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THE IMPACT OF STRESSFUL LIFE EVENTS AND EXPOSURE
TO COMMUNITY VIOLENCE ON DELINQUENCY
IN HISPANIC PRE-ADOLESCENTS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science
in
Psychology:
Clinical Counseling

by
Nadine Valerie Perez Zamora

June 2003

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Approved by:



Dr. Faith McClure, Chair, Psychology



Dr. Jean Peacock



Dr. David Chavez

5/14/03

Date

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the current study was to examine delinquent behavior in Hispanic pre-adolescents. It was hypothesized that both predictor variables [exposure to community violence (number of events; perception of events) and stressful life events (number of events)] would impact delinquent behavior (violent thoughts, violent behaviors, and promiscuity). Results indicate that exposure to community violence (number of events) was the single significant predictor of violent thoughts, violent behavior, and promiscuity. Neither community violence (perceived impact) nor stressful life events (number of events) accounted for additional significant variance above that accounted for by community violence (number of events).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my husband, Rene, for all of his love and support during my educational journey. He has been a pillar of strength in my life and I could not have accomplished all that I have without him by my side. Also, I would like to thank my parents, whose undying love and support have given me the courage to believe in myself and to develop the discipline that I needed to succeed in all of my endeavors. I would also like to thank my family and friends who cheered me on during this and every other goal I've worked toward. Finally, I would like to thank my thesis committee: Faith, Jean, and David, for sharing not only their time but also their knowledge with me. They are all truly gifted individuals who possess not only a wealth of knowledge but also a passion for sharing it with others like myself. And to my chair, Faith, thank you, thank you, thank you, for everything! You have become such a powerful role model in my life and I aspire to be like you in so many ways! I am truly lucky to have been blessed with so many wonderful people in my life.

DEDICATION

For Mom and Dad,

I'm everything I am because you loved me.....

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Violence is widespread across the United States; it permeates our culture and is evident in many forms, ranging from covert acts to overt acts, such as physical aggression towards another or destruction of property. Violent behavior is seen across an array of settings within our culture; media presentations of violence, family violence, and community violence are just a few examples. In the Western culture, "Violence is as American as apple pie" (Stokely Carmichael, as cited in Beck, 1993, p. 228). Violent acts have plagued this country since its conception and year after year, individuals have used violence as a means of obtaining that which they have desired. Society has engaged in and modeled violent behavior generation after generation and today's youth have become a part of this vicious cycle.

Because of society's tolerance of, and modeling of, violent behavior, children have been increasingly exposed to violence in their everyday lives. In fact, in some parts of the U.S., violent responses to threats or insults are endorsed and not viewed as inappropriate (Cohen, 1998). But is it appropriate for children to be exposed to

violent acts at early stages in their development? I can recall in my own childhood having personally witnessed or heard about violent acts being committed in my neighborhood, to my family members, or to my friends. I can clearly remember the feelings I had when I heard gunshots, screeching tires, and then sirens just minutes later. Growing up, these types of episodes were frequent; they were normal. In fact, they were all just a part of "life."

Should it be "normal" for a child to know firsthand through experience what a violent place the world is before they reach adolescence or adulthood? Certainly most would reply with an answer of "no" to this question; however, empirical studies indicate that many children do know about violence at a very young age. For example, in their 1997 study of 146 children living in a Chicago public housing development, Sheehan, DiCara, LeBailly, and Christoffel found that 42% of children ages 7-13 years old had seen someone shot and 37% had seen someone stabbed. Of the children age 9 or younger, 28% had witnessed a shooting and 26% had witnessed a stabbing. In addition, Aisenberg's (2001) study highlights that "children younger than the age of 5 years have substantial exposure to community violence and experience negative consequences"

(p. 393). This suggests that on a daily basis children witness violence in the media, in their homes, in their communities, and so forth. Children are thrust into a world where violence is not only accepted and tolerated, but also encouraged, or so it seems. Moreover, generation after generation, children have been raised to believe that using violent behavior is acceptable in this society. To illustrate, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, the number of offenders under 18 admitted to State prison has more than doubled from 1985 to 1997 (Strom, 2000), many for violent crimes such as rape and murder. Indeed, "in 1997, 61% of persons admitted to State prison under age 18 had been convicted of a violent offense compared to 52% in 1985" (Strom, 2000). Furthermore, according to Scahill (2000), between 1988 and 1997, there was an 83% increase in delinquency cases involving females, and 62% of these offenses were committed by females under age 16. Thus, it is quite evident that violence has increasingly become a problem among our youth. In fact, both the victims and perpetrators of violence are increasingly young people (Sweatt, Harding, Knight-Lynn, Rasheed, & Carter, 2002).

Exposure to violence can occur in a variety of settings (e.g. media, home, community, etc.). Researchers

are interested in how children are impacted by such exposure. The outcome of violence exposure will vary depending on several factors, including the type of exposure, the amount of exposure, and the impact of the exposure. In a series of classic studies, Bandura (1969) found that children often imitated aggressive behavior toward a Bobo doll after observing models being reinforced for aggressive behavior. In addition, Drabman and Thomas (1974) investigated whether or not media violence increased children's toleration of real-life aggression. They found that indeed, children who saw an aggressive film took longer to seek adult help when they witnessed real-life aggression. Twenty years later, Molitor and Hirsch, (1994) replicated the Drabman and Thomas study and confirmed their results: when children were exposed to violence on television/film and then they witnessed aggressive behaviors in real life, they seemed to tolerate the aggressive behaviors of others more (they took longer to get help from an adult than children who did not see the violent film). Others (Kolbo, 1996) have researched the effects on children who witness family violence. Results of this study suggest "children exposed to family violence are at an increased risk for emotional and behavioral problems" (p. 122). And yet others (e. g.,

Veenema, 2001) have studied the effects that witnessing violence within one's community has on children. Veenema found that exposure to community violence is related to significant stress and depression in children. Also, in a compelling study with young children, Eiden (1999) reported that exposure to community violence was a significant predictor of child behavior problems even when adequacy of parental care-giving was controlled for. The current study is interested in evaluating the impact of community violence among pre-adolescents.

