conscious of the special learning needs of the students, for example, "I tailor to the learning abilities and styles of the middle school students." Another respondent expressed individualization this way: "Too lengthy. Not going to work with the population of students that are referred to me." One respondent described how she cuts out portions of the curriculum that are not relevant to the students, saying, "One of the parts of the series I do not feel is a pertinent topic." Other social workers discussed the need to adjust the program for age or maturity level, with one respondent saying, "I adapt it to my grade level – K-2." Finally, one social worker succinctly described the general need for individualization, saying, "No one model works 100% of the time with 100% of kids."

Hypothesis Testing

Multiple Regression Analysis

Using blocks of variables, two hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis: (1) *Reported level of violence and practitioner capabilities will predict practitioner awareness of evidence supported programs;* and *(2) Reported level of violence, practitioner capabilities, and awareness of evidence-supported programs will predict the use of evidence-supported programs.* The results of the diagnostic tests will be reported first, followed by the results of the hypothesis testing.

Collinearity Diagnostics

When examining the tolerances for each of the independent variables for the first hypothesis, it was noted that multicollinearity did not appear to be a problem, as all of the tolerances were a reasonable .524 or above (Norusis, 2005). However, the condition index was high at 29.9 and this created a possible limitation to the analysis (Agresti & Finlay, 1997). For hypothesis two, the tolerances for each of the independent variables were .523 or higher, but again the condition index was high at 31.3, indicating multicollinearity may have been a small problem.

To address this concern, a reduced model was run for hypothesis one with *time addressing violence* in block one and only the significant predictor variables in block two: *number of years worked, confidence teaching,* and *familiarity with the term ESP. ESP awareness* was the outcome variable. Results revealed similar betas and better

diagnostics than the full model $F(4, 239) = 7.585$, $p = .000$. Tolerance levels were .942 and higher and the condition index was a reasonable 11.75.

Likewise, a second reduced model was run for hypothesis two using only the significant variables. *Time addressing violence* was in the first block, followed by *number of years worked*, *preparedness*, and *confidence teaching* in the second block, and *ESP awareness* in the third block. *ESP utilization* was the dependent variable. Again, results revealed similar betas and better diagnostics than the full model $F(5, 239) = 25.14$, $p = .000$. Tolerance levels were .699 and higher and the condition index was 13.53. Based on these results, collinearity was no longer a concern and it conceptually made sense to include all variables in this analysis.

Test Assumptions

The assumptions of multiple regression were addressed prior to completing these analyses. Level of measurement was examined and met the requirements of this test, with the outcome variables being interval or ratio level and the predictor variables being at least nominal. All the observations were independent and the distribution of the values of the dependent variable *ESP awareness* were normal, although *ESP utilization* was somewhat skewed.

Before estimating the coefficients for the first hypothesis, it was necessary to rule out that there was a curved relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. To address this assumption of linearity, a scatterplot matrix was obtained for the predictor variables *global perception of violence*, *time addressing violence*, *types of violence – student/staff*, *types of violence – practitioner*, *number of*

years worked, *self-estimate of preparedness*, and *confidence teaching* and the independent variable *ESP awareness*. There was no evidence of a curved relationship between any of the independent variables and *ESP awareness*. The same process was completed for the second hypothesis. A scatterplot matrix was obtained for the predictor variables *global perception of violence*, *time addressing violence*, *types of violence – student/staff*, *types of violence – practitioner*, *number of years worked*, *self-estimate of preparedness*, *confidence teaching,* and *ESP awareness* and the independent variable *utilization*. Again, there were no pronounced curvatures to the relationships.

Hypothesis One

To test the first hypothesis, the reported level of violence variables were entered first and the practitioner capabilities variables entered second. The first block included the four predictor variables for reported level of violence: *global perception of violence*, *time addressing violence*, *types of violence - student/staff,* and *types of violence – practitioner.* The second block included the following six predictor variables related to practitioner capabilities: *number of years worked, highest degree, self-estimate of preparedness*, *confidence teaching, familiarity with the term ESP,* and *defining ESP.* The outcome variable was *ESP awareness* (Table 5.11).

An ample 12.8% of the variance in the practitioners' awareness of evidence-supported programs was explained by the total set of predictor variables, F (10, 216) = 3.176, $p < .001$. On Step 1, the subset of reported level of violence predictor variables

Table 5.11
Standardized Betas, F, and R^2 Values for Multiple Regressions of Practitioners' Awareness of Evidence-supported Programs

Predictor	ESP Awareness β	
Step 1 (Reported Level of Violence)		
Global Perception of Violence	-.012	
Types of Violence – Student/Staff	-.095	
Types of Violence - Practitioner	-.038	
Time Addressing Violence	.163*	
F (4, 222)		1.602
R^2		.028
Step 2 (Adding Practitioner Capabilities)		
Global Perception of Violence	-.042	
Types of Violence – Student/Staff	-.041	
Types of Violence - Practitioner	-.021	
Time Addressing Violence	.149*	
Number of Years Worked	.156*	
Highest Degree	-.031	
Self-estimate of Preparedness	.088	
Confidence Teaching	.188*	
Familiarity With the Term ESP	.139*	
Defining ESP	-.005	
F (10, 216)		6.64**
R^2		.128
R^2 change		.100
F change		4.135**

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$.

did not significantly predict *ESP awareness*, although *time addressing violence* made a unique and significant contribution to the prediction ($\beta = .163, p < .05$). Even though this variable was a significant predictor, when combined with the others in the equation, the entire set failed to reach significance given measurement error and sample size.

When the subset of *practitioner capabilities* variables was added to the equation in Step 2, the practitioners' awareness of evidence-supported programs were

significantly predicted, $F(10, 216) = 6.64, p < .001$. The resulting equation significantly improved the prediction with an additional 10% of variance explained. Significant unique contributions were made to the prediction of *ESP awareness* by *time addressing violence* ($\beta = .149, p < .05$), *number of years worked* ($\beta = .156, p < .05$), *confidence teaching* ($\beta = .188, p < .05$), and *familiarity with the term ESP* ($\beta = .139, p < .05$) after controlling for all other variables. These results indicated that if the practitioner had spent more time addressing violence, had more years of experience as a school social worker, had higher levels of confidence in his/her ability to successfully implement violence interventions, and was familiar with the term "evidence-supported program," that led to a greater number of evidence-supported programs known by the practitioner.

Hypothesis Two

Next, a multiple regression analysis was used to test the second hypothesis: *reported level of violence, practitioner capabilities, and awareness of evidence-supported programs will predict the use of evidence-supported programs*. Predictor variables were again entered as blocks, with the *reported level of violence* variables entered first, the *practitioner capabilities* variables entered second, and the *ESP awareness* variable entered third. The dependent variable was *ESP Utilization*. The first block included the four predictor variables for *reported level of violence*: *global perception of violence*, *time addressing violence*, *types of violence - student/staff*, and *types of violence – practitioner*. The second block included the following six predictor variables related to *practitioner capabilities*: *number of years worked,*

highest degree, self-estimate of preparedness, confidence teaching, familiarity with the term ESP, and *defining ESP*. The third block contained the single predictor variable *ESP awareness* (Table 5.12).

Table 5.12
Standardized Betas, F, and R^2 Values for Multiple Regressions of Practitioners' Utilization of Evidence-supported Programs

Predictor	ESP Utilization β	
Step 1 (Reported Level of Violence)		
Global Perception of Violence	-.132	
Types of Violence – Student/Staff	-.080	
Types of Violence - Practitioner	.009	
Time Addressing Violence	.170*	
F (4, 222)		2.258
R^2		.039
Step 2 (Adding Practitioner Capabilities)		
Global Perception of Violence	-.155	
Types of Violence – Student/Staff	-.023	
Types of Violence - Practitioner	.018	
Time Addressing Violence	.141*	
Number of Years Worked	.161*	
Highest Degree	.006	
Self-estimate of Preparedness	.175*	
Confidence Teaching	.171*	
Familiarity With the Term ESP	.065	
Defining ESP	-.074	
F (10, 216)		4.468**
R^2		.171
R^2 change		.132
F change		5.749**
Step 3 (Adding ESP Awareness)		
Global Perception of Violence	-.136	
Types of Violence – Student/Staff	-.005	
Types of Violence - Practitioner	.027	
Time Addressing Violence	.073	
Number of Years Worked	.090	
Highest Degree	.020	
Self-estimate of Preparedness	.135*	
Confidence Teaching	.085	
Familiarity With the Term ESP	.001	
Defining ESP	-.072	
ESP Awareness	.457**	
F (11, 215)		10.688**
R^2		.354
R^2 change		.182
F change		60.561**

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$.

A substantial 35.4% of the variance in the practitioners' utilization of evidence-supported programs was explained by the total set of predictor variables, F (11, 215) = 10.688, $p < .001$. On Step 1, the subset of *reported level of violence* predictor variables did not significantly predict *ESP utilization*, F (4, 222) = 2.258, p = .064. When the subset of *practitioner capabilities* variables was added to the equation in Step 2, the practitioners' utilization of evidence-supported programs was significantly predicted, F (10, 216) = 4.468, $p < .001$. On Step 3, when *ESP awareness* was added to the other variables, the resulting equation significantly improved the prediction with an additional 18.2% of variance explained.

In the final model, significant unique contributions were made to the prediction of *ESP utilization* by the practitioners' *self-estimate of preparedness* ($\beta = .135$, $p <$ .05), and *ESP awareness* ($\beta = .457$, $p < .001$) after controlling for all other variables. If the practitioner believed that s/he was more prepared to address interpersonal violence and had a higher level of awareness of evidence-supported interventions, this led to the greater utilization of evidence-supported programs.

Question Three: Non-evidence Supported Interventions

In order to answer the third research question, "Outside of evidence-supported programs, what services and programs are being implemented?" descriptive statistics were run for the variable *checklist of services and programs* (Table 5.13). Responses revealed that more than 90% of the school social workers surveyed were implementing the following services or programs: individual behavior plans, parent

meetings/conferences/education, discipline referrals, individual counseling, expulsion/suspension, classroom management, and small group counseling.

Table 5.13

Services and Programs Implemented by School Social Workers

Interventions	*n*	%
Individual behavior plans	245	98.0
Parent meetings/conferences/education	244	97.6
Discipline referrals	243	97.2
Individual counseling	242	96.8
Expulsion/suspension	234	93.6
Classroom management	232	92.8
Small group counseling	230	92.0
Social skills training	222	88.8
Teacher-based classroom intervention	216	86.4
Academic tutoring	201	80.4
During- or after-school detention	195	78.0
Zero tolerance policies	195	78.0
After school sports or clubs	191	76.4
Home visiting	185	74.0
Classroom-based curriculum	172	68.8
Violence crisis intervention	170	68.0
Anti-bullying campaign or curriculum	157	62.8
Pro-social behavior curriculum	151	62.8
Teacher training on violence issues	130	52.0
Peer tutoring	129	51.6
School transfer	129	51.6
Conflict management programs	124	49.6
Mentoring program	123	49.2
Peer mediation program	114	45.6
Friendship clubs	93	37.2
Security guards	89	35.6
Police anti-violence programs	82	32.8
Victim assistance or support services	81	32.4
Skill streaming	80	32.0
Metal detectors, video cameras, surveillance system	77	30.8
Services that address community violence	61	24.4
Anti-gang programs	51	20.4
School uniforms	44	17.6
Church group involvement on campus	23	9.2

A content analysis for *perceived program success* revealed that of the most frequently used interventions, 45.6% of the techniques were Non-ESPs ($N = 114$). Of these Non-ESPs most frequently used, 45.6% of the respondents reported that the technique was "very effective" ($n = 52$) and 45.6% of the respondents reported that the technique was "somewhat effective" ($n = 52$). Of the second most frequently used techniques perceived to be most successful by the respondents 45.6% of the techniques were Non-ESPs ($N = 114$). Of these second most frequently used Non-ESPs, 33.3% of the respondents reported that the technique was "very effective" ($n = 38$) and 58.8% of the respondents reported that the technique was "somewhat effective" ($n = 67$). Of the third most frequently used techniques perceived to be most successful by the respondents, 35.2% of the techniques were Non-ESPs ($N = 88$). Of these third most frequently used Non-ESPs, 38.6% of the respondents reported that the technique was "very effective" ($n = 34$) and 48.9% of the respondents report that the technique was "somewhat effective" ($n = 43$). Table 5.9 displays the means and standard deviations for program effectiveness of non-evidence supported programs perceived to be successful.

