School Safety Issues & Gender: Understanding Risk Factors and Responses

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National Victimization Rates

- Total Victimization
  - 38/1,000 students
  - 2.6% in last 6 months
- Violent Victimization
  - 25/1,000
- Threatened or Injured w/Weapon
  - 7% in last 12 months

- Total Victimization
  - 20/1,000 students
  - 2.8% in last 6 months
- Violent Victimization
  - 10/1,000
- Threatened or Injured w/Weapon
  - 5% in last 12 months

Source: NCES Indicators of School Safety 2017
NJ Study 2005-2011

24 Schools over 5 years (N=2,590) (14 schools today)

Violent Victimization:
• Hit: 31.3%

Non Violent Victimization:
• Property Stolen or Damaged: 35.2%

Threatened with a Weapon
• 2.9%
## Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sample (N=2,590)</th>
<th>School Level (N=8,805)</th>
<th>State Level (N=398,911)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Male</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>50.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% White</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Level</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Age</td>
<td>12.4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Measures

• Demographic Characteristics
  – Age, Race, Gender, Grades

• Attitudinal Characteristics
  – Beliefs about behavior (3 items)
    • “How wrong is it…”
  – Beliefs about rules (7 items)
    • “I want to be a good citizen”

• School Characteristics
  – School Climate (14 items)
    • This is a good school to go to
NJ Victimization Prevalence

20% of boys 1+ victimization

• Violent Victimization
  – 38.6%
• Non-violent Victimization
  – 34.6%
• Threatened or Injured w/Weapon
  – 4.1%
• Seen a weapon?
  – 7.9%

15% of girls 1+ victimization

• Violent Victimization
  – 24.6%
• Non-violent Victimization
  – 35.6%
• Threatened or Injured w/Weapon
  – 1.9%
• Seen a weapon?
  – 6.2%
Boys and Violent Victimization

**Risk Factors**

- Poly-victimization
- Younger age
- Higher security environments

**Protective Factors**

- Positive School Climate
Girls and Violent Victimization

Risk Factors

- Poly-victimization
- Minority Status
- Low Grades

Protective Factors

- Pro-social Beliefs
  - Behavior and rules
- Positive School Climate
Non Violent Victimization

Risk Factors

✓ Poly-victimization

Protective Factors

✓ Pro-Social Beliefs
  • Conventional rules

✓ Positive School Climate
Threatened w/ Weapon

Risk Factors

✓ Poly-victimization
✓ Low Grades

Protective Factors

✓ Pro-Social Beliefs
  • Conventional rules
✓ Positive School Climate
Victimization Experiences

- Higher Security Environments
- Minority Status
- Lower Grades

Protective factors
- Pro-Social Beliefs
- Positive School Climate

Risk factors
NJ Perpetration Prevalence

4.6% of boys 1+ perpetration
3.4% of girls 1+ perpetration

- Violent Perpetration
  - 24%
- Non-violent Perpetration
  - 5.8%
- Threatened or Injured w/Weapon
  - .8%

- Violent Perpetration
  - 28%
- Non-violent Perpetration
  - 6.9%
- Threatened or Injured w/Weapon
  - 2.5%
Boys and Violent Perpetration

**Risk Factors**
- Poly-victimization
- Older
- Lower Grades
- Higher security environments

**Protective Factors**
- Pro-Social Belief
  - Conventional Rules
- Positive School Climate
Girls and Violent Perpetration

**Risk Factors**
- ✓ Poly-victimization
- ✓ Minority Status
- ✓ Older
- ✓ Lower Grades

**Protective Factors**
- ✓ Pro-social Beliefs
  - Behavior
- ✓ Positive School Climate
Non Violent Perpetration

Risk Factors

✓ Poly-victimization
✓ Lower Grades

Protective Factors

✓ Pro-Social Beliefs
  • Behavior and rules
✓ Positive School Climate
Using A Weapon

Risk Factors

✓ Older
✓ Low Grades

Protective Factors

✓ Pro-Social Beliefs
✓ Behaviors rules
✓ Positive School Climate
✓ Higher Security Environment
Perpetration Behaviors