The effects of witnessing community violence will undoubtedly vary from individual to individual because everyone has a unique perception of the witnessed event. Many studies do, however, indicate that witnessing violence affects most children in a negative way. For example, these experiences sometimes interfere with a child's normal development of trust (Aisenberg, 2001) or often increase the child's likelihood of exhibiting violent behaviors themselves (Song, Singer, & Anglin, 1998). Despite strong evidence in the literature that witnessing violence has a negative impact on children, especially in the form of internalizing symptoms, such as depression, some studies have found otherwise. For example, Fitzpatrick (1993) measured exposure to violence

and the presence of depression in low-income African-American youth. His results revealed that younger children, children in households without their mother, and victims of violence reported more depressive symptoms than older youth and children living with their mother.

Interestingly, "chronic exposure to violence, in the form of witnessing violent acts, was not significantly related to depression." In fact, in this study, "witnessing violence had no significant effect on depression"

(p. 530). Fitzpatrick explains "this finding, although surprising, may indicate that youths chronically exposed to violence experienced a desensitization process such that these types of daily stressors had little or no impact on their well-being" (p. 530). While Fitzpatrick's argument that "youth chronically exposed to violence may possess an extraordinary set of coping mechanisms"

(p. 531) allowing them to "insulate themselves from external stimuli and as a result are less affected by these experiences and report fewer depressive symptoms"

(p. 531) is possible, it is also possible that the impact of the daily stressors may not emerge until a later date.

Undoubtedly, exposure to community violence hurts youth in many ways, especially youth who are considered to be "at risk" such as those who are economically

disadvantaged or who live in violent neighborhoods. While the outcomes of violence exposure will vary depending on the type of exposure, it is evident that chronic exposure to violence can produce a number of both short-term and long-term effects on children. Although there is a paucity of "systematic" research on the psychological consequences to children of being raised in chronically violent neighborhoods, the evidence suggesting that there are adverse effects is compelling. For example, Martinez and Richters (1993) found that "children's reports of witnessing violence in the community were also associated with higher self-ratings of overall distress" (p. 28) and "violence exposure was associated with distress symptoms in both older and younger children" (p. 32).

While research on the long-term effects that witnessing violence has on children is sparse, there is growing evidence that witnessing violence does indeed have long-term negative effects on children. Putnam and Trickett (1993), for example, make a strong argument that some of the long-term effects noted in cases of child abuse, such as disturbances in the sense of self, profound distortions in body image, and high rates of self-destructive behaviors, may be similar to the long-term effects of chronic exposure to violence in

children and adolescents. They argue that the vast amount of research on the long-term effects of child abuse on children may in fact be useful in identifying long-term effects for chronic exposure to violence, thus, allowing one to draw similar conclusions between the two. According to Putnam and Trickett, (1993):

Childhood sexual abuse (CSA) shares the elements of pervasiveness of threat and chronicity of stress with community violence. The chronicity of stress and the likelihood of future traumatization common to both CSA and community violence may tap similar coping mechanisms such as seeking "safe" places or escape into daydreaming and fantasy. The experience of community violence may resemble CSA in that the child lives in a situation where he or she is continually socially exposed to current or potential traumatizers with attendant stress and anxiety. Evading traumatization requires continual vigilance and active escape behaviors, which must necessarily take precedence over other activities and interests. (p. 84)

Putnam and Trickett go on to say:

The lack of safe environments and/or separations from situations or individuals guaranteeing safety can be profoundly traumatic experiences for helpless children. Children surrounded by the constant and often unpredictable dangers of community violence are likely obsessed with analogous anxieties and concerns for safety. (p. 85)

Putnam and Trickett point out that there are indeed important differences between the experiences of CSA and community violence, however, they contend "these two broad forms of trauma share many common elements with respect to

chronicity of stress and pervasiveness of threat, and therefore may tap common psychological and physiological responses" (p. 92).

Although we know violence doesn't discriminate, that is, it can be found across all socioeconomic groups and across all races, it is true that some individuals are at greater risk for encountering violence in the course of their life than are others. For instance, Song et al. (1998) report "adolescents are at greater risk for being victims of serious crime than adults" (p. 531).

Interestingly, although most youth have a high risk for witnessing violent behavior, "minority youth are at the greatest risk of injury from violence" (Sheehan et al., 1997, p. 502). One possible explanation for this may be that the majority of minorities live in lower class neighborhoods where resources are limited, overcrowding is a problem, and citizens have lower levels of education. This type of stressful environment may significantly contribute to increased violent or delinquent behavior, especially among youth.

While it seems "reasonable" to note that violence has an impact at all socioeconomic levels, Bell and Jenkins (1993) report, "Violence and mayhem is not evenly distributed across all neighborhoods and demographic

groups...It occurs in inner-city neighborhoods, disproportionately among the young and in public places" (p. 46). Similarly, Halliday-Boykins and Graham, (2001) note that neighborhood disadvantage plays a significant role in violence outcomes. And it appears to be no secret that neighborhood disadvantage is an epidemic among minorities. Statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau (2001) show that 22.7% of Blacks, 10.2% of Asians and Pacific Islanders, and 21.4% of Hispanics live in poverty; compared to only 7.8% of non-Hispanic Whites. This data reveals that a large portion of the minority population is living in poverty, which consequently may place them at an increased risk for being exposed to violence because they live in severely disadvantaged neighborhoods.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Delinquency

Delinquent behavior is a significant problem among today's youth. We know that many factors contribute to delinquency among youth, including being a witness to or a victim of violence. Because there are a myriad of ways that witnessing violence can affect an individual, such as physically, mentally, and developmentally, researchers must decide which of these outcomes they will focus on in their research. The current study is intended to examine not only the number of violent events a child is exposed to but also the impact of these events on the child emotionally, and later, behaviorally. In other words, the current study seeks to discover how distressing the violence is for the individual and if the reported level of distress is related to delinquent behavior.