Adherence to the curriculum protocol was also considered. Of the Non-ESPs most frequently used, 26.3% of the respondents "always use the full protocol" ($n = 30$). Of the second most frequently used Non-ESPs, 24.6% of the respondents "always use the full protocol" ($n = 28$). Of the third most frequently used Non-ESPs, 28.4% of the respondents "always use the full protocol" ($n = 25$). Table 5.9 displays the means and standard deviations for fidelity of non-evidence supported programs

perceived to be successful. Results related to curriculum adaptation for Non-ESPs due to student culture, socioeconomic status, and disabilities are displayed in Table 5.10.

Question Four: Barriers

The fourth research question, "What are the factors at the district, school, and practitioner level that inhibit the implementation of evidence-supported programs?" will be answered by reporting descriptive statistics for the *barriers* variable (Table 5.14). The top three barriers identified by respondents from the checklist of barriers were as follows: Competing demands to address other subject areas (n = 211), lack of time for adequate preparation (n = 175), and lack of money/resources for purchasing instructional materials (n = 174).

Table 5.14
Barriers to Leading Violence Prevention/Intervention Sessions

Source	*n*	%
Competing demands to address other subject areas	211	84.4
Lack of time for adequate preparation	175	70.0
Lack of money/resources for purchasing instructional materials	174	69.6
Lack of adequate violence prevention/intervention training	156	62.4
Lack of time to attend training	150	60.0
Lack of instructional materials	141	56.4
Lack of knowledge of programs/curriculum	136	54.4
District has not made violence prevention/intervention a high priority	111	44.4
Principal has not made violence prevention/intervention a high priority	101	40.4
Resistance from school board and/or parents	46	18.4

Barriers Identified by Social Workers

Strong academic focus. Table 5.15 lists the top five barriers identified through content analysis of the open-ended *barriers* question, "Please describe any other barriers to your teaching/leading violence prevention/intervention sessions." The two most frequently reported barriers were a strong academic focus and lack of time. Respondents identified a strong academic focus (n = 55) as the number one barrier to leading violence prevention/intervention sessions in their schools.

Table 5.15
Barriers, Recommendations for Overcoming Barriers, and Resources for Effectively Addressing School Violence Identified Through Content Analysis

Source	*n*
Barriers to leading violence intervention sessions (N = 129)	
Strong academic focus	55
Not enough time	32
Lack of staff support	16
Inadequate staffing	15
Competing demands	12
Recommendations for overcoming barriers (N = 122)	
Increase staffing	19
Increase funding	18
More training for all staff	12
Support from administration	11
Collaboration with teachers, students, parents, administrators, community	9
Resources to address school violence more effectively (N = 146)	
More time	28
More resources, materials, curricula	24
Increase staffing	22
More training for all staff	21
Increase funding	17
Support from administrators/involvement of administrators	17

One respondent stated, "Strict mandates to not take academic time from students," while another social worker said, "NCLB creating an environment of great stress, causing teachers to fill every minute with academics and resist implementing classroom interventions. No pressure from administration due to academic improvement being paramount."

Lack of time. The second most significant barrier identified by respondents was a lack of time (n = 32). One social worker described the challenge of finding time to lead school violence intervention sessions, "As a school social worker in four buildings, I feel I am stretched pretty thin to do an adequate job of leading violence prevention or intervention sessions." Another social worker clearly echoed this same theme, "Time for adequate preparation and presentation of information is the biggest barrier."

Recommendations for Overcoming Barriers

Increase in staffing. Further content analysis revealed numerous suggestions for overcoming these barriers (Table 5.15). An increase in staffing and an increase in funding were the two most frequent responses to the question, "Please give any comments, suggestions, or recommendations for overcoming barriers." Several respondents believed that an increase in staff (n = 19) would assist in overcoming these barriers. One social worker said it would help her to have, "More trained staff to implement programs in large schools," while another respondent stated, "I'd love it if they hired another social worker." A social worker from a large school said, "We have over 1800 students in a gang infested community. We need more than one social

worker." Several social workers proposed creative ideas for increasing levels of staffing, such as, "Emphasize the need to have caseload numbers like Speech and Teacher Consultants have in my district," and "A school counselor or another social worker could be hired to go into the classroom or a graduate student could be trained."

Increase in funding. Respondents indicated that an increase in funding (n = 18) would also assist in overcoming the barriers to implementing anti-violence sessions. One respondent stated, "Funding for education is being cut, while the expectations for accountability are increasing. The result is that schools must do more with less. Something has to give." Another respondent offered the following suggestion regarding the problem of funding, "Social work is considered a 'related service' in Minnesota. If this was changed, school districts could perhaps receive better funding from the state for our positions and recognize projects like this that we could implement for them."

Other respondents discussed funding as it related to the role and position of the social worker, recommending, "Increased funding for social workers to work with regular education students" and "More funding for schools so that these can be permanent positions in the school budget." Additionally, social workers talked about the very real issue of the need for funds to obtain materials. One respondent said, "More money to purchase programs," while another said, "We need more money to buy the curriculum. The Substance Abuse and Violence Prevention group lost their funding because they could not prove they were effective."

Help for Social Workers to Address Violence More Effectively

Resources. In response to the question, "What would help you address school violence more effectively?" the social workers identified several resources (Table 5.15). The top four recommendations were more time (n = 28), more resources, materials, curricula (n = 24), increase staffing (n = 22), and more training for all staff (n = 21). Concerning the resource of time, one respondent said it would be helpful to, "Have another 8 hours to do prep and planning to purposefully address this issue vs. dealing with crisis. I see kids two days/week, back-to-back, all day long, no breaks." Another social worker interested in intervention materials talked about the need for, "More free information and supplies." The social workers again emphasized the need for increased staffing, with one respondent stating, "I think it would help if we had enough School Social Workers so we could be in each individual school. We all have about five+ schools that we give services to." Finally, the respondents discussed the need and desire for more training, with one social worker saying, "I would like to learn these programs to implement them more effectively. Teach me the curriculum and I will implement it."

Chapter Six: Discussion

This study represents a substantial contribution to the literature regarding evidence-supported practice in school social work. For the first time, data are available regarding social workers' awareness and utilization of evidence-supported interventions designed to address interpersonal violence in the school context. The study's findings shed light on what school social workers are doing to address school violence, whether or not they are using evidence-supported programs, what predicts their awareness and use of evidence-supported programs, as well as the barriers they face implementing evidence-supported programs.

Multiple regression analysis determined that the practitioner's time addressing violence, years of school social work experience, confidence in successful program implementation, and familiarity with the term "evidence-supported program" predicted the social worker's awareness of evidence-supported programs. The more time the practitioners spent addressing violence, the more years of experience they had as a school social worker, the higher levels of confidence they possessed in their ability to successfully implement violence interventions, and the more familiar they were with the term "evidence-supported program," the greater the number of evidence-supported programs they knew. The impact of practitioner capabilities on practitioner awareness of evidence-supported programs emphasizes the need for high levels of training and preparation of school social workers in the area of school violence.

Further multiple regression analysis determined that a practitioner's level of preparedness to effectively respond to school violence and awareness of evidence-supported programs predicted the use of evidence-supported interventions. The more prepared the practitioners believed they were to address interpersonal violence and the more awareness they had of evidence-supported interventions, the greater their utilization of evidence-supported programs. This highlights the importance of dissemination of information regarding evidence-supported school violence intervention programs, as well as program training for school social workers. It is vital that school social workers know where and how to access evidence-supported resources for addressing school violence. Likewise, a quality social work education should include curriculum related to effective school violence interventions.

The extent to which the school social workers' had awareness of evidence-supported programs was examined. Almost three-fourths of the respondents (69.6%) reported familiarity with the term "evidence-supported program," while well over half of the respondents (61.6%) provided a correct definition of the term. Of the 250 respondents, 247 social workers reported having awareness of at least one evidence-supported program. It is encouraging that well over half of the respondents had an understanding of the term "evidence-supported program" and nearly all of the respondents were aware of at least one evidence-supported program. This demonstrates that the majority of school social workers surveyed are aware of the concept of evidence-supported interventions and are being exposed, at least limitedly, to effective school violence intervention programs.

Also examined was the extent to which the school social workers utilized evidence-supported programs. Despite 98.8% of the respondents being aware of at least one ESP, only 72.4% of the respondents reported using an evidence-supported program during the last three years. It is notable that 26.4% fewer school social workers utilized an evidence-supported program than reported awareness of one. Interestingly, even though most school social workers have awareness of evidence-based programs, that awareness is not always permeating their practice. The forthcoming discussion regarding barriers, such as limited time to address violence, sheds light upon this data.

The non-evidence supported interventions implemented by the practitioners were explored. Results indicate that social workers are simultaneously implementing many different types of intervention strategies. In response to the survey checklist of programs and services, a large majority of the school social workers indicated they are utilizing numerous services and techniques that are non-evidence supported, such as individual behavior plans (98%), discipline referrals (97.2%), and individual counseling (96.8%). Of the most frequently used programs identified by the respondents, the number of social workers using non-evidence supported programs (n = 114) just slightly exceeded the number of respondents implementing evidence-supported programs (n = 99). Of the second and third most frequently implemented programs, the number of practitioners utilizing non-evidence supported programs exceeded those using evidence-supported programs by more than 50%. This may suggest that non-evidence supported programs may be more accessible or easier to

implement. It may also indicate that school social workers are utilizing non-evidence supported techniques that they have been trained to implement and believe to be effective. No matter what the reason, this frequent use of non-evidence supported interventions raises an ethical issue, since social workers are obligated by the profession to use evidence-supported practices.

It is interesting to note that the respondents reported virtually no difference in the levels of effectiveness of the non-evidence supported programs compared to the evidence-supported programs. The rates of fidelity to curriculum protocol varied slightly for the implementation of non-evidence supported programs versus evidence-supported programs. Of the three most frequently used non-evidence supported programs, less than 30% of the respondents always use the full protocol, whereas less than 25% of the respondents implementing evidence-supported programs always use the full protocol. This could indicate that adhering to the curricular protocols for evidence-supported programs may be somewhat more difficult than adhering to those of non-evidence supported programs. An inadequate level of support for practitioners to implement evidence-supported programs should also be considered as a possible explanation for this lower level of fidelity.

Finally, barriers that influence the social workers' ability to implement evidence-supported school violence intervention programs were identified. The number one barrier identified from a checklist provided to the respondents was competing demands to address other subject areas, while the number one response to the qualitative question on barriers was an intense focus on academic subject areas.

Both of these findings indicate that the school social workers are most frequently confronted with the obstacle of academics taking priority over the need to address the behavioral objectives of the students. Similarly, the second most frequently identified barrier from both the survey checklist and the content analysis was lack of time. The results from both of these analyses demonstrate that school social workers are clearly indicating that the need to address other subject areas and an inadequate amount of time are critical barriers to implementing evidence-supported interventions. The role of the social worker as a secondary provider of services within the educational setting likely accounts for this.

Overall, these findings have implications for university and school district training programs, can inform national and state policy regarding the dissemination and use of evidence-supported programs, and can be used by organizations of school social workers to address the issues surrounding the implementation of evidence-supported programs to prevent school violence. This knowledge can be put in the context of the existing literature, including research regarding social workers addressing school violence, as well as studies related to practitioners' awareness and use of evidence-supported programs in the area of children's mental health and school-based substance-use prevention programs.

