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Author:

Kathryn Brookmeyer Ph.D.  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
CDC/NCIPC/DVP, 4770 Buford Highway NE, MS F-63  
Atlanta, Georgia United States 30341  
Entered By, Primary Author, Presenting Author

Christopher Henrich Ph.D.  
Georgia State University  
Dept. of Psychology, PO Box 5010  
Atlanta, Georgia United States 30302  
Co-author

Golan Shahar Ph.D.  
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev  
84105 Beer-Sheva  
Israel, Israel Israel 84105  
Co-author

Title:

Preventing Adolescent Violence Perpetration in Sderot, Israel: The Role of Social Relationships

**Text:**

Terror violence exposure is a pressing issue for adolescents growing up in Sderot, Israel, located a half a mile from the Gaza strip; in 2008, almost 1,200 attacks struck the town. This presentation will investigate how key social relationships may protect adolescents in Sderot who are exposed to terror violence from engaging in violent behavior. Support from parents, school, and friends may be critical in attenuating the effects violence perpetration despite terror violence exposure. From an ecological perspective, examining how these supportive relationships may curb violent behavior is vital to understanding how to bolster protection for adolescents and prevent violence perpetration.

Data were collected as part of a larger study of Israeli adolescents' risk and resilience. The largest high school in Sderot was recruited and consent was obtained from parents and students in grades seven through nine. Student data were collected using a 175-item self-report survey assessing adolescents' attitudes and behaviors ( $N = 44$ ). The terror violence exposure measure was adapted from Kirschenbaum (2006), and social support from parents, friends, and school personnel was measured through the Perceived Social Support Scale (Dubois et al., 1994). Community violence exposure and community violent behavior was adapted from Richters and Martinez's (1993) Survey of Children's Exposure to Community Violence.

A multiple regression was conducted to test the hypotheses about the unique and interactive effects of terror violence exposure and social support on adolescent violent behavior. Support from friends appeared to mainly act as a risk by increasing the likelihood of violent behavior in the context of terror violence exposure ( $B = .08$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $p < .05$ ). However, social support from school personnel appeared to buffer the effect of violence exposure for those adolescents exposed to terror violence ( $B = -.34$ ,  $SE = .11$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Effects of family support on violence perpetration were not detected. Follow-up analyses indicated that support from friends also acted as a risk for increased violence perpetration when adolescents were exposed to community violence ( $B = .12$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and that school support remained a protective effect in the context of community violence exposure ( $B = -.31$ ,  $SE = .11$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Violence prevention implications and bolstering the possible protective effects of schools will be discussed. Longitudinal data from Sderot, Israel are in the process of being collected, and will be analyzed prior to this symposium.

**Theme Groups:** 1 Key social relationships