Several studies have found that exposure to community violence often contributes to children's own violent behavior (Song et al., 1998) as well as to other negative outcomes, such as decreased school performance (Hurt, Malmud, Brodsky, & Biannetta, 2001), decrements in IQ and reading achievement (Delaney-Black et al., 2002),

decreased self-esteem, emotional and behavioral problems, and increased risk for engaging in high risk behaviors (Berenson, Wiemann, & McCombs, 2001; Martin, Gordon, & Kupersmidt, 1995; Ruchkin, Schwab-Stone, Kuposov, Vermeiren, & Steiner, 2002). For example, in their 2001 study, Berenson et al., examined the relationship between exposure to violence and health-risk behaviors in adolescent girls. They found that compared to adolescents who had not been exposed to violence, those who had witnessed violence and/or experienced violence were more likely to report engaging in high-risk taking behaviors such as using tobacco and marijuana, drinking alcohol or using drugs, having multiple sex partners, and having intercourse with strangers. In addition, Hurt et al. (2001) concluded that "higher exposure to violence in children correlates with poorer performance in school, symptoms of anxiety and depression, and lower self-esteem" (p. 135).

Stress

Individuals the world over encounter unique life events and, consequently, are affected by such events in unique ways; thus it can be expected that one's response to stressful events will vary depending on several factors

including age, developmental abilities, and coping style. Because responses to life events can vary as a function of age, it is important for researchers to be aware of the developmental level of their participants. Furthermore, an individual's perception of the experience may contribute to their response and both may significantly impact later adjustment.

The study of the effects of stress on children's adjustment is still a relatively new area of interest in psychology. As with all areas of study, there are several theories and perspectives about the way in which stress affects individuals. In his (1987) review, Compas describes three major theories about how stress affects an individual. First, the biological theory suggests a neurological perspective in which it is believed that stressful life events affect brain functioning, which in turn, may lead to unregulated, problematic behavior. Second, the psychosocial theory focuses on the nature of stressful life events and the relationship between these events and subsequent psychological or physical disorders. This model has a strong focus on a linear relationship between events as causal factors in the etiology of some type of distress. Finally, developmental theories have a stronger focus on the developmental nature of life events,

rather than the "disease" orientation of the psychosocial theories. In this model, life events are not viewed as sources of pathology, but rather as states of disequilibrium, which precede and make positive development possible (Compas, 1987).

Stress appears to be universal; it can be seen in numerous environments and it is a part of every individual's life across the entire lifespan. Stress is an important variable to consider when conducting research on violence because witnessing violent events is in and of itself a form of stress. This is significant because oftentimes, one's response to the stressors in their life will impact their life in some significant way. Therefore, when studying stress, it is important to recognize that many factors can impact an individual's response to stress; such factors include sociological factors, family factors, environmental factors, etc. Such factors may either exacerbate or lessen the impact that stressful life events have on an individual.

While stressful life events play a pivotal role in violence outcomes, the events themselves are only one piece of the puzzle. Of great importance also is how a child perceives the stress he/she is encountering. The perception of the stressors the child is experiencing may

determine the coping mechanisms that are used to cope with the stressor; the child can employ positive or negative coping mechanisms. According to Valentiner, Holahan, and Moos, (1994) "Cognitive and behavioral coping, in particular, contribute significantly to an individual's psychosocial adjustment during stressful periods or under stressful conditions" (p. 1094). Children who use more adaptive coping strategies will have better adjustment than children who primarily use maladaptive coping strategies. Because witnessing violence has been found to be a significant stressor for children, it is important that researchers identify not only the effects of witnessing violence on children's adjustment, but that they identify other variables as well, such as how the child copes with the stressors as well as other moderating and mediating variables. This will enable researchers to establish a wider range of potential interventions.

Much like the study of violence, stress research has primarily focused on the adult population. However, more recently, researchers have recognized that stressful life events do not only occur in adulthood. Many have, therefore, turned their attention to children and adolescents and are beginning to question the impact that stressful life events have on children's social,

psychological, and biological well-being. This research is important for both developmental and clinical psychology because stress plays a unique role in development and exhibition of psychopathological symptoms across the life span; put succinctly, stress impacts children differently than it does adults. A concern for developmental researchers then, is to try to understand why this is so. Further, developmental researchers need to attempt to identify other factors that play a role in an individual's responses to stress. This research is important to researchers because children's responses to stress may impact their adjustment later in life. For example, it is important to identify how coping mechanisms employed by children can either aid or hinder their development and adjustment when dealing with stress. Further, as noted earlier, children who are exposed to chronic stress are at risk for negative outcomes. For instance, Grant, Compas, Thurm, McMahon, and Ey (2000, as cited in Compas et al., 2001, p. 87) found:

psychosocial stress is a significant and pervasive risk factor for psychopathology in childhood and adolescence and the ways in which children and adolescents cope with stress are potentially important mediators and moderators of the impact of stress on current and future adjustment and psychopathology

Grant et al. (2000, as cited in Compas et al., 2001, p. 87) go on to state "the development of characteristic ways of coping in childhood may place individuals on more versus less adaptive developmental trajectories and may be a precursor of patterns of coping throughout adulthood."