Prediction of Awareness

Astor et al. (1997) found a link between reported level of school violence and the practitioner's knowledge of intervention techniques. In the Astor study, a hierarchical linear regression confirmed that the social workers' prior training in

violence intervention was a significant predictor of the social worker's perception of violence as a problem. Astor found that social workers who had received training in violence intervention were more likely to perceive violence as a problem in their schools. Similarly, this study found a link between the social workers' reported level of violence in their schools and their awareness of evidence-supported intervention techniques.

Astor's research indicated that the social worker's perception of the level of violence was contingent on the presence of multiple types of violence (Astor et al., 1997). Although not tested in this study, participants in the Astor study were more likely to report a larger problem with violence in their schools as the number of types of violent events increased. Due to Astor's results, one might expect that the perceived size of the problem of violence and the types and number of violent events would be strong predictors of awareness of evidence-supported programs in this study, but actually, time spent addressing violence was a stronger predictor of awareness of evidence-supported programs than either of these. Results demonstrate that the amount of time a school social worker spends addressing violence significantly predicts the practitioner's awareness of evidence-based school violence intervention programs.

The research group ORC Macro found practitioner capabilities to be related to knowledge of evidence-supported children's mental health programs (Sheehan, 2005). In the ORC Macro study, a stepwise logistical regression confirmed that education predicted knowledge of the concept of evidence-based treatment. The more education

the practitioners had, the more likely they were able to correctly define the term "evidence-based treatment." The current study also found a link between practitioner capabilities and awareness of evidence-supported programs. Similarly, survey results revealed that the more highly capable the school social workers, the more likely they will seek out and have awareness of evidence-supported programs. Results indicate that confidence teaching, familiarity with the term "evidence-supported program," and years of experience predicted awareness of evidence-supported programs.

Prediction of Utilization

Ennett and colleagues (2003) reported that practitioner capabilities are related to the use of effective intervention methods and delivery of evidence-supported programs in alcohol and drug abuse prevention. Ennett found that the better prepared or well trained the practitioners, the more likely they will implement effective programs. Specifically, Ennett found that having a graduate degree was positively associated with using effective content and delivery methods. She also found the practitioners' comfort using effective intervention methods and recent training were both significantly correlated with the use of evidence-based programs (Ennett et al., 2003). This study supports Ennett's findings, with practitioner capabilities predicting the use of evidence-supported programs. The higher the social workers' self-estimates of preparedness, the more frequently the social workers used evidence-supported programs.

Of the respondents in the ORC Macro study who did not use evidence-based treatments, some indicated that they did not use evidence-based treatments because

they lacked familiarity with them (Walrath et al., 2006). Similarly, this study found that the practitioners' level of awareness of evidence-supported programs predicted their utilization of evidence-supported programs. This is supported by the ORC Macro results and is a very significant finding and a new contribution to the literature. Most important, school social workers need to know about a variety of evidence-supported programs in order to use them. Practitioners need to be exposed to evidence-supported programs – dissemination predicts utilization.

Acquiring Evidence-supported Programs

Unfortunately, many of the practitioners clearly indicated that they are not exposed to the effectiveness literature, with a total of 54.7% of the respondents either stating they have not tried to locate evidence-supported programs or have had difficulty locating evidence-supported programs. Overall, the school social workers do not know which programs work and, in some cases, do not even know where to look for evidence-supported programs. Respondents discussed the difficulty of wading through copious advertisement materials for intervention programs, yet being uncertain of the effectiveness. Likewise, some respondents in the ORC Macro study also stated questionable research as a reason they did not obtain and use evidence-based treatments (Walrath et al., 2006).

Other social workers in this study reported not knowing how or where to access information on evidence-supported programs. The implication of these findings is that use of evidence-supported programs must be more widely promoted. The issue of locating evidence-supported programs is further complicated by the fact that the

practitioners also indicated that intervention programs are cost prohibitive. Again, the ORC Macro study echoes this theme (Walrath et al., 2006). A lack of funds combined with a lack of awareness about effective programs creates a situation where school social workers do not want to spend their limited budgets to purchase a program that may not work.

Utilization of Interventions

Despite the concerns about acquiring evidence-supported programs, the majority of school social workers are using at least one evidence-supported program. Interestingly, the lower the age/grade levels served by the social workers, the greater percentage of social workers utilized at least one evidence-supported program. This may be indicative of fewer time constraints in the settings with the younger students and lower grade levels, with perhaps fewer academic requirements and greater emphasis on social competence.

These practitioners reported that the interventions are fairly effective, but their levels of fidelity to these interventions are surprisingly low. The ORC Macro study also found that evidence-based treatments were typically not implemented according to the full and recommended protocol (Walrath et al., 2006). Walrath et al. (2006) suggested this lack of fidelity could be because the majority of the practitioners worked for organizations that did not require the use of evidence-based treatments. Similar to the ORC Macro respondents, the school social work practitioners in this study are aware of evidence-supported programs, yet have difficulty implementing them faithfully according to protocols. This indicates that training issues must be

addressed in order to ensure that the programs are implemented as intended, and shown to be effective.

The practitioners emphasized the reasonable need to individualize the programs for the culture, age, ability, and specific needs of the students. Despite recent emphasis in the research literature regarding interpersonal violence perpetrated by girls, specifically relational aggression (Crick, 1997; McEnvoy et al., 2003), the social workers did not discuss gender as a reason for individualizing an intervention. This is surprising, as the respondents estimated girls are perpetrating nearly 30% of the violence at their schools. It seems reasonable and necessary to address the specific issues of the violent female student.

Interestingly, the number one reason for low fidelity was not the need for individualization, but a lack of time. School social workers clearly stated that there is not enough time to work with the students effectively. This is a source of frustration for the practitioners because this lack of time obstructs the social workers' ability to address the behavioral objectives of individual students, as well as the overall school community. Again, it is worth mentioning that the issue of time may be "built into" the position of the school social worker as a secondary service provider within the educational setting. The primary purpose of educating students in academic areas is of greatest importance in the school environment, resulting in time constraints for the school-based social worker.

Despite the fact that most of school social workers surveyed are implementing at least one evidence-supported program, more than 90% are regularly implementing

numerous interventions that are non-evidence supported. Overall, the social workers reported similar levels of effectiveness of evidence-supported programs and non-evidence supported programs, but it is important to note that they are implementing the evidence-supported programs less often. This may indicate that the non-evidence supported interventions may be easier to implement or more conducive to the educational environment and the social worker's job constraints.

Barriers

A lack of time and a lack of funding were recurring themes discussed by the practitioners as barriers to the use of evidence-supported programs. Similarly, the ORC Macro study found that practitioners frequently mentioned a lack of time and programs being too costly as reasons for not using evidence-supported interventions (Walrath et al., 2006). Competing demands to address other subject areas and a strong academic focus significantly contribute to the problem of time and make it difficult for school social workers to do an adequate job of addressing interpersonal violence.

Many respondents specifically identified the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy as the cause of an intense focus on academics and testing. Interestingly, a recent poll by Phi Delta Kappa and Gallup found that nearly six in ten U.S. citizens who are familiar with No Child Left Behind believe it has had no effect or actually harms schools (Rose & Gallup, 2006). An August 22, 2006 press release from the National Education Association (NEA) reports that in an NEA member poll conducted in June 2006, nearly half of the members (48%) stated they believe that NCLB has hurt the conditions for teaching and learning at the schools in which they work; only

30% of members say that NCLB has helped. An overwhelming majority (84%) think there is too much reliance on standardized tests. Addressing these barriers of time, cost, and strong academic focus is critical if the students affected by interpersonal violence are going to be effectively treated. Wentzel (1991; 2000) suggests that students' social competence can strongly influence their academic performance. The connection between social skills training and the improvement of a student's academic performance should be considered as a means of linking behavioral and academic goals, thereby reducing the barriers faced by the social worker while continuing to provide an academic focus for the student.

Practice Implications

In recent years, with the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act in 2001, more commonly known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), teachers have been put in the position of having to demonstrate that what they are teaching is effective (Collins & Salzberg, 2005). The legislation mandates that all teachers use evidence-based practices in their classrooms. In addition, NCLB allows school districts to reward teachers for increased student achievement with monetary compensation through a $500 million Teacher Incentive Fund (Lewis, 2005).

Linking funding to attempts to close the sciences-to-services gap is not unique to the field of education. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Center for Mental Health Services is currently sponsoring a national project to promote the widespread adoption of six evidence-based practices for adults with serious mental illness (Herndon, 2003). The project is

developing, testing, revising, and disseminating comprehensive resource toolkits that will enable practitioners to replicate evidence-based practices successfully in their community settings. In addition, SAMHSA offers Community Action Grants to help communities explore exemplary practices, while SAMHSA and the National Institute of Mental Health have a joint project that gives states funding to plan for the implementation of evidence-based programs.

In an unprecedented state directive, the Oregon legislature adopted Senate Bill 267 (ORS 182.525, 2003) requiring the state Office of Mental Health and Addictions Services, the Department of Corrections, the Oregon Youth Authority, the State Commission on Children and Families, and the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission to demonstrate that set percentages of their program dollars support evidence-based interventions. In this current two-year budget cycle, the state behavioral health agency will have to show that 25% of its funding supported evidence-based programs. That percentage is mandated to rise to 50% in the 2007-2009 budget cycle and to 75% in the 2009-2011 biennium (Fitzpatrick, 2004).

Likewise, the NASW policy statement on adolescent health calls for a minimum of 25% of all physical health, mental health, and substance abuse dollars to be spent on research-based interventions (Thompson & Henderickson, 2002). During the past several years, editors of prominent NASW journals have called for research articles in the area of evidence-based practice in the school context (Franklin, 2001; Proctor, 2002).

Although the use of evidence-supported interventions has yet to be mandated for school social workers, it is critical that these practitioners be able to document the effectiveness of their interventions. The non-evidence supported programs that social workers are frequently using and finding effective need to be evaluated. School social work practitioners need to collaborate with evaluators and researchers to document the effectiveness of these interventions. These programs could also then be packaged and information about the effective interventions could be disseminated to other school social workers across the country.

The need for the individualization of evidence-supported programs also must be seriously considered. Similar to this study, the ORC Macro research found that practitioners believed that no one treatment could be applied to all children (Walrath et al., 2006). Social workers have long been concerned that violence disproportionately affects women, individuals from racial and ethnic minority groups, and gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals (Proctor, 2002). Accordingly, programs need to be developed that address the needs and concerns of specific student groups, including such differences as culture, ability levels of the learners, and gender (Pollack & Sundermann, 2001; Small & Tetrick, 2001). Practitioners who have developed or successfully adapted a program to meet the needs of a specific population need a means for sharing this information with other school social workers who may be working with a similar population.

In addition, developers of evidence-supported programs need to consider the crucial issue of time in implementing an intervention in the school setting. Programs

need to conserve time, but still remain effective. Social workers stated they would benefit from an increase in both staffing and funding. We need to encourage creative ways to increase this capital, such as having professional organizations distribute information about grants and encouraging school social workers to apply. Finally, school social workers need both affordable resources and widely distributed, highly visible information about evidence-supported programs. School social work organizations can support and assist this process. For example, NASW youth policies advocate for effective services and programs that are universally available and accessible (Thompson & Henderickson, 2002). Social workers need to have the information that will enable them to wisely spend their limited funds.

Policy Implications

Policy changes need to be made in order for school social workers to have adequate time for addressing interpersonal violence. Clearly, school safety is a political priority, but the same system that wants the practitioner to address school violence also sets the social worker up for failure by not allowing for adequate integration of anti-violence interventions into the academic curriculum. Research should be considered on the effects of certain aspects of No Child Left Behind and other policies that make student testing paramount and that may negatively affect the time social workers have to work with students. Practitioners need creative and new ideas for incorporating social work services into the regular school day and into the academic objectives of the school environment. Policy changes that mandate behavioral intervention/prevention efforts with students, outside and in addition to the

special education realm need to be considered. Likewise, policy makers should mandate the use of evidence-supported programs to address violence in our schools. If this were to occur, a process could then be created for providing school districts with a list of evidence-supported school violence intervention and prevention programs. In this current educational environment of tight budgets and high accountability, it is clear that we need to get more and better information out to school social workers regarding evidence-supported programs.

