

Internet Project

Article I: Title: Peer Victimization in School: Exploring the Ethnic Context; Author: Sandra Graham, Dept. of Ed., University of California, Los Angeles; Journal: Current Directions in Psychological Science; Publish Date: December 2006; Volume: 15; Number: 6; Pages: 5

This article provides an overview of recent research on peer victimization in schools that highlights the role of the ethnic context – specifically, classrooms and schools' ethnic composition. The author discusses the two important findings from her research study. First, greater ethnic diversity in classrooms and schools reduces students' feelings of victimization and vulnerability primarily due to the fact that there is a more balance of power among the collective of ethnic groups. Second, in non-diverse classrooms where one ethnic group enjoys a numerical majority, victimized students who are members of the majority may be particularly subjective to self-blaming attributions. In order to conduct this study the author analyzed data from a large sample of 2000 sixth-grade level students from 99 classrooms in 11 different middle schools in metropolitan Los Angeles. The ethnic composition contained students who self-identified as Latino (46%), African American (29%), Asian American (9%), Caucasian (9%), or multiethnic (7%). According to the analysis, the author concluded that the research suggests that ethnicity is an important context variable for understanding the experiences of students who are victimized by their peers. However, the author found that no particular ethnic group had a greater or lesser risk of victimization than another. The true key to victimization revolved around the numerical majority of a particular ethnic group in comparison to the socio-composition. Minority ethnic group students that were victimized by the majority often attributed the victimization to the majority group. Majority ethnic group students that were victimized by the majority often attributed the victimization to self.

Interestingly, students of victimization of an equally diverse socio-composition attributed the blame equally between self and their perpetrator.

Accordingly, in my personal opinion I agree with the author in that anytime a particular ethnic group has a majority the members of that group typically feel more secure in self and their milieu. This is also true that anytime a particular ethnic group has a minority the members of that group often have a disconnection from their true value, because the affirmation of self is limited or absent. In conclusion the author won my allegiance because although she focuses on an attributional explanation to the victimization of peer victimization she gives credence to the fact that there are a number of factors not discussed in her studies that could account for the linkages between victimization and adjustment.

Article II: Title: Needs of Sexual Assault Advocates in Campus-Based Sexual Assault Centers: Exploring the Ethnic Context; Authors: Carmody, Dianne; Ekhomu, Jessica; Payne, Brian K. Journal: College Student Journal; Publish Date: June 2009 Part B; Volume: 43; Issue: 2; Pages: 7

This article is about the study of universities and colleges campuses' sexual assault crisis centers' needs. The research utilized the evaluation technique through self-answered questionnaires of seventeen advocates working with campus sexual assault centers to realize the needs of these centers in order to better serve their constituents. Based on the research four specific needs were underscored. Advocates emphasized the need for increased funding for prevention and counseling programs, improved strategies to assist international students, and coordination of college sexual assault programs at the state level. The authors concluded that the lack of funding prevented the crisis centers from reaching their full potential and as a result their constituents were provided a disservice. Often times the lack of funding prevented

the lack of education about the true blame of the offense. Moreover, the lack of funding has hindered the fact that there needs to be an increased awareness to both men and women about the true nature of sexual assault that is currently not occurring. Additionally, the authors concluded that because international students, specifically, women that come to the United States often possess skewed cultural views about violence against women that more is needed to counteract this belief system. In the authors' summation they concluded that the need for statewide coordinators to oversee sexual assault prevention efforts on college campuses exists. Currently, there are no uniform laws, rules or methods to handling sexual assaults; thus, many victims and perpetrators fall through the cracks. The authors believe that if such a position exists it would strengthen the position of crisis centers by sending a message to students, university professionals, and the community that sexual assault will be taken seriously on college campuses

In conclusion, at prima facie I agree with the authors in their summation that more funding, awareness, education, prevention programs and focus on international students are needed. However, I have an issue with the validity of the self-questionnaires. Historically, I know researchers believe that self-questionnaires allow the subject to be more open. Nonetheless, I have concerns when a particular group has a direct benefit from the research, such as, the advocates. Therefore, I agree with the authors' deductions with the caveat that the advocates could have been self-motivated to report the needs as they did.