Currently, the literature on stressful life events indicates that indeed, stressful life events can impact children in a number of ways, including sociological, psychological, and/or biological impairments. In his review of the empirical research on stress, Compas (1987) lists a number of studies all of which have one thing in common, "a significant relationship between life events and disorder" (p. 284). Research outcomes listed in Compas's (1987) review indicated that stressful life events in childhood lead to an increase in aggressive and delinquent behavior, violence, conduct problems, and externalizing and internalizing symptoms and diagnoses. Because stress is ultimately a part of each and every individual's life from conception to death, it is imperative that research in this area continues and that researchers work to identify the long-term consequences of stress on children's adjustment into adolescence and adulthood. In addition, it is important to recognize that stress in and of itself is a complex variable that can

never be fully understood unless we take a multi-disciplinary approach. Stress has the power to exacerbate any symptom and is therefore a focus of attention in many fields of research. In psychology, it has been discovered that experiencing stress in childhood in the form of stressful life events can lead to externalizing and internalizing symptoms and diagnoses, such as aggressive behavior, conduct problems, etc. Because stress is a universal feature across the lifespan, it makes for an interesting and important area of study, especially in developmental life-span and clinical psychology.

In this study, perception of life events (reported level of distress) versus actual number of life events experienced is highlighted. Thus, the issue of exposure (i.e. number of stressful life events, number of violent experiences) versus perception by the individual of how distressing these events were to them is of significance. Therefore, in this study, the impact of the combined numbers of stressful life events and violent community exposure will be evaluated. Specifically, the number of stressful life events as well as the number of violent events an individual has experienced and the perception of these events (stressful life events and community

violence) will be examined in relation to delinquent behavior. Therefore, the current study seeks to measure children's exposure to violence and the amount of stressful life events the child has encountered within the past year and their association with delinquent behavior.

The intent of the current study is to examine if distress caused from exposure to violence, rather than the violent act itself, is a stronger predictor of future violent or delinquent behavior in children. That is, children's exposure to violence and their experience of such violence will be examined in relation to the amount of delinquent behavior the children report engaging in. Violence refers to "physical force exerted for the purpose of violating, damaging, or abusing" (Costello et al., 1997, p. 1507). Results of violence can be psychological, social, or physical and can also harm the well being of individuals or groups (American Psychological Association, 1993). For this study, exposure to violence will be determined by children's reports of having either directly experienced or directly witnessed a violent act done to a family member, a friend, an acquaintance, or a stranger (e.g., being stabbed or shot or seeing someone get stabbed or shot). Experience of violence will be determined by children's reports of how distressing the experience was

for them. Stressful life events will be measured by the amount of events or experiences that an individual reports having had within his/her home and/or community within the past year (e.g., moving, illness, death of a family member).

Acting out is defined as behaviors that are disorderly or destructive and which deviate or are in opposition to the laws or rules of society (Figelman & Sidd, 1994). In the original study from which this data was drawn, acting out was comprised of four dimensions. However, in this study, only three dimensions were examined. Therefore, acting out was comprised of the following three dimensions: 1) violent thoughts, 2) violent behaviors, and 3) promiscuity.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this research is to contribute to the current literature by examining children's reports of exposure to violence and stressful life events, and to examine how these factors contribute to their delinquent/acting out behavior. It was hypothesized that:

- 1a) Delinquent behavior (violent thoughts) is predicted by exposure to community violence (number of events);
- 1b) Delinquent behavior (violent behavior) is predicted by

exposure to community violence (number of events);

1c) Delinquent behavior (promiscuity) is predicted by exposure to community violence (number of events), 1d) it is further predicted that the individuals perceptions of the impact of the exposure to community violence (perception of events) will account for additional explainable variance in delinquent behavior (i.e. it will account for variance beyond that accounted for by number of events) and that the impact of stressful life events will account for variance beyond that accounted for by the first two. 2) Overall delinquent behavior (violent thoughts, violent behaviors, and promiscuity) is predicted by the interaction between stressful life events (number of events) and exposure to community violence (number of events). 3) Overall delinquent behavior (violent thoughts, violent behaviors, and promiscuity) is predicted by the interaction between the impact/perception of stressful life events and the impact/perception of exposure to community violence.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The present study used archival data from a study conducted by Peacock, McClure, and Agars (2003). Therefore, several items contained within the material and measures were not utilized as part of the present analysis. The method section described below focuses on the specific instruments that were used for the results of this study.

Participants

The sample consisted of 206 adolescent participants obtained from a previous study and consisted of: 67% Hispanic/Latino, 17% African American, 4% Caucasian, and 12% Other. Approximately 50% were male and 50% were female and ages ranged from 11-12 years old. However, data for the present study is a subset, focusing only on the Hispanic/Latino population (138 participants: 85 female and 53 male). All participants were recruited from a 6th grade elementary school in a rural area of Southern California. A monetary incentive of \$5.00 was given to students for their participation in the study. All participants were treated in accordance with the "Ethical

Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct" (American Psychological Association, 1992).

Materials

In this study, the following materials were used:

- 1) Two consent forms: a parent/guardian consent/permission form and a child verbal consent form (see Appendix A & B);
- 2) One demographic sheet (see Appendix C);
- 3) A Stressful Life Events Scale (see Appendix D);
- 4) An Impact of Events Questionnaire (also referred to Community Violence Scale, see Appendix E);
- 5) A Delinquency Scale (see Appendix F);
- 6) A Student Debriefing Form (see Appendix G).