Limitations

Although this study contributes to our understanding of school social workers' awareness and use of evidence-supported school violence intervention programs, the results are limited in generalizability for two reasons. First, the study was limited to those affiliated with SSWAA and may not be generalizable to the larger school social worker population. Members of this school social work professional organization may have more education, they may be more involved in their profession, and they may have similar levels of exposure to school violence interventions and training opportunities.

Additionally, the organization does not keep statistics on its membership, and it is therefore impossible to know if the sample is representative of the individuals on SSWAA's membership rolls. It is possible to compare the demographics of the respondents in this study with that of the Astor study. Astor's respondents were similar to this study's respondents in several ways, including gender (88.8% female), ethnicity (88.4% white), age (40.5% fell between 40-49), education (95% had an

MSW), years worked as a school social worker ($M = 9$), years worked in current district ($M = 7$), and community setting (37% suburban, 15% inner city, 15% urban, not inner city, 11% rural). It is important to note that Astor's sample was said to reflect the general demographics of NASW membership at the time of his survey, specifically with respect to gender, ethnicity, and age (Astor et al., 2000).

Second, the low response rate (12.7%) indicates that the sample may not be representative of the population. Astor's mail survey of school social workers had a much higher response rate, but for a web survey, the response rate is expected to be lower (Solomon, 2001). A literature review conducted by the RAND Corporation (Schonlau, Fricker, & Elliot, 2002) reported a range of response rates to web-based surveys of 8% to 62%. One study conducted similarly to this survey, with college faculty as participants, had a response rate of 19% (Jones & Pitt, 1999). The ORC Macro study obtained a 44% response rate for their web-based survey, but it should be noted that although the survey was designed as a web-based survey, hard copies were made available to respondents upon request. In addition, a reminder follow-up letter and a hard-copy survey were mailed to those who had not yet responded (Walrath et al., 2006).

Unfortunately, it is not possible to compare the response rate of this study to previous SSWAA membership surveys, as only one previous survey has been administered and no information is available regarding the response rate of that survey. Additionally, it was discovered that some members on the SSWAA e-mail list are no longer practitioners in a school setting. Several social workers e-mailed the

researcher with this information, but there were likely more who did not. This factor would actually have the potential to increase the response rate, as an unknown number of social workers may have inappropriately received the survey.

With web surveys, the issue of multiple submissions is a potential problem (Solomon, 2001). This issue was addressed by asking respondents to participate only once, removing any incentive to participate more than once, and by reviewing the data for identical or nearly identical records. A process called filtering is used to deal with highly similar submissions. After reviewing the data, there was no evidence that filtering for multiple submissions was required. In addition, the WebSurveyor program would not allow the same e-mail address to complete the survey more than once.

The concern that someone other than a school social worker completed the survey was addressed by requesting that only school social workers complete the survey and, again, by removing any incentive for someone other than a school social worker to participate in the study. This issue was also dealt with by sending an introductory e-mail letter and link to the survey directly to the school social workers, requesting that they participate.

The use of a web-based survey could have created another limitation by reducing the likelihood of respondents from inner city or poorly funded schools completing the survey, eliminating the possibility of data from these important constituents. Schools with limited funds and technological capabilities may not have the resources for a school social worker to have internet access. This is an important consideration, as

lower income schools may have higher incidences of interpersonal violence, and this study would be lacking those data. Similarly, the possibility of the web-based survey excluding practitioners from certain ethnic minority groups must also be considered. The ORC Macro study found that race was the only significant difference between hard-copy respondents and web-based respondents. Walrath et al. (2006) reported that a significantly higher percentage of hard-copy respondents were African-American.

Finally, this study does not capture all of the issues facing school social workers addressing interpersonal violence, such as the issue of school climate or social workers' theories about violence, and how these theories affect the way they address the problem. These issues are potential avenues for future research. However, despite these limitations, the present study identifies issues that will assist in addressing the research-practice gap in the school setting and provides key findings related to the awareness and use of evidence-supported programs designed to address school violence.

Future Research

Due to the scope of this national survey, a number of additional analyses can be completed. Immediately following the conclusion of this study, the relationship between school climate and the use of evidence-supported school violence intervention programs will be examined. Ennett (2003) found that a supportive school environment predicted the use of school-based evidence-supported substance use prevention programs. Of Ennett's respondents who used any one of a list of ten evidence-based programs, a sense of community spirit in the school was associated

with best practices. The potential connection between the attitudes of school personnel, school culture, levels of support from administrators, teachers, and parents and the use of evidence-supported programs will be studied.

With mandates for school social workers addressing interpersonal violence being only a matter of time, district policies regarding the implementation of school violence interventions will also be studied. It would be important to learn how many school districts currently require school violence prevention or intervention programs, as well as how many districts mandate the use of evidence-supported intervention programs.

As this study is only the second known national survey of school social workers, next to the Astor survey (1997), there are additional analyses that will be conducted and then compared to Astor's research. Astor investigated whether social workers who reported potentially lethal events also perceived their schools as having a serious violence problem. As with the Astor study, the social workers' perception of violence as a problem will be compared to the types of violence perpetrated at their schools. The community setting will also be examined in relation to the social workers' rating of the problem of violence, as Astor found that the location of the school significantly predicted the social workers' perception of a school problem with violence.

Practitioner training issues will be examined, specifically, "In what context are school social workers being trained to implement school violence intervention programs?" and "Are school social workers being trained to use evidence-supported

school violence interventions?" Astor et al. (1998) also researched the training of school social workers to address the problem of school violence. Astor found that the majority of the respondents received school violence intervention training in conference settings (70%) and school district in-service programs (62%). Surprisingly, Astor found that more than half of the school social workers obtained this training through self-education (56%). Social worker levels of preparedness to address school violence will also be examined in relation to the context in which the practitioners received their training. This analysis has the potential to identify effective formats for training social workers to feel adequately prepared to address interpersonal violence in the school context. The likelihood that programs will be implemented as intended, and thus yield maximum benefits, will be enhanced by training.

Moving beyond the scope of this study, other research could include designing and evaluating a training intervention for school social workers to increase their awareness of evidence-supported programs and learn effective ways to implement those programs. The social workers' level of adherence to the programs as taught could also be evaluated. Future research should include an investigation of school violence intervention programs that are commonly used and effectiveness studies on those that are thought to be particularly promising.

Nearly one decade after the first national survey of school social workers, this study and plan for future research, represents the continuation of the groundbreaking research of Astor et al. (1997) examining the issue of social workers confronting

school violence. This study is timely, yet at the same time, long overdue. Many concerns regarding interpersonal violence in the school context remain the same, yet this study broadens the research of the past, focusing attention upon the contemporary and vital issue of evidence-supported practice, highlighting the need to infuse research into the practice of school social workers addressing violence. As awareness of evidence-supported programs is linked to utilization, future research should include an investigation into how best to increase school social workers' awareness of evidence-supported programs.

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School Violence Intervention Strategies

Study/Program	Type of Intervention	Theory Base	Method of Measuring	Data Sources & Sample Size	Research Design	Outcomes/ Effectiveness
Using sixth-grade school records to predict school violence, chronic discipline problems, and high school outcomes. (Tobin & Sugai, 1999)	Tracking behavior School records and discipline referrals as an effective way to assess, monitor and predict school violence, versus being used as interventions themselves.	Criminology	Review of archival records	Discipline referrals $n = 526$	Longitudinal research study - archival review of a randomly selected sample of students over a six-year period	Results supported the use of records of discipline referrals as a screening device to identify sixth grade students who were at risk for violent behavior, chronic discipline problems, or school failure.
Preventing school violence: The use of office discipline referrals to assess and monitor school-wide discipline interventions. (Sugai, Sprague, Horner, & Walker, 2000)	Tracking behavior Discipline referrals provide an indicator of the status of school-wide behavior and to improve the precision of universal interventions for all students and their targeted interventions for students with severe problem behaviors	Criminology	Review of school records – discipline referral database	Discipline referrals $n = 18,598$ 21 academic years of data.	Analysis of school databases containing discipline information. Descriptive statistics	Results indicated universal intervention support reform is needed when the percentage of students receiving one or more referrals per year exceeds 20. Reform of selected behavior support systems would be warranted if the school had more than 10 children with 10 or more referrals, and reform of the targeted intervention systems would be called for if the 5% of students with the most referrals accounted for greater than 60% of all referrals.

Study/Program	Type of Intervention	Theory Base	Method of Measuring	Data Sources & Sample Size	Research Design	Outcomes/ Effectiveness
School violence: Prevalence and intervention strategies for at-risk adolescents. (Cirillo et al., 1998).	Selective Social cognitive small group with 10 weekly sessions	Social Cognitive/ Social Information Processing Theory	Questionnaire gathering demographic, violence, and drug/alcohol use information. Questions from the Student Health Survey were included.	Students $n = 43$	Experimental design pretest, posttest, and follow-up	Effectiveness not substantiated by this study. A two-way ANOVA revealed no significant differences between the experimental and control groups ($p = .12$).
Validating school social work: An evaluation of a cognitive-behavioral approach to reduce school violence. (Whitfield, 1999)	Indicated Small group 12-session anger control training program	Cognitive-behavioral theory	Self-Control Rating Scale Child Behavior Checklist Teacher's Report Form	Students in day treatment, teachers, and parents $n = 16$	Experimental design	The anger control training students presented fewer behavioral problems on a weekly basis when compared with the students not receiving the anger control training; only four of the eight students presented favorable response patterns following the intervention.
Prevention strategies for at-risk students and students with EBD in urban elementary schools. (Kamps, Kravits, Stolze, & Swaggart, 1999).	Indicated Classroom management, social skills, peer tutoring in reading	Social Cognitive Theory	Direct observation measures Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders Teacher rating of student behavior (Using a survey developed by the experimenters.)	Observation of students Teachers $n = 52$	Quasi-experimental design	Significant differences between the two groups in on-task, positive recess interaction and play, aggression, and out-of-seat behaviors. Significant differences for appropriately requesting attention, following directions, and reducing disruptive behaviors for the target group.

Study/Program	Type of Intervention	Theory Base	Method of Measuring	Data Sources & Sample Size	Research Design	Outcomes/ Effectiveness
An effective approach to violence prevention: Traditional martial arts in middle school. (Zivin et al., 2001).	Indicated Traditional martial arts	Relational model/ Attachment theory	Sutter-Eyberg Inventory of Student Behavior Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale Intermediate Visual and Auditory Continous Performance Test	Teachers and students *n = 60*	Profile-matched, randomly assigned, wait-list control group	Juvenile boys (age 12-14) at high risk for violence and delinquency showed decreased violence and positive changes in psychological risk factors following the intervention.
Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum (Committee for Children, 1992; Grossman et al., 1997)	Universal Classroom-based curriculum consisting of three units geared toward teaching social skills related to empathy, impulse control, and anger management	Social Cognitive Theory / Social Information Processing Theory	Achenbach CBCL and Teacher Report Form School Social Behavior Scale Parent-Child Rating Scale Direct observation	Observation of students Teachers Parents *n* = 790	Randomized controlled trial 6 matched pairs of schools	There was no significant difference in the change scores between the intervention and control schools for any of the parent-reported or teacher-reported behavior scales. At a 2-week follow-up, the behavioral observations did reveal an overall decrease in physical aggression ($p = .03$) and an increase in pro-social/neutral behavior ($p = .04$) in the intervention group compared with the control group.