- Higher Security Environments
- Physical Size*
- Minority Status
- Lower Grades

- Pro-Social Beliefs
- Positive School Climate

*Results from analysis of earlier cohorts
Potential Solutions

• Conversations about high security environments

• Recognizing special risk for minority girls
  • Academic achievement approaches

✓ Mentoring Programs
  • Skill-based as well as relational

✓ Improved School Climate
  • Social Norming Programs

✓ Bystander Intervention Programs
  • May be best for older students
Social Norms Programs

• An increasingly popular universal prevention technique based upon psychological theory and supported by an extensive empirical study

• An **environmental** approach based upon sharing accurate information with students
  – Compatible with other prevention strategies

• Promote what is **really** happening!
Why Social Norms?

• Our behavior is influenced by our perceptions of what others think and do BUT
  – These perceptions are often inaccurate
  – If we can correct the “misperceptions” that exist, over time behavior should reflect the more accurate (and healthier) norm

• Especially important for YOUNG people
  – MOST students are GOOD students
Components

• Survey
  – Climate surveys are a great place to start

• Media Campaign
  – Be creative!

• Community Support
Developing Social Norms Messages

• Create the messages from survey results
• Cite survey sources on posters
• Include the social norms project logo or other program logo
  – Create one that is school specific or use one from another program
• Use the planning committee for ideas!
  – Where, when, and how the messages/campaign will be executed
Variety of Message Delivery

- Reach students using various forms of media
- "Seven different times in seven different ways"

• Audio Examples
  • PSAs using social norms messages on the morning announcements, or school radio station

• Video Examples
  • PSAs using social norms messages on the local community or school TV station, or on screen savers on computers in labs or the library

• Print Examples
  • Posters, food tray liners, bottom of tests
Variety of Message Delivery (cont.)

• Deliver messages to the PARENTS, too!
  – Post social norms messages on school Web site
  – Advertise social norms messages on local TV stations
  – Share social norms messages on Connect-Ed (automated phone blasts)
  – Print school norms on materials (e.g., school newsletters, report cards, included in progress reports)

• Deliver messages to the COMMUNITY, too!
  – Request permission to hang posters in storefronts
  – Include community members on school planning team
    • Ask member for innovative ideas
Impact of Social Norms

✓ Positive Behavioral Outcomes
  – Reduced violent and non-violent victimization

➢ Additional Benefits
  • Bullying improved
  • Tolerance/relational victimization
Impact of Social Norms

✓ Positive Behavioral Outcomes
  – Reduced violent perpetration

➢ Additional Benefits
  • Bullying improved
    • Tolerance/relational perpetration
  • Cyberperpetration
Take Away

- Structural Concerns
  - Boys and girls are negatively affected by different structural disadvantage
    - Minority status and educational attainment
    - High security environments
- Small gains go far
  - Social Norms campaign
    - Focus on climate and conventional rules
      - Girls may benefit more BUT boys do benefit
Thank you!
Questions?

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Online Resources

• Online resources
  – Hobart and William Smith Colleges Alcohol Education Project
    • http://alcohol.hws.edu/
  – MassTAPP Social Norms Gallery
    • http://www.edc.org/masstapp-social-norms-gallery
  – National Social Norms Resource Center
    • www.socialnorms.org
  – MOST of Us
    • www.mostofus.org
Selected References


Beliefs

• I want to be a good citizen
• Being honest is more important than being popular
• If you find someone’s purse, it is okay to keep it
• It is okay to take advantage of someone who isn’t careful
• Sometimes you have to be a bullying to get respect
• You have to be willing to break the rules if you want to be popular
• If you found your group of friends were leading you into trouble, would you stop hanging out with them
School Climate

- This school is a pretty good school
- Students really like each other here
- Friendships are made in this school
- Groups of students do not get along
- Some students in this school do not like each other
- The teachers care about how students feel in this school
- The teachers are more like friends than authority
- The teachers go out of their way to help students
- The teachers embarrass students for not knowing the right answer
- There are very few rules to follow
- If a student breaks the rule at this school, they are disciplined
- The teachers will send a student out of class if he does something wrong