Article III: Title: Intimate Partner Violence Among Economically Disadvantage Young Adult Women: Associations With Adolescent Risk-Taking and Pregnancy Experiences; Authors: O'Donnell, Lydia; Agronick, Gail; Duran, Richard; Myint-

**U, Athi; Stueve, Ann.; Journal: Perspectives on Sexual & Reproductive Health;
Publish Date: June 2009; Volume: 41; Issue: 2; Pages: 8**

This is a research paper based on data obtained from 581 female participants in the Reach for Health Longitudinal Study, who were followed for approximately 10 years beginning in middle school out of Brooklyn, New York taken from the population of three schools. The context of the study is that intimate partner violence negatively impacts the health of substantial proportions of young women in economically disadvantaged communities, where sexual initiation, aggressive behaviors, unintended pregnancies and childbearing are common among adolescents. It is therefore important to assess how adolescent risk behaviors and pregnancy experiences are linked to such violence during young adulthood according to the researchers. After considering and analyzing a large amount of data the researchers concluded that it is important to consider women's pregnancy histories in programs aimed at preventing the adverse outcomes of relationship violence and in screening for partner violence in sexual and reproductive health services. The researchers' insightful conclusion that early intervention may help women develop the skills needed for resolving conflicts with peers and partners is profound.

The conclusion reached by the researchers altered my initial perception of their study coupled with the listed limitations of the study. Initially, I was ready to dissent from the researchers' point-of-view until they outlined several potential flaws to the variables they had selected for their study. Such as, the fact that the subjects of the study were limited to only three schools all within Brooklyn, New York, thereby failing to account for different socioeconomically milieus. One issue that the researchers failed to resolve for me was the

methodology behind their measurement of “partner violence”. Several of the questions could be misconstrued from harmless sexual foreplay between partners to “partner violence” because of the terminology utilized on the questionnaires. Even though the researchers failed to completely gain my agreement of their findings I believe their study has validity, but requires much more research on the issue.

Article IV: Title: Restorative Justice as Social Justice for Victims of Gendered Violence: A Standpoint Feminist Perspective; Author: *van Wormer, Katherine*; Journal: *Social Work*; Publish Date: April 2009; Volume: 54; Issue: 2; Pages: 10

This article provided an overview of restorative justice as a process and examined its relevance to women who have been victimized by physical and sexual abuse. The author considers four restorative justice models throughout the article, which are victim-offender conferencing; family group conferencing, healing circles and community reparation. In this article the author underscores several points that should be considered as foods-for-thought by both criminal justice system professionals and the social worker profession as a whole. First, the author focuses on “standpoint feminism”, which is about giving women a voice for self-determination. Ironically, the author’s focus on the basic tenets of restorative justice highlights the failure of the criminal justice system’s “new laws” of mandatory arrest and prosecution policies that have proliferated across the states often times having adverse effects then their intended goals. For the most part the victim is marginalized even more than before, because her voice is taken away. She has no recourse once the authorities are called in and as a result the author points out that many women, especially, women of color simply choose not to

report, because of their lack of input in the process. In a sense according to the author the women are therefore further victimized, but this time by the system that is designed to protect them. Second, the author outlines how restorative justice is about healing and not retribution, which is what most victimized women need. Through restorative justice according to the author a path towards empowerment and relationship building can be achieved. According to the author at this point, the point-of-view of the offender is taking responsibility for the wrongdoing and from the point-of-view of the victim comes the right to tell their story, receive a sincere apology while bringing some closure. Third, the author believes that the victims must play a key role throughout the process to ensure that their needs and the community needs are met and that they are not re-victimized. The author does allow for the fact that some offenders may not be appropriate for this type of process, but more research needs to be conducted to find out which offenders would be appropriate.

In conclusion, I agree with the author's summation that unfortunately in the United States and Canada, the present system involving mandatory arrests and prosecutions of perpetrators in domestic violence cases have brought about unintended consequences to the extent that many victims are reluctant to call the police. As a woman of color I also concur that a new methodology must be considered in responding to domestic violence, especially, for women of color who are well aware of the historical mistreatment of minorities in the criminal justice system.