Study/Program	Type of Intervention	Theory Base	Method of Measuring	Data Sources & Sample Size	Research Design	Outcomes/ Effectiveness
FAST Track – Family and Schools Together (McDonald, 1992)	Universal Program components include: (a) parent training, (b) home visiting/ case management, (c) social skills training, (d) academic tutoring, and (e) teacher-based classroom intervention.	Social Information Processing Theory/Family Systems Theory/Family Stress Theory/Social Ecological Theory	Family Environment Scale, FACES III, CBCL – external, SSRS, Revised Behavior Problems Checklists, Questionnaires about parental involvement Demographic questionnaires Evaluation instruments	Child, teacher and parent reports $n = 249$	Randomized design with a non-intervention control group.	Preliminary results are mixed, with clear indications that the intervention is changing social-cognitive information processing and reducing some aggressive behaviors, but the effect sizes are not large.
PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) Curriculum (Kusche & Greenberg, 1994)	Universal Focuses on the school and classroom settings, but information and activities are also included for use with parents.	Social Information Processing Theory/Social Cognitive Theory/Emotional Intelligence/Affective-Behavioral-Cognitive-Dynamic	Child Depression Inventory WISC-R Test of Cognitive Abilities	Parents, teachers and students $n = 236$ typical students $n = 126$ students with special needs $n = 57$ deaf/hearing impaired students	Three controlled studies with randomized control versus experimental groups (using one year of PATHS implementation with pretest, post-test, and follow-up data).	Improved protective factors and reduced behavioral risk factors, including decreased reports of conduct problems, including aggression.

Study/Program	Type of Intervention	Theory Base	Method of Measuring	Data Sources & Sample Size	Research Design	Outcomes/ Effectiveness
Training elementary school students to manage conflict. (Johnson, D. & Johnson, K., 1995)	Universal Peer mediation	Social Information Processing Theory	Total Recall Test Delayed Total Recall Measure Conflict Scenario Written Measure Conflict Scenario Interview Measure Conflict Resolution Interview Schedule	Students, teachers and administrators $n = 227$	Experimental design	Results from interviews indicated that students successfully learned the negotiation and mediation procedures, were able to apply the procedures in actual conflict situations, and maintained this knowledge throughout the academic school year. Outcomes not measured.
PeaceBuilders (Embry, Flannery, Vazsonyi, Powell, & Atha, 1996)	Universal School-wide violence prevention program	Social Cognitive Theory	Achenbach's TRF Child self-report	Teachers and students $n > 4,000$	8 matched schools randomly assigned to immediate post-baseline intervention or to a delayed intervention. Hierarchical linear modeling	The results indicated that students in grades K-2 in the immediate-intervention schools rated significantly higher by teachers on social competence than control students, while students in grades 3-5 exhibited moderate effects. Third- to fifth-grade students in the immediate-intervention schools were also rated by teachers as significantly less aggressive than students in non-intervention schools.
School uniforms and safety. (Stanley, 1996)	Universal School uniforms	Social Control Theory	Review of District Records	School Principals District database $n = 5,800$	Longitudinal study Analysis of district database.	In the first year following implementation: overall school crime decreased by 36%; sex offenses, by 74%; physical fights between students, by 51%; weapons offenses, by 50%; assault and battery offenses, by 34%; school suspensions, by 32%; and vandalism, by 18% It is unclear whether drops in violence were a result of the school uniform policy.

Study/Program	Type of Intervention	Theory Base	Method of Measuring	Data Sources & Sample Size	Research Design	Outcomes/ Effectiveness
Classroom-based social skills training: Impact on peer acceptance of first-grade students. (Choi & Heckenlaible-Gotto, 1998)	Universal Classroom-based social skills training	Social Cognitive Theory	Work With peer rating scale Play With peer rating scale	Students $n = 25$	Experimental design Pretest/ posttest	Treatment group scores increased significantly between the pretest and posttest measures for the Work With peer rating scale ($p = .04$), but not for the Play With peer rating scale ($p = .30$). No significant increases or decreases were found for the control group on either the Work With peer rating scale ($p = .26$) or the Play With peer rating scale ($p = .70$). Students in the treatment group made statistically significant gains in peer acceptance during work-related activities.
The dark side of zero tolerance: Can punishment lead to safe schools?, (Skiba & Peterson, 1999)	Universal Zero tolerance policy	Criminology	Surveys	School principals or disciplinarians $n = 1,234$	Random sample survey	The National Center for Education Statistics found that schools that use zero tolerance policies are still *less safe* than those without such policies.
Making Choices (Fraser, Nash, Galinsky, & Darwin, 2000)	Universal A teacher-directed, skills-training program.	Social Information Processing Theory	Student surveys Teacher rating scales	Students Teachers $n = 70$	Pre- and post-test measures	Ability of students in the non-aggressive-accepted and aggressive-accepted subgroups to encode social cues and to distinguish pro-social goals increased. The aggressive-rejected and non-aggressive rejected students failed to demonstrate significant gains at post-test.

Study/Program	Type of Intervention	Theory Base	Method of Measuring	Data Sources & Sample Size	Research Design	Outcomes/ Effectiveness
Incredible Years Series (Webster-Stratton, 1991a, 1991b, 1995)	Combined: Universal and Indicated A set of three comprehensive, multi-faceted, and developmentally-based curricula for parents, teachers, and children	Social Cognitive Theory/ Social Information Processing Theory	Home and school observations Child social skills, attribution and self-esteem testing	Parents, teachers and students $n = 133$	Randomized control group evaluations	The outcomes indicated significant: increases in children's positive affect and cooperation with teachers, positive interactions with peers, school readiness and engagement with school activities; reductions in peer aggression in the classroom; increases in children's appropriate cognitive problem-solving strategies and more prosocial conflict management strategies with peers; and reductions in conduct problems at home and school.
Bullying Prevention Program (Olweus, 1993; Olweus, Limber, & Mihalic, 1999)	Combined: Universal and Indicated School-wide, classroom, and individual components	Social Cognitive Theory	Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire	Students, school personnel, and parents $n = 6388$	Quasi-experimental "age-cohort" design with time lagged contrasts between adjacent but age-equivalent cohorts.	Found a substantial reduction in students' reports of bullying and victimization; a significant reduction in students' reports of general antisocial behavior; and significant improvements in the "social climate" of the class.

Table of Measures

Concepts	Variables	Survey Item Number	Measures
Practitioner Capabilities			
	Number of years worked	1	Years worked as a school social worker? (Respondent will write in an answer.)
	Highest degree	2	Your highest degree? (1=BSW, 2=MSW, 3=Ph.D./DSW)
	Self-estimate of preparedness	3	How prepared are you to effectively respond to violence at your school? (1=totally unprepared to 7=totally prepared.)
	Confidence teaching	4	How confident are you that you are doing a good job teaching violence prevention/intervention lessons? (1=very confident, 2=somewhat confident, 3=not too confident, 4=not at all confident.)

Concepts	Variables	Survey Item Number	Measures
Practitioner Capabilities (continued)			
	Familiarity with the term ESP	5	Are you familiar with the term "evidence supported program"? (1 = yes, 0 = no, and 2 = don't know)
	Defining ESP	5a 5b	How do you define "evidence-supported program"? Even though you are unfamiliar with the term, how might you define "evidence-supported program"? (1=correct definition and 0=incorrect definition)
ESP Awareness			
	ESP Awareness	6a	*ESP Awareness Scale.* Which, if any, of the following curricula are you aware of? (20 item scale of ESPs. Respondent will choose from 1=aware of program and 0=not aware of program.)

Concepts	Variables	Survey Item Number	Measures
Utilization			
	Utilization	6b	*Utilization Scale.* Which, if any, of the following curricula, available commercially or because your school participated in a research study, did you use? (20 item scale of ESPs. Respondents will choose from 1=used and 0=did not use.)
Reported Level of Violence			
	Reported level of violence	12	How big of a problem is violence at your school? (1=very big problem, 2=big problem, 3=middle size problem, 4=little problem, 5=very little or no problem)

Concepts	Variables	Survey Item Number	Measures
Reported Level of Violence (continued)			
	Types of violence - student/staff	13a	*Student/Staff Violence Checklist.* Has this happened to a student or staff at one of your schools in the past 365 days? (23 item scale of various violent acts. Respondent will choose 1=yes or 0=no and will write in the number of times each act occurred.)
	Types of violence - practitioner	13b	*Practitioner Violence Checklist* Has this happened to you at school in the past 365 days? (23 item scale of various violent acts. Respondent will choose 1=yes or 0=no and will write in the number of times each act occurred.)
	Time addressing violence	14	On average, what percentage of your day is devoted to addressing (intervention and prevention efforts) violent student behaviors? (1=0-10%, 2=5-10%, 3=11-20%...11=91-100%)

Selected Evidence-Supported School Violence Prevention and Intervention Programs

Program Name	Description of Intervention	Author(s)
Aggression Replacement Training: A Comprehensive Intervention for Aggressive Youth	A program combining anger management, moral education, and social skills training for aggressive youth.	Goldstein, Glick, Reiner, Zimmerman, & Coultry (1985).
Bullying Prevention Program	A campaign integrating family, school, and community, to reduce and prevent bully/victim problems.	Olweus (1993).
FAST Track	A multistage program for high-risk youths, grades K to 5; combines, family, child, and school.	McDonald (1992).
Good Behavior Game	A behavior modification program aimed at decreasing early aggression and shy behaviors in elementary-grade children.	Kellam, Rebok, Ialongo, & Mayer (1994).
I Can Problem Solve	A program teaching interpersonal problem-solving skills, interpersonal dialogues, learning consequences of actions, and social competence.	Shure (1992).

Program Name	Description of Intervention	Author(s)
Incredible Years Series	A set of three comprehensive, multi-faceted, and developmentally-based curricula for parents, teachers, and children.	Webster-Stratton (1991a, 1991b, 1995).
PATHS - Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies	A curriculum that develops emotional and social competencies and helps to reduce aggression in children in grades K to 5.	Kusche & Greenberg (1994).
Peacebuilders	A school wide program implemented by staff and students; fosters a positive school climate for students in grades K to 6+.	Embry, Flannery, Vazsonyi, Powell, & Atha (1996).
Positive Adolescents Choices Training (P.A.C.T.)	Twenty one-hour weekly group sessions focusing on social skills training, violence violence awareness, and anger management for African-American youth.	Yung & Hammond (1998).

Program Name	Description of Intervention	Author(s)
Behavioral Monitoring and Reinforcement Program (Formerly Preventive Intervention)	A curriculum focused on preventing juvenile delinquency, substance use, and school failure for high-risk middle and high school students.	Bry (1982).
Resolving Conflict Creatively Program	A curriculum that integrates conflict resolution and intergroup relationships for grades K to 12.	Aber, Brown, Chaudry, Jones, & Samples (1996).
School Transitional Environmental Program (STEP)	The curriculum focuses on reducing the complexity of school environments and decreasing vulnerability to academic and emotional difficulties for middle and high school students.	Larson (1998).
Seattle Social Development Project	The program focuses on intervening early in children's development to increase prosocial bonds, strengthen attachment and commitment to schools, and decrease delinquency; for K-8.	Hawkins, Catalano, Morrison, O'Donnell, Abbott, & Day (1992).

Program Name	Description of Intervention	Author(s)
Second Step: A Violence Prevention Program	A skill-building curriculum designed to reduce impulsive and aggressive behavior; preschool to middle school.	Committee for Children (1992).
Social Competence Promotion Program for Young Adolescents	Teaches self-control, problem-solving, and communication skills to grades 5 to 8.	Weissberg, Barton, & Shriver (1997).
Training and Implementation Guide for Student Mediation in Elementary Schools	Focuses on teaching communication and conflict resolution skills; preschool to grade 6.	New Mexico Center for Dispute Resolution (1994).
Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents	A curriculum-based health education program for high school student	Prothrow-Stith (1987).