The Consent Forms

Participants and their parents were administered separate consent forms. The child verbal consent form (see Appendix B) contained an age appropriate explanation about the purpose of the study, an explanation about confidentiality, and a description of how long it would take to complete the questionnaire. It also included information about the amount of incentive pay that would be given as well as when breaks would be given during participation in the study. Participants were also informed that they could ask questions at any time during

the session and that the questionnaires were in no way meant to be tests and therefore, would not be graded.

Parents received the parent/guardian consent/permission form, which also included information about the study (see Appendix A). Information on the form consisted of material describing the background of the researchers along with the purpose and method of the study, as well as a description of participation and incentives. The consent form also included an explanation of confidentiality, the nature of the questions being administered to the children, and information about how long the child would be out of the classroom. In addition, the form explained that there would be a monetary incentive given to participants. Parents were also informed of their right to view the questionnaire and subsequently were asked to sign a letter of agreement if they would be allowing their child to participate in the study. The letter of agreement restated the abovementioned concepts in the first person and parents/guardians were asked to sign and return the form to the school.

The Demographic Sheet

Each participant was asked to respond to a demographic questionnaire that included questions

concerning age, gender, and ethnicity, as well as inquiries about their friends, favorite television shows and video games, and with whom they spent their time with (see Appendix C).

Scales

Stressful Life Events Inventory

The Stressful Life Events Inventory (Compas, Davis, Forsythe, & Wagner, 1987) was used to measure life events (see Appendix D). This scale was used to identify the number of stressful life events an individual has experienced within the past year and how these events impacted the individual. The Stressful Life Events Inventory consists of 29 items, which represent an array of relevant life events that could occur within a family (e.g., birth of a sibling, incarceration of a family member, death of a parent, etc.). Respondents were asked to respond in a yes/no format in regards to whether or not they had experienced the stressful life events listed and if so, how much the events bothered them. A 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 (didn't bother you) to 5 (really, really bothered you) was used to assess the amount of distress the event caused the individual. Participants each received a cumulative score based on their responses.

The scores were determined as follows: if a respondent indicated that "yes" s/he had experienced the event, they received a one (1), however, if the participant responded that "no" s/he did not experience the event, they received a zero (0). Then, each response (either 1-5) chosen for each question on the 5 point Likert-type scale was multiplied by the score given in the yes/no category, (either a 1 or a 2). The test re-test reliability of the Stressful Life Events Inventory was reported as $r = .86$ and the alpha co-efficient was reported as $\alpha = .73$ (major events) and $\alpha = .86$ [daily events] (Compas et al., 1987). The scale was found to have empirical validity by appearance of association clusters.

In summary, exposure was determined by counting the number of events that a child reported experiencing. The total number reflected the amount of exposure to violence. To measure distress, the number of exposure experiences was multiplied by the extent to which the experienced bothered the child.

Modified Impact of Events Scale (Community Violence Scale)

The Modified Impact of Events Scale (Horowitz, Wilner, & Alvarez, 1979) also referred to as the Community Violence Scale, consists of 14 items that were used to

assess both the amount of violent events an individual had been exposed to within their community and the extent to which the events "bothered" them (see Appendix E). Test re-test reliability for the Impact of Events Scale was $r = .87$ (Horowitz et al., 1979). The current study reported the alpha coefficient as $\alpha = .76$.

Respondents were asked to respond in a yes/no format as to whether or not they had experienced certain events (e.g. someone stabbed, raped, beaten, etc.) and if so, how much the events bothered them. They were also asked to identify the individual to whom the event occurred (e.g. self, family member, friend, or acquaintance). Similar to the Stressful Life Events Scale, a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (didn't bother you) to 5 (really, really bothered you) was used to assess the amount of distress the event caused the individual. Participants each received a cumulative score based on their responses. The scores were determined as follows: if a respondent indicated that "yes" s/he had experienced the event, they received a one (1), however, if the participant responded that "no" s/he did not experience the event, they received a zero (0). Then, each response (either 1-5) chosen for each question on the 5 point Likert-type scale was multiplied by the score given in the yes/no category,

(either a 0 or a 1). For example, if a child answered "no" (score of 0) and still indicated that the event bothered him/her "a medium amount" (score of 3) then the numbers would be multiplied together and the child would receive a score for that item. In this example, 0 and 3 would be multiplied together for a score, resulting in a score of zero for this item. If a child answered "yes" (score of 1) and then indicated that the event bothered him/her "a lot" (score of 5) then 1 and 5 would be multiplied together, resulting in a score of 5 for this item. The sum of all scores was totaled and each participant received a composite score for the measure. A high score on the 5-point Likert-type scale indicated that the participant viewed his/her life events as highly stressful, whereas a low score suggested that the participant viewed his/her life events as low or moderately stressful.

In summary, exposure was determined by counting the number of events that a child reported experiencing. The total number reflected the amount of exposure to violence. To measure distress, the number of exposure experiences was multiplied by the extent to which the experienced bothered the child.

The Delinquency Scale

Delinquency was measured by the Delinquency Scale, which was designed by Peacock, McClure and Agars for the purpose of this study (see Appendix F). The Delinquency Scale consists of items that are considered to be delinquent behavior (e.g. gotten drunk, set a fire, stolen a car, etc). In the 42-item scale, delinquency was measured by how often the child reported being involved in an activity. A 5-point Likert type scale from 1 (almost always or always true) to 5 (almost never or never true) was used with possible scores ranging from 42 to 210. A high score indicated a higher involvement in delinquent behavior, whereas a low score indicated a lower involvement in delinquent behavior. The alpha coefficient was $\alpha = .92$. The appropriate items were reversed so that high scores on this measure indicated high levels of delinquency. The original delinquency scale was divided into four dimensions: 1) overall general delinquency 2) substance use 3) violent/destructive behavior 4) thoughts about engaging in violent acts. For this study, only the following dimensions were used: 1) violent thoughts 2) violent behaviors 3) promiscuity. In this study, promiscuity was taken out of the general

delinquency section. The general delinquency dimension was no used as a whole in this study.

