




SPR 18th Annual Meeting

You may print by clicking on this  button. To return to the previous page, close this browser window or click the 'X' button in the top right corner of the page.

ID# 519

Location: Pikes Peak (Atrium Tower/2nd Floor)

Time of Presentation: Jun 04 2:45 PM - 4:15 PM

Category/Theme: Etiology

The Influence of Neighborhood Violence on Parental Messages about Violence

*S. R. Lindstrom Johnson*¹; *N. M. Finigan*¹; *T. L. Cheng*¹; *C. P. Bradshaw*³; *D. Haynie*²

1. Pediatrics, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Baltimore, MD, United States.

2. Prevention Research Branch, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Rockville, MD, United States.

3. Mental Health, Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore, MD, United States.

Despite the significant risks associated with exposure to violence, few parenting interventions address how exposure influences parent and youth conversations about violence. To inform this gap in the research, this study aimed to identify strategies that parents from violent neighborhoods suggest for their youth to avoid or deescalate violence and explore how parents' experience with neighborhood victimization influences the conflict resolution strategies they recommend to their children.

Data come from 123 parents and youth (ages 11-13) attending 3 urban middle schools located in neighborhoods characterized by violence. Parents and youth participated in both dyad and individual semi-structured interviews and completed a questionnaire. During the dyad interview, parents and youth responded to 3 video-taped violence scenarios. The coding scheme was emergently and iteratively developed with all transcripts double coded and discrepancies adjudicated. Neighborhood victimization was assessed with a dichotomous measure of parent/household member victimization. This analysis is based on the transcripts from all parents reporting neighborhood victimization (n=24) as well as an equal random sample (n=24) from non-victimised parents. Comparison of the 2 groups revealed no statistical difference in demographic characteristics or involvement in youth violence.

Parents identified 12 strategies for youth to avoid or deescalate conflict, with all parents identifying multiple strategies (mean=7.5). Most commonly advocated strategies included fostering social skills, having consequences, and involving an adult, many times the parent. Parents also mentioned having their youth choose appropriate peers, avoid troublemakers, stay out of and not provoke situations, and use peer intervention. Almost all parents mentioned advocating non-violent values with some describing their youth as "not a fighter". Parents who had experienced victimization less frequently described a rationale for suggested solutions, provided less detailed avoidance plans, and were more likely to refer to personal examples. Both sets of parents modeled aggressive behavior; victimized parents were more likely to mention using corporal punishment whereas non-victimised parents were more likely to use aggressive methods to defend their youth.

Incorporating these context specific strategies into parenting interventions could make them more relevant and effective for adolescents at greatest risk. Interventions also need to address parents' own experiences with violence as this influences both the content of strategies and the inadvertent modeling of violence.