Appendix D

Organization Recruitment E-mail Letter

Dear Randy Fisher,

My name is Natalie Cawood and I worked as a school social worker in Arizona and Oregon for 6 years.

I am now a Ph.D. student at Portland State University and I am completing my dissertation under the supervision of two professors, Dr. Eileen Brennan and Dr. James Nash. Portland State University's Graduate School of Social Work and Regional Research Institute are very interested in collaborating with SSWAA on a research project involving a survey of elementary school social workers. The research project we are interested in completing is a survey of school social workers regarding issues surrounding the topic of school violence. We would like to create an e-mail survey to send to your members.

Is SSWAA interested in surveying its members? Are there research questions that your organization has for its members that you would like included in a survey, such as training needs, for example?

We are currently in the process of developing a list of potential subjects for this research and I am wondering if you might be willing to share the names and contact information of your members? This information would be kept confidential and used ONLY for the purpose of contacting the social workers via e-mail letter to see if they are interested in completing our survey.

Again, we would be very interested in collaborating with you on this type of research project and would be interested in hearing your thoughts about this possibility.

Sincerely,

Natalie Cawood, MSW
Ph.D. Student
Graduate School of Social Work
Portland State University

If you have questions please contact:
Natalie Cawood at (503) 577-7651 or kyleandnat@aol.com
Dr. Eileen Brennan (503) 725-8343 or eileen@pdx.edu
Dr. James Nash (503) 725-5036 or nashj@pdx.ed

Appendix E

June 29, 2005

Dear School Social Work Association of America Board Members,

Portland State University's Graduate School of Social Work and Regional Research Institute are interested in collaborating with the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) on a research project involving a survey of school social workers. The research project we are beginning is a survey of school social workers regarding issues surrounding the topic of school violence. As part of Natalie Cawood's dissertation, she has created an e-mail survey which we would like to send to your members. The proposal has been approved by a dissertation committee chaired by Eileen Brennan which includes Dr. James Nash, Dr. Richard Hunter, Dr. Julie Rosenzweig, all of the Graduate School of Social Work, and Dr. Samuel Henry, Professor of Education at Portland State University.

We are currently in the process of recruiting potential subjects for this research and we are requesting that SSWAA send an e-mail to your members, which provides a link to the survey. We are interested in surveying your full and associate members who are currently school-based practitioners. Additionally, we would be willing to add several research questions that your organization might wish to have included in the survey, such as questions related to training needs. In return, we would be pleased to share the results of the study with SSWAA in the form of a summary article.

We have included a summary of our research plan, as well as a paper and pencil version of our survey for your review. Again, we would be very interested in collaborating with you on this type of research project and look forward to hearing your decision on this possibility. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

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Appendix F

Social Workers Addressing Interpersonal Violence in the School Context: Awareness and Use of Evidence-supported Programs

Research Plan

Submitted by Natalie D. Cawood
Portland State University
and
Eileen M. Brennan
Portland State University
for a Collaborative Study with the
School Social Work Association of America

Introduction to the Problem

Interpersonal Violence

Interpersonal violence in the school context has the potential to adversely affect the victims' physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development, interfering with the important developmental milestones of childhood and adolescence (Osofsky, 1999; Stein et al., 2003). Effects of violence on students can include physical injury, emotional withdrawal, depression, lowered self-esteem, feelings of fear, increased aggression, posttraumatic stress disorder, and a sense of danger in their schools (Blyth et al., 1980; Osofsky, 1999; Stein et al., 2003). Violence or the threat of violence also affects the school climate and reduces the ability of students to concentrate and learn. Students exposed to violence are more likely to have a higher number of school absences, poorer school performance, a lower grade point average, as well as decreased IQ and reading ability (Stein et al., 2003).

Research-Practice Gap

Ringeisen, Henderson, and Hoagwood (2003) put forward a powerful argument that there is a gap between mental health research and the delivery of mental health services in the school setting. DuPaul (2003) supports this claim, "The gap between research on mental health interventions and strategies that are actually used in schools continues to plague education, school psychology, and related fields (p. 180)." School social workers are both legally and ethically obligated to protect students from harm, but it is unclear whether they possess the tools and information that they need to assure that their interventions are evidence-based and effective.

Research Context

This study will consist of a web-based survey completed by a national sample of school social workers. The survey data will assist researchers in learning the extent to which school social workers know about evidence-supported school violence

intervention programs and the extent to which school social workers are implementing evidence-supported school violence intervention programs. Data collected will identify the services and programs that are being implemented, outside of evidence-supported programs. The data will also help communicate the factors confronted by the social workers at the district, school, and practitioner level that inhibit the implementation of evidence-supported programs.

Ron Astor and his colleagues from the University of Michigan, in collaboration with the National Association of Social Workers, undertook the first national survey of school social workers that focused explicitly on the topic of interpersonal violence in the schools (Astor, Behre, Wallace, & Fravil, 1998). The Astor study investigated the anti-violence programs and services offered in the school setting, but did not look at awareness or use of ESPs. The researchers found that the social workers' perception of violence as a problem was contingent upon the presence of multiple types of violence. Outside of the Astor (1997) study, there has not been any research examining what school social workers are doing to address school violence.

Susan Ennett and her colleagues from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2003) surveyed school-based practitioners regarding the barriers they confront in implementing evidence-supported programs. The Ennett study did not look at interpersonal violence, but at school-based substance use prevention programs. The researchers' found that practitioner capabilities were related to the use of effective methods and delivery of evidence-supported programs.

In 2005, Angela Sheehan from the research group ORC Macro conducted a survey examining the use of evidence-based practices in the community-based service setting (Sheehan, 2005). The Sheehan study examined knowledge and use of evidence-supported programs, but in a mental health setting and found that practitioner capabilities were related to knowledge of evidence-supported programs.

Specific Aims

The purpose of this research study is to examine the extent to which evidence-supported school violence intervention programs are known and used by school social workers, and to determine the barriers that are related to the use of evidence-supported programs.

Major Research Questions

1. To what extent do school social workers know about evidence-supported school violence intervention programs?;

2. To what extent are school social workers implementing evidence-supported school violence intervention programs?;

3. Outside of evidence-supported programs, what services and programs are being implemented?; and

4. What are the factors at the district, school, and practitioner level that inhibit the implementation of evidence-supported programs?

Hypotheses

1. Reported level of violence and practitioner capabilities will predict practitioner awareness of evidence- supported programs; and

2. Reported level of violence, practitioner capabilities, and awareness of evidence-supported programs will predict the use of evidence-supported programs.

Significance of Research

This research has the potential to be used as a guide to policy by helping to address the research-practice gap in school-based interventions. It also could be used as a guide to practice, as participants will become aware of evidence supported school violence programs, as many of these are identified in the survey.

This survey data could potentially be used to create university and school district training programs, inform national and state policy, and help the School Social Work Association of America better serve school social workers on the issue of implementing evidence-supported programs to address school violence. This study is also significant because it is a new contribution to the research area of social work and interpersonal violence in the school context.

Potential Benefits to Participants

The participants will receive one direct benefit by becoming aware of evidence supported school violence programs. There are two indirect benefits. The survey data will be used to inform school social work practitioners, social work professors, state school social work consultants, as well as individuals qualified as school social workers, but employed as school administrators, as the results of this study will be distributed via articles and conference presentations. Participants will also benefit by contributing to the social work profession, one of the National Association of Social Workers core values/ethical principles.

Protection of Human Participants

It is highly unlikely that any psychological risks will be posed for the participants answering the survey questions. The survey questions may remind participants of negative work experiences or the difficult challenge of addressing school violence. It is anticipated that any negative emotions will be countered by the knowledge that the research gives attention to their concerns and experiences. Participants may elect to stop answering questions at any time. Everyone who is eligible to take the survey is a professional social worker and has been trained in dealing with their own stress issues regarding their professional work.

The data will be entered and stored in mySQL database on a UNIX database server maintained by Portland State University's Office of Information Technology. The database is highly restricted and accessible only by the proper account and password. When the data have been collected, they will be exported through another restricted account using a Microsoft Access ODBC link. From here the table will be exported, printed and read into SPSS for analysis and stored in an SPSS data file. The SPSS file will reside on the research project's C: drive with access restricted by password. A back up disk will also contain the SPSS file and will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. The printed versions of the data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and retained for a minimum of three years following the completion of the research.

Dissemination Plan

We expect that our analysis of these data will lead to the publication of at least one article to be submitted to a peer reviewed journal, most probably in the field of school social work. We also plan to present the results at one or two major conferences in the fields of school social work and children's mental health. Finally, the analysis of these data will inform an article that will be prepared for the School Social Work Association of America. This article will be made available to the study participants

Addressing School Violence: A Survey of School Social Workers

Introduction

As a school social worker you work with children who frequently face issues of violence. Because you confront violence among students on a daily basis you are the best source of information about effective approaches to addressing school violence. We are interested in learning about both your direct and indirect work in dealing with violence in the schools.

Practitioner Information

We'd like to start by getting to know more about you, through questions about your education and experience as a school social worker.

1. Years worked as a school social worker: _____

2. Your highest degree: (*Select only one response.*)

___BSW
___MSW
___Ph.D./DSW
___Other (*please specify:* _____)

3. How prepared are you to effectively respond to violence at your school(s)?
(Put an X mark in the space that best shows your opinion.)

Totally Unprepared							Totally Prepared
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

4. How confident are you that you are doing a good job implementing violence prevention/intervention program(s)? (*Select only one response.*)

___Very confident 4
___Somewhat confident 3
___Not too confident 2
___Not at all confident 1

5. Are you familiar with the term "evidence-supported program?"
(check one):

___1 = Yes *(go to 5a)*
___0 = No *(go to 5b)*
___2 = Don't know *(go to 5b)*

5a. How do you define "evidence-supported program?"

_____
_____

5b. Even though you are unfamiliar with the term, how might you define "evidence-supported program?"

_____
_____

Evidence Supported Programs Addressing Violence

Now we would like to ask you some questions related to your knowledge and use of programs that address school violence.

6A.	**Here are several evidence supported school violence intervention/ prevention programs. Which, if any, of the following curricula are you aware of?** *(For each program, please select only one response.)*	**Aware of Program**	**Not Aware of Program**
a.	Aggression Replacement Training: A Comprehensive Intervention for Aggressive Youth		
b.	Behavioral Monitoring and Reinforcement Program (Formerly Preventive Intervention)		
c.	Bullying Prevention Program		
d.	FAST Track		
e.	Good Behavior Game		
f.	I Can Problem Solve		
g.	Incredible Years Series		
h.	PATHS – Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies		
i.	Peacebuilders		
j.	Positive Adolescents Choices Training (P.A.C.T.)		
k.	Resolving Conflict Creatively Program		
l.	School Transitional Environmental Program (STEP)		
m.	Seattle Social Development Project		
n.	Second Step: A Violence Prevention Program		
o.	Social Competence Promotion Program for Young Adolescents		
p.	Training and Implementation Guide for Student Mediation in Elementary Schools		
q.	Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents		

6B.	**Over the past three years, which, if any, of the following curricula, available commercially or because your school participated in a research study, did you use?** *(For each program, please select only one response.)*	**Used Program**	**Did Not Use Program**
a.	Aggression Replacement Training: A Comprehensive Intervention for Aggressive Youth		
b.	Behavioral Monitoring and Reinforcement Program (Formerly Preventive Intervention)		
c.	Bullying Prevention Program		
d.	FAST Track		
e.	Good Behavior Game		
f.	I Can Problem Solve		
g.	Incredible Years Series		
h.	PATHS - Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies		
i.	Peacebuilders		
j.	Positive Adolescents Choices Training (P.A.C.T.)		
k.	Resolving Conflict Creatively Program		
l.	School Transitional Environmental Program (STEP)		
m.	Seattle Social Development Project		
n.	Second Step: A Violence Prevention Program		
o.	Social Competence Promotion Program for Young Adolescents		
p.	Training and Implementation Guide for Student Mediation in Elementary Schools		
q.	Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents		

7. In general, what three (3) intervention techniques or programs do you utilize that you perceive to be the most successful in helping students decrease their violent behaviors?
(Please list in order of frequency of use.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

7-1a. How effective do you rate [FIRST PROGRAM/TECHNIQUE LISTED IN Q7]?