Debriefing Statement

The debriefing statement (see Appendix G) consists of information regarding the major research questions in the study. Participants were also given information about who to contact if they experienced distress due to their participation in the study or if they wanted to discuss or obtain the results of the study.

Procedure

The present study used archival data from Peacock, McClure and Agars (2003) study on delinquent behaviors. In the original procedure, teachers announced the study in class and those students who indicated that they wished to participate were given a description of the study along with two consent forms; one for themselves and one for their parents. In the description of the study, parents were told that the study focused on "identifying strengths in children" and that their child would receive \$5.00 for his or her participation. Children were asked to take the consent forms home, have parents sign them, and then to return them to the attendance office, where they would be retrieved by the researchers. Upon receipt of the consent

forms, teachers were contacted to arrange the days and times that students would be taken from class in order to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered in a centrally located classroom, twice a day, for two weeks. At 8:00 a.m. each day, students were gathered and placed into groups of twenty and then escorted to the classroom in which the questionnaire was being administered. Students were instructed to find a seat so that they could listen to instructions as well as to an explanation of the study. Once again, students were asked for their consent to participate and they were also informed that if at any time during the testing they felt uncomfortable or wished to stop participating, for any reason, they had the right to do so and they would then be escorted back to their classroom. After the announcements, questions were taken. After their questions had been answered, students were instructed to open their packet and to begin filling out the entire questionnaire in front of them. The questionnaire included: a demographic sheet (see Appendix C), an impact of events questionnaire (see Appendix E), a stressful life events scale (see Appendix D), a delinquency scale (see Appendix F), and a debriefing statement (see Appendix G). Overall, the average time to complete the questionnaire was approximately 90 minutes.

Upon completion of the packet, students were debriefed (verbally), told the true nature of the study, and all questions that respondents had were answered. Children were then given their \$5.00 incentive and escorted back to their classroom.

Statistical Analysis

Bivariate correlations as well as hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted to test the study hypotheses.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Bivariate correlations for all variables are in Table 1. As can be seen in Table 1, Stressful Life Events (number of events exposed to) did not impact the outcome variables, therefore, it was eliminated in the regression model. A series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses were used to test the study hypotheses.

Table 1. Bivariate Correlations for all Variables

Correlations	CESUM	LIFESUM	LIIMPACT	CEIMPACT
VIOLENT TH.				
Pearson Correlation	-.342**	-.129	.272**	.338**
Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.072	.002	.000
N	131	131	117	92
PROMISCUITY				
Pearson Correlation	-.303**	-.138	.223**	.209*
Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.058	.008	.023
N	130	130	116	91
VIOLENT BEH.				
Pearson Correlation	-.250**	-.054	.074	.251**
Sig. (1-tailed)	.002	.271	.214	.008
N	130	130	116	91

Note: VIOLENT TH. = Violent thoughts; VIOLENT BEH. = Violent behavior; CESUM = Community violence (number of events exposed to); LIFESUM = stressful life events (number of events exposed to); LIIMPACT = Stressful life events (impact of events); CEIMPACT = Community violence (impact of events).

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

The predictor variables were: community violence (number of events exposed to), community violence (impact of events), and stressful life events (impact of events). The outcome variables included in the analyses were violent thoughts, violent behaviors, and promiscuity.

Regression results from the three analyses can be found in tables 2 through 4. Results from table 2 show that overall, community violence (number of events exposed to) accounted for 13.7% of the variance in violent thoughts, $F(1, 84) = 13.390$, $p < .001$. Neither the impact of community violence nor the impact of stressful life

Table 2. Regression Results for Violent Thoughts

Independent Variables	β^*	t^*	R^2	R^2 change	F^* value
Set I:					
CESUM	-.371	-3.659	.137	.137	.000
Set II:			.138	.001	.772
CESUM	-.317	-1.504			
CEIMPACT	.061	.290			
Set III:			.155	.016	.214
CESUM	-.232	-1.050			
CEIMPACT	.105	.493			
LIIMPACT	.137	1.253			

Note: CESUM = total number of community violence events exposed to; CEIMPACT = participants perceived impact of community violence events exposed to; LIIMPACT = participants perceived impact of stressful life events experienced.

events accounted for additional significant variance over and beyond the variance accounted for by community violence (number of events exposed to).

Results shown in Table 3 indicate that community violence (number of events exposed to) accounted for 13.8% of the variance in violent behavior, $F(1, 89) = 14.277$, $p < .001$. Community violence (impact of events) accounted for no additional significant variance in violent behavior. The stressful life events (impact of events) was not included in this regression analysis because bivariate correlations indicated that it was not significantly related to violent behavior.

Table 3. Regression Results for Violent Behavior

Independent Variables	β^*	t^*	R^2	R^2 change	F^* value
Set I:					
CESUM	-.372	-3.779	.138	.138	.000
Set II:			.164	.026	.100
CESUM	-.674	-3.264			
CEIMPACT	-.343	-1.660			

Note: CESUM = total number of community violence events exposed to; CEIMPACT = participants perceived impact of community violence events exposed to; LIIMPACT = participants perceived impact of stressful life events experienced.

Results in Table 4 show that community violence (number of events exposed to) accounted for 16.4% of the variance in promiscuity. Neither community violence

(impact of events) nor stressful life events (impact of events) accounted for additional significant variance in promiscuity.