___Very effective 4
___Somewhat effective 3
___Not too effective 2
___Not at all effective 1

7-1b. When you use [FIRST PROGRAM/TECHNIQUE LISTED IN Q7], to what extent do you implement the FULL curriculum/protocol?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Never use the full protocol		Sometimes use the full protocol		Always use the full protocol	Does not apply

7-1c. If you don't implement the full curriculum/protocol for [FIRST PROGRAM / TECHNIQUE LISTED IN Q7], why not? _____

7-1d. If you don't implement the full curriculum/protocol for [FIRST PROGRAM / TECHNIQUE LISTED IN Q7] *(please check all that apply)*:

I adapt my school violence prevention/intervention program due to:

Student culture/ethnicity ____
Student socioeconomic status ____
Student disabilities ____

7-1e. How did you receive your INITIAL training on [FIRST PROGRAM / TECHNIQUE LISTED IN Q7]? *(check one)*:

Graduate school course ___
Conference workshop ___
Free-standing workshop ___
Self-training/instruction ___
Agency sponsored or in-service ___
Continuing education ___
Other training/instruction ___
(*Please specify*: _____)
No formal training/instruction received ___

7-2a. How effective do you rate [SECOND PROGRAM/TECHNIQUE LISTED IN Q7]?

___Very effective 4
___Somewhat effective 3
___Not too effective 2
___Not at all effective 1

7-2b. When you use [SECOND PROGRAM/TECHNIQUE LISTED IN Q7], to what extent do you implement the FULL curriculum/protocol?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Never use the full protocol		Sometimes use the full protocol		Always use the full protocol	Does not apply

7-2c. If you don't implement the full curriculum/protocol for [SECOND PROGRAM / TECHNIQUE LISTED IN Q7], why not? _____

7-2d. If you don't implement the full curriculum/protocol for [SECOND PROGRAM / TECHNIQUE LISTED IN Q7] *(please check all that apply)*:

I adapt my school violence prevention/intervention program due to:

Student culture/ethnicity ____
Student socioeconomic status ____
Student disabilities ____

7-2e. How did you receive your INITIAL training on [SECOND PROGRAM / TECHNIQUE LISTED IN Q7]? *(check one)*:

Graduate school course ___
Conference workshop ___
Free-standing workshop ___
Self-training/instruction ___
Agency sponsored or in-service ___
Continuing education ___
Other training/instruction ___
(*Please specify*: _____)
No formal training/instruction received ___

7-3a. How effective do you rate [THIRD PROGRAM/TECHNIQUE LISTED IN Q7]?

___Very effective 4
___Somewhat effective 3
___Not too effective 2
___Not at all effective 1

7-3b. When you use [THIRD PROGRAM/TECHNIQUE LISTED IN Q7], to what extent do you implement the FULL curriculum/protocol?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Never use the full protocol		Sometimes use the full protocol		Always use the full protocol	Does not apply

7-3c. If you don't implement the full curriculum/protocol for [THIRD PROGRAM / TECHNIQUE LISTED IN Q7], why not? _____

7-3d. If you don't implement the full curriculum/protocol for [THIRD PROGRAM / TECHNIQUE LISTED IN Q7] *(please check all that apply)*:

I adapt my school violence prevention/intervention program due to:

- Student culture/ethnicity ____
- Student socioeconomic status ____
- Student disabilities ____

7-3e. How did you receive your INITIAL training on [THIRD PROGRAM / TECHNIQUE LISTED IN Q7]? *(check one)*:

- Graduate school course ____
- Conference workshop ____
- Free-standing workshop ____
- Self-training/instruction ____
- Agency sponsored or in-service ____
- Continuing education ____
- Other training/instruction ____
- *(Please specify:* _____)
- No formal training/instruction received ____

8. The following are programs or services that some schools provide to respond to the issue of violence. Please check the left side if your school has such a service. Please check the middle column if you are directly involved with this service. *And*, if you believe that this intervention is particularly effective, please check the far right side. *(Check all that apply)*:

	Does your school have any of these programs/ services?		Are you directly involved with this program/ service		Do you believe this program/ service is effective?		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Don't Know
Classroom management							
School uniforms							
Zero tolerance policies							
Discipline referrals							
Individual behavior plans							
Parent meetings/conferences/education							
Small groups/counseling							
Home visiting							
Peer mediation program							
Social skills training							
Academic tutoring							
Peer tutoring							
Mentoring program							
Teacher-based classroom intervention							

	Does your school have any of these programs/ services?		Are you directly involved with this program/ service		Do you believe this program/ service is effective?		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Don't Know
Classroom-based curriculum							
Expulsion/suspension							
During- or after-school detention							
Individual counseling							
School transfer							
Conflict management programs							
Skill streaming							
Friendship clubs							
Police anti-violence programs							
After school sports or clubs							
Victim assistance or support services							
Anti-bullying campaign or curriculum							
Anti-gang programs							
Pro-social behavior curriculum							
Violence crisis intervention							
Teacher training on violence issues							
Church group involvement on campus							
Security guards							
Metal detectors, video cameras, surveillance system							
Services that address community violence							

9. Overall, how successful do you think your violence prevention/intervention sessions are in preventing or reducing violence by students in your school? (*Select only <u>one</u> response.*)

___Very successful 4
___Somewhat successful 3
___Not too successful 2
___Not at all successful 1

10.	How often did your school-wide interventions do the following?	Always	Sometimes	Never
a.	Raise the awareness and responsibility of students regarding the types of violence in their schools.			
b.	Raise the awareness and responsibility of teachers regarding the types of violence in their schools.			
c.	Raise the awareness and responsibility of parents regarding the types of violence in their schools.			
d.	Create clear guidelines and rules for the entire school.			
e.	Clarify, to the entire school community, what procedures should be followed before, during, and after violent events.			
f.	Focus on getting the school staff involved in the program.			
g.	Focus on getting the students involved in the program.			
h.	Focus on getting the parents involved in the program.			
i.	Fit easily into the normal flow and mission of the school setting.			
j.	Utilize faculty and staff in the school setting in order to plan, implement, and sustain the program.			
k.	Utilize parents in the school setting in order to plan, implement, and sustain the program.			
l.	Increase monitoring and supervision in non-classroom areas.			

11. Have you had any difficulty locating school violence interventions that have been proven by research to be effective?

___ Yes *(go to 11a)* ___ No *(skip to 12)* ___ I haven't tried *(skip to 12)*

11a. If yes, explain: _____

Violence in Your School

Now we would like to ask you some questions about the size and scope of the problem with violence in your school. If you work at more than one school, please answer the questions about the school where you spend the most time. If you spend equal amounts of time at all your schools, please choose one school and provide us with information about that setting.

12. How big of a problem is violence at your school?

___ Very big problem 5
___ Big problem 4
___ Middle size problem 3
___ Little problem 2
___ Very little or no problem 1

13a. Has this happened to a student or school staff at your school in the past 365 days?	**Yes**	**No**	**# of times**
Grabbed or shoved			
Punched, kicked or scratched			
Cut with a sharp object			
Hit on the head or body with an object			
Had medical care for an injury from an attack			
Had personal property stolen without force involved			
Had something stolen by force or threat of force			
Threatened with physical harm			
A student yelled bad words, cursed at someone			
Made fun of them or put down their race/ethnicity			
Sexually attacked at school or school event			
Sexually harassed or insulted			
Harassed or intimidated by gangs			
Bothered by people using drugs or other substances			
Involved in ethnic or racial conflicts			
Intimidated by the way someone looked at them			
Threatened by someone using a gun or other weapon			
Car vandalized or broken into			
Shooting on or near campus			
Observed a killing on or near campus/neighborhood			
Observed or participated in a fist fight			
Assaulted by a group of students			
Hit or assaulted by a teacher or staff person			

13b. Has this happened to you personally at your school in the past 365 days?	Yes	No	# of times
Grabbed or shoved			
Punched, kicked or scratched			
Cut with a sharp object			
Hit on the head or body with an object			
Had medical care for an injury from an attack			
Had personal property stolen without force involved			
Had something stolen by force or threat of force			
Threatened with physical harm			
A student yelled bad words, cursed at you			
Made fun of you or put down your race/ethnicity			
Sexually attacked at school or school event			
Sexually harassed or insulted			
Harassed or intimidated by gangs			
Bothered by people using drugs or other substances			
Involved in ethnic or racial conflicts			
Intimidated by the way someone looked at you			
Threatened by someone using a gun or other weapon			
Car vandalized or broken into			
Shooting on or near campus			
Observed a killing on or near campus/neighborhood			
Observed or participated in a fist fight			
Assaulted by a group of students			
Hit or assaulted by a teacher or staff person			

14. On average, what percentage of your day is devoted to addressing (intervention *and* prevention efforts) violent student behaviors?

___0-10% ___21-30% ___41-50% ___61-70% ___81-90%
___11-20% ___31-40% ___51-60% ___71-80% ___91-100%

15. Does hazing regularly occur in your school? Yes ____ No ____

15a. Do you perceive hazing as a problem in your school? Yes ____ No ____

Barriers to Addressing School Violence

Next we would like to ask you about any barriers that you have confronted in addressing violence in your school.

16. Which, if any, of the following have been barriers to your teaching/leading violence prevention/intervention sessions? (*Select either **yes** or **no** for each item below.*)	**Yes**	**No**
Lack of adequate instructional materials		
Lack of money/resources for purchasing instructional materials...		
Lack of adequate violence prevention/intervention training...		
Lack of time to attend training.....		
Lack of time for adequate preparation....		
Lack of knowledge of programs/curriculum...		
Competing demands for teaching other subject areas...		
Our school district has not made violence prevention/intervention a high priority...		
Our school principal has not made violence prevention/intervention a high priority...		
Resistance from school board and/or parents for teaching violence prevention/intervention...		
Other (please describe.)...		

17. Please give any other comments, suggestions, or recommendations for overcoming barriers.

_____

_____

18. What would help you address school violence more effectively? _____

_____

Practitioner Characteristics

The next group of questions will help us learn more about your background.

19. **Your gender:** ____Male ____Female

20. **Your age:** _____

21. **Length of time since you received your highest degree** _____

22. **Your race/ethnicity:** *(check all that apply):*
_____Native American/American Indian or Alaskan Native
_____Asian-American or Pacific Islander
_____African American
_____Mexican American
_____Hispanic American/Latina(o)
_____White, not of Hispanic origin
_____Other (specify:_____)

23. **Number of years working in current district:** _____

24. **Number of schools currently served:** 1 2 3 4 5 6+

25. **Are you a member of the School Social Work Association of America?** Yes ___ No___

26. **Are you a member of your state school social work organization?** Yes ___ No___

School Characteristics

These questions are related to your place of employment and will provide us with valuable demographic information about your school and the students you serve.

27. Size of current district: (students)

___under 1000
___1000-3999
___4000-8999
___9,000-12,999
___13,000-20,999
___21,000-30,999
___31,000-39,999
___40,000-49,999
___50,000-99,999
___100,000-299,999
___300,000+

28. Size of school (# of students) where you are a social worker:

___under 100
___101-200
___201-300
___301-400
___401-500
___501-600
___601-700
___701-800
___801-900
___901-1000
___1001-1500
___1501-2000
___2001-3000
___3000+

29. Age/grade levels you serve:

___0-3 years
___3-5 years
___K-6
___7-8
___9-12
___12+
___All

30. Which of the following best describes the community setting of the school you work in?

___Inner city
___Urban, not inner city
___Suburban
___Rural
___Other (specify_____)

31. What is your estimate of the economic resources of the children/families attending the school you work in?

___poor – very low income
___lower middle income
___middle income
___upper middle income
___upper income

32. Approximately what percentage of students in your school are eligible to receive free or reduced cost lunch as part of a federal assistance program?