Table 4. Regression Results for Promiscuity

Independent Variables	β^*	t^*	R^2	R^2 change	F^* value
Set I:			.164	.164	.002
LIIMPACT	.085	.787			
CESUM	-.681	-3.053			
CEIMPACT	-.416	-1.913			

Note: CESUM = total number of community violence events exposed to; CEIMPACT = participants perceived impact of community violence events exposed to; LIIMPACT = participants perceived impact of stressful life events experienced.

An omnibus F test was also conducted. Results of these tests indicated that delinquent behavior is significantly impacted by community violence and stressful life events, however, there was no significant interaction between community violence and stressful life events, $F(3, 79) = .327, n.s.$

Upon completion of these analyses, a clear and consistent pattern of prediction can be found across delinquency outcomes. Exposure to community violence (number of events exposed to) was the single significant predictor of violent thoughts, violent behavior, and promiscuity. Community violence (impact of events) and stressful life events (impact of events) did not add

additional explanatory value. In other words, it was the amount of exposure to violence within ones community that predicted subsequent delinquent behavior (violent thoughts, violent behavior, promiscuity) rather than perception of the stressful nature of the events. That is, the person's feelings about the violent or stressful event did not significantly predict their delinquent behavior (violent thoughts, violent behavior, and promiscuity) above and beyond that explained by the number of violent community events exposed to.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to identify children's exposure to community violence and stressful life events and evaluate how these two variables impacted delinquent behavior (violent thoughts, violent behavior, and promiscuity). In particular, we were interested in examining whether the concrete number of violent community experiences and stressful events the child was exposed to were the primary contributors to delinquent behaviors or whether the impact or perception of these events also contributed to delinquent outcomes in children. Since cognitive psychologists emphasize the importance of perception or cognitive interpretation of experienced events as important contributors to psychological and behavioral responses to events, we hypothesized that perception of events would contribute to child outcomes beyond that explained by mere exposure. We were especially interested in this issue since our participants were pre-adolescents who, developmentally, were still in the concrete operational stage of cognitive development (Piaget). Given the subjects' developmental level, we expected the concrete experiences (number of events

exposed to) to be the primary contributors to the children's outcomes but did, in addition, expect the children's perception of the impact of the events to explain additional variance in the outcomes observed.

It was predicted that the child's exposure to violent community events would be the primary contributor to delinquent outcomes in these children's behaviors. In addition, it was expected that the children's perception of how much the violent events in his/her community "bothered" him/her would account for additional explainable variance in delinquent behavior (violent thoughts, violent behavior, and promiscuity). Similarly, it was predicted that the child's exposure to stressful life events would also contribute to delinquent outcomes in these children's behaviors. Further, it was expected that the children's perception of how much the stressful life events "bothered" or impacted him/her would account for additional explainable variance in these children's delinquent behavior.

As expected, exposure to community violence (number of events) accounted for a significant amount of the variance in delinquent behavior, including violent thoughts, violent behavior, and promiscuity. Specifically, community violence (number of events) accounted for 13.7 %

of the variance in violent thoughts, 13.8 % of the variance in violent behaviors, and 16.4 % of the variance in promiscuity. These findings are consistent with previous research that suggests exposure to community violence impacts children in negative ways. For example, Eiden (1999) found that exposure to community violence was a significant predictor of child behavior problems. Similarly, Song et al. (1998) reported that witnessing violence often increases the likelihood of the children exhibiting violent behaviors themselves. The robustness of the finding that exposure to community violence significantly impacts children's delinquent behaviors in negative ways is compelling. It suggests that the juvenile justice system might be more effective in reducing juvenile delinquency if they committed their financial resources to *prevention* of offenses by working to reduce community violence rather than by "rehabilitating" juvenile offenders.

Contrary to expectations, respondents' perception (or perceived distress) of the violent events in their community had no additional explanatory value. This is surprising because it seems reasonable to expect that one's feelings about an event would be related to his/her response towards that event. In fact, cognitive

psychologists often highlight the role of interpretation or perception in mediating individual's responses to their life experiences. Although many individuals argue that children who live in communities with high rates of violence engage in violence because they have more *opportunities* to engage in violent acts, these construction may be simplistic and fail to capture the key ingredients that promote violent behavior in children. For example, violence in the community may present kids with a "model" of how to behave; alternatively, it may desensitize children to the negative impact of delinquent behaviors. The lack of findings regarding the impact of perceptions of violent experiences may have resulted from the fact that the children in this study were 11-12 year olds and likely had not yet fully developed the cognitive abilities to engage in complex abstract thinking. That is, since these children were still likely in the "concrete operational stage" of development (Piaget), it is possible that concrete experiences were more meaningful than interpretation of the events. Indeed, identifying affective or arousal states requires a certain level of cognitive abilities, what developmental psychologist's such as Piaget refer to as "formal operations." That is, it is likely that it is only when children are in the

formal operations stage of development (e.g., adolescents age 12 or 13 and over), that they are capable of "thinking about thoughts rather than about things that exist" (Spencer Pulaski, 1971, p. 67). In contrast, it is likely that pre-adolescents (7-11 or 12 years old) are typically still in the "concrete operations" stage in which developmentally they are not yet capable of such abstract thought. The child in this stage is "capable only of thought about concrete, existing objects and people" (Spencer Pulaski, 1971, p. 54). In addition, "his thought is still limited to his own concrete experiences" (Spencer Pulaski, 1971, p. 26-27). Therefore, it may be reasonable to believe that cognitions or perceptions of events are meaningful at some but not other ages. For example, for younger children, it may be the actual number of concrete events that determines delinquent outcomes. In contrast, the delinquent outcomes in adolescents and young adults may be impacted by cognitions in addition to concrete events. Thus, cognitions may mediate delinquent outcomes only in those who are more cognitively mature and able to engage in complex abstract thinking.