_____% of students eligible for free or reduced cost lunch

33. Approximately what percentage of students in your school belongs to each of the following racial/ethnic groups?

_____Native American/American Indian or Alaskan Native
_____Asian-American or Pacific Islander
_____African American
_____Mexican American
_____Hispanic American/Latina(o)
_____White, not of Hispanic origin
_____Other (*please specify:* _____)

34. What percentage of violence of all types and in all categories is perpetrated by girls at your school? _____

35. What is the zip code for the school where you spend the most time? _____

School Climate

This final group of questions will ask you to examine the attitudes of school personnel and describe the experience of your school environment.

36. How much do you agree with each of the following statements about your school? *(Select only one response.)*	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Agree
There is a great deal of cooperative effort among staff members.					
In this school, there is a feeling that everyone is working together toward common goals.					
Staff are supportive of one another.					
This school seems like a big family, everyone is close and cordial.					
Staff frequently consult with and help one another.					
You can count on most staff to help out anywhere, anytime – even though it may not be part of their official assignment.					
The principal usually consults with staff before making decisions that affect us.					
Staff take an active role planning at this school.					
Staff are involved in making decisions that affect them.					
Staff at this school feel free to communicate with the principal.					
Administrators and staff collaborate to make this school run effectively.					
In general, staff at this school are treated fairly.					

37. How supportive has each of the following people or groups been of your implementing of violence prevention/intervention programs?	Very Supportive	Somewhat Supportive	Not Very Supportive	Not At All Supportive
District Safe and Drug-Free Schools Coordinator...				
Other district administrators...				
My school principal....				
Classroom teachers....				
Parents....				
Parent-Teacher Association...				
Education Association/Teachers' Union...				

38. In general, does each school in your district choose violence interventions independently or is program implementation district-wide?

___ Independently ___ District-wide program implementation ___Does not apply

39. Does your school or district have any policies mandating interventions in response to violent student behavior? (e.g. zero tolerance, safety assessments, use of evidence-supported programs)

_____ Yes *(go to 39a)* _____ No *(skip to 40)*

39a. If yes, please describe_____

40. What level of priority does your school place on addressing violent student behaviors?

___ High priority
___ Medium priority
___ Low priority

Thank you for participating in our study!

In a few months, a summary of the results will be posted on the School Social Work Association of America website, as well as Portland State University's Research and Training Center website.

Appendix H

School Social Work Association of America

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

Invitation to Participate

Social Workers Addressing School Violence: Awareness and Use of Evidence-supported Programs

Dear School Social Work Colleague:

The School Social Work Association of America and Portland State University's Graduate School of Social Work are collaborating on a research study regarding school violence interventions. You are being asked to take part in this study because you confront the challenge of addressing school violence every day.

We are interested in learning the extent to which evidence-based school violence intervention programs are being implemented by school social workers, and to determine the barriers that are related to the use of evidence-based programs. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a web survey, which should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

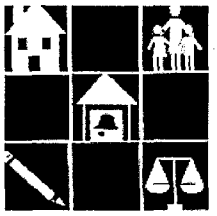
We are very interested in learning about your experiences addressing school violence. To learn more about the study and access the survey, please go to the following link:
http://survey.oit.pdx.edu/ss/wsb.dll/cawoodn/addressingschoolviolence.htm

Sincerely,

Corrine Anderson-Ketchmark, MSW
SSWAA Past-President
SSWAA/Portland State University Research Liaison

Natalie Cawood, MSW
Ph.D. Candidate/Principal Investigator
Portland State University
Graduate School of Social Work

Appendix I



School Social Work Association of America

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent

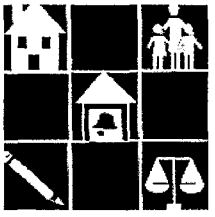
The information that you provide could potentially be used to create university and school district training programs, inform national and state policy, and help the School Social Work Association of America better serve school social workers on this issue. This survey is being completed by a sample of school social workers throughout the United States.

The survey questions may remind you of negative work experiences or the difficult challenge of addressing school violence. You may not receive any direct benefit from taking part in this study, but the study may help to increase knowledge that may help others in the future. Subject identities will be anonymous, as no subject identifiers will be connected to the survey.

Participation is entirely voluntary. Your decision to participate or not will not affect your relationship with the researcher, Portland State University, the School Social Work Association of America or any of its state chapter affiliates. If you decide to take part in the study, you may choose to withdraw at any time without penalty. If you have concerns or problems about your participation in this study or your rights as a research subject, please contact the Human Subjects Research Review Committee, Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, 111 Cramer Hall, Portland State University, (503) 725-4288. If you have questions about the study itself, contact Natalie Cawood at (928) 774-1480 or cawoodn@pdx.edu ; Dr. Eileen Brennan at (503) 725-5003 or eileen@pdx.edu.

If you agree to participate, please proceed to the next page.

Appendix J



School Social Work
Association of America

PORTLAND STATE
UNIVERSITY

JUST A REMINDER...

The School Social Work Association of America and Portland State University's Graduate School of Social Work are collaborating on a research study examining school social workers' awareness and use of interventions used to address interpersonal violence in the school context.

We are very interested in learning about your experience addressing school violence and it is not too late to participate.

To learn more about the study and access the survey, please go to the following link:
http://survey.oit.pdx.edu/ss/wsb.dll/cawoodn/addressingschoolviolence.htm

Sincerely,

Natalie Cawood, MSW
Ph.D. Candidate/Principal Investigator
Portland State University
Graduate School of Social Work

Appendix K

School Social Work
Association of America

PORTLAND STATE
UNIVERSITY

LAST CHANCE TO PARTICIPATE!

The School Social Work Association of America and Portland State University's Graduate School of Social Work are collaborating on a research study examining school social workers' awareness and use of interventions used to address interpersonal violence in the school context.

We are interested in receiving input from as many SSWAA members as possible.

To access the survey, please go to the following link:
http://survey.oit.pdx.edu/ss/wsb.dll/cawoodn/addressingschoolviolence.htm

Sincerely,

Natalie Cawood, MSW
Ph.D. Candidate/Principal Investigator
Portland State University
Graduate School of Social Work

Appendix L

APPLICATION FOR REVIEW OF THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN PROPOSED RESEARCH

I. Project Title and Prospectus:

Title: Social workers addressing interpersonal violence in the school context: Awareness and use of evidence-supported programs.

Prospectus:

The purpose of this research study is to examine the extent to which evidence-based school violence intervention programs are known and used by school social workers, and to determine the barriers that are related to the use of evidence-based programs. Interpersonal violence in the school context has the potential to adversely affect the victims' physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development, interfering with the important developmental milestones of childhood and adolescence (Osofsky, 1999; Stein et al., 2003). Effects of violence on students can include physical injury, emotional withdrawal, depression, lowered self-esteem, feelings of fear, increased aggression, posttraumatic stress disorder, and a sense of danger in their schools (Blyth et al., 1980; Osofsky, 1999; Stein et al., 2003). Violence or the threat of violence also affects the school climate and reduces the ability of students to concentrate and learn. Students exposed to violence are more likely to have a higher number of school absences, poorer school performance, a lower grade point average, as well as decreased IQ and reading ability (Stein et al., 2003).

Ringeisen, Henderson, and Hoagwood (2003) put forward a powerful argument that there is a gap between mental health research and the delivery of mental health services in the school setting. DuPaul (2003) supports this claim, "The gap between research on mental health interventions and strategies that are actually used in schools continues to plague education, school psychology, and related fields (p. 180)." School social workers are both legally and ethically obligated to protect students from harm, but it is unclear whether they possess the tools and information that they need to assure that their interventions are evidence-based and effective.

This study will consist of a web-based survey completed by a national sample of school social workers. The survey data will assist researchers in learning the extent to which school social workers know about evidence-supported school violence intervention programs and the extent to which school social workers are implementing evidence-supported school violence intervention programs. Data collected will identify the services and programs that are being implemented, outside of evidence-supported programs. The data will also help communicate the factors confronted by the social workers at the district, school, and practitioner level that inhibit the implementation of evidence-supported programs.

II. Exemption Claim for Waiver of Review:

None.

III. Subject Recruitment:

The subject population will include members of the School Social Work Association of America, the Kentucky School Social Work Association, the New York School Social Work Association, the Iowa School Social Work Association, the Indiana School Social Work Association, the Washington School Social Work Association, the Arizona School Social Work Association, and possibly other School Social Work Associations. Participants must have a degree in social work, be associated or full members of one of the above organizations, as well as practitioners currently employed in a school setting.

I will recruit between 200 and 1,000 subjects by contacting the President of each organization with an introductory e-mail letter (Appendix A). Next, I will submit a brief description of the research study to each organization and request access to membership e-mail lists. After approval has been obtained, potential participants will then be contacted via e-mail with information about the research study and provided with a link/internet address that will direct the participants to a website that contains the survey.

All subjects are professional social workers engaged in school-based social work. The age, gender, ethnicity, and health status of the participants is unknown to me, at this time, but this information will be collected. All participants will be adults and no participants will be excluded based on age, gender, or ethnicity.

IV. Informed Consent:

A waiver for *signed* informed consent is requested. A cover letter will be posted on the website containing the survey and the subjects will use a portal to access the survey (Appendix B). After the subject reads the cover letter, the subject will click on a button that will read, "I agree to participate," in order to gain access to the research survey.

V. First-Person Scenario:

"I received an e-mail last week regarding a new study examining the types of school violence interventions being implemented by school social workers and the barriers they confront in utilizing evidence supported programs. This e-mail provided me with a link that directed me to a website. The website contained a cover letter that provided further information about my participation in the study. Once I decided to participate, I clicked on a button reading, 'I agree to participate,' and gained access to

the survey. I completed a brief survey that took approximately 15-20 minutes. When I was done with the survey, I clicked on another button reading, 'Submit survey.'"

VI. Potential Risks and Safeguards:

It is highly unlikely that any psychological risks will be posed for the participants answering the survey questions. The survey questions may remind participants of negative work experiences or the difficult challenge of addressing school violence. It is anticipated that any negative emotions will be countered by the knowledge that the research gives attention to their concerns and experiences. Participants may elect to stop answering questions at any time. Everyone who is eligible to take this survey is a professional social worker and has been trained in dealing with their own stress issues regarding their professional work. All participants are members of a School Social Work Association and are able to seek support and assistance through these organizations.

VII. Potential Benefits:

The participants will receive one direct benefit by becoming aware of evidence supported school violence programs, as many of these are identified in the survey. There are several indirect benefits. The survey data will be used to inform school social work practitioners, social work professors, state school social work consultants, as well as individuals qualified as school social workers, but employed as school administrators, as a summary article will be provided to all organizations that assist with recruiting subjects. This article will be made available to the participants. In addition, results will be published in a scholarly journal and presented at a professional conference.

This survey data could potentially be used to create university and school district training programs, inform national and state policy, and help the School Social Work Association of America better serve school social workers on the issue of implementing evidence-supported programs to address school violence. Participants will benefit by contributing to the social work profession, one of the National Association of Social Workers core values/ethical principles.

VIII. Records and Distribution:

The data are entered and stored in mySQL database on a UNIX database server maintained by Portland State University's Office of Information Technology. The database is highly restricted and accessible only by the proper account and password. When the data have been collected, they will be exported through another restricted account using a Microsoft Access ODBC link. From here the table will be exported, printed and read into SPSS for analysis and stored in an SPSS data file. The SPSS file will reside on my C: drive with access restricted by password. A back up disk will also contain the SPSS file and will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. The printed

versions of the data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and retained for a minimum of three years following the completion of the research.

IX. Appendices:

Appendix A: Letter to school social work organizations
Appendix B: Cover letter
Appendix C: Survey