Also, contrary to expectations, stressful life events (number of events) did not provide explanatory value about delinquent behavior. This is surprising given that

community violence (number of events), also a form of stress, accounted for so much of the explained variance in delinquent behaviors for this sample. These results may best be explained by an observation made by Compas (1987) "in the past, most research on stress in children focused on normative events and life transitions which were encountered by children anyhow" (p. 277). He also observed "most measures used to assess stressful life events focus on major life events and fail to recognize the impact of daily events and their relationship to physical or psychological dysfunction" (p. 277). When reviewing the stressful life events scale used in this study, it was evident that this study had also assessed a number of very normative events, such as birth of a sibling, death of a grandparent, or rejection by peers. Although this scale also assessed many major life events, such as death of a parent, incarceration of a parent or sibling, or severe illness requiring hospitalization of a sibling, the impact of these experiences may have been "muted" by these children's exposure to traumatic events such as community violence. Further, in the past, many studies on the effects of stressful life events have used different outcome variables than those used in this study. According to Compas, (1987) most studies of stressful life events in

childhood have assessed for physical or psychological dysfunction, as opposed to acting out behavior, as in this study. Results from these previous studies have often found that children report physical symptoms, specifically in the form of somatic complaints. It is possible that experiencing stressful life events in childhood results in more somatic and psychological disturbances among children rather than behavioral disturbances.

Results of this study provide clear evidence for the impact of witnessing community violence on children's delinquent behavior, specifically, their violent thoughts, violent behaviors, and promiscuity. This is significant because delinquent behavior has become a major problem amongst youth. If it is the actual amount of violent acts a child is exposed to, as opposed to their perception of the violent acts that accounts for most of the variance in delinquent behavior, then it is imperative that we recognize the implications of exposing youth to violence in such a broad array of settings (e.g. media, home, community).

Future research in this area needs to continue to address number of events exposed to as well as perceived impact of such events. No other studies were found in which these two variables were assessed together. In

addition, future research should attend not only to age, but to the developmental differences in cognitive abilities of children. As noted by Compas (1987, p. 281), "Measurement of cognitive appraisals of events made by children and adolescents remains a potentially productive avenue for understanding some of the individual differences in response to events." He further suggests that "When studying this population, the developmental level of participants needs to be considered because cognitive appraisal processes may change with age" (Compas, 1987, p. 284). In addition, researchers should consider evaluating multiple outcomes in their studies. For example, future studies may include assessment of physiological responses, somatic complaints, or psychological responses in addition to assessment of behavioral outcomes. Finally, future research may benefit if the child's coping responses are also studied in conjunction with the amount of events the child has experienced, as well as the child's perception of these events. For instance, Compas, Connor-Smith, Saltzman, Harding Thomsen, and Wadsworth (2001) discuss several types of coping styles a person may use in response to stress. One of these coping styles is referred to as "secondary control coping." This particular coping style

"involves efforts by the individual to fit with or adapt to the environment and typically may include acceptance or cognitive restructuring" (Compas et al., 2001, p. 92). It would be interesting to see the impact of these variables, when assessed together, on delinquent behavior. In particular, it would be useful to conduct research of this sort with children at differing developmental levels.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the sample population of this study consisted of pre-adolescents, all of which were Hispanic children living in low socioeconomic neighborhoods. Because the sample consisted of only Hispanic children, it is important that we determine if the results of this study hold up in different cultures. Therefore, conducting a similar study using children of different ethnicities would be wise.

APPENDIX A
PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

I agree to allow my child to participate in the study, "Identifying strengths in Children." This study is being conducted by researchers at California State University, San Bernardino and has been approved by the University's human subjects board. The benefits of this study include helping researchers understand how children cope and what factors help them cope best. The study is not a test and will not take influence my child's grades in any way. The study will take my child about 90 minutes to complete. My child will be asked to fill out questionnaires about stressful situations and relationships and how he/she handles those concerns. If at any time my child wants to discontinue his/her participation, it can be done without penalty. Also, my child's teacher will be asked to take 5 minutes to answer questions about my child's behavior in the classroom.

I understand that by participating in this study, my child will not encounter any more stress or harm than she/he would during the performance of a routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. If my child does have a bad experience while filling out a questionnaire, one of the researchers will be present to calm my child or will contact the school psychologist.

I also understand that the information my child provides will be held in strict confidence by the researchers. At no time will my name or my child's name be reported along with his or her responses. All data collected by the researchers will be reported in group form only. At the conclusion of the study, I may request and receive a report of the results. If I have any questions or concerns, I am aware that I can contact Dr. Faith McClure (909-880-5598) or Dr. Jean Peacock (909-880-5579) for information. I acknowledge that I have been informed about and understand the purpose of the "Identifying Strengths in Children Study." I freely consent to allow my child to participate and acknowledge that I am the parent/guardian.

Student and Parent/Guardian Permission Form

Identifying Strengths in Children Study

Student Name (Please Print) _____

Student Signature _____

Parent Signature _____

APPENDIX B
CHILD VERBAL CONSENT FORM

Child Verbal Consent Form

You are being asked to be part of a research study that tries to identify how children deal with stressful situations. We know that most of you cope well with various problems, but sometimes you probably wish you could have more help. We hope that by learning more about you and your lives, we will be able to understand your strengths and the areas where parents, teachers, counselors and members of your community can know how best to help children increase their chances of succeeding and doing well in life.

This is not a test, there are no right or wrong answers, and you will not be graded on your performance. Some of the questions about stressful situations and the relationships with people in your life may be easy to answer. Some may be hard to answer. For example, we will ask you whether or not you know kids who was shot or beat up at school but you do not have to tell us who they are. We just want you to tell us about your experience so we can understand your situation. Participating in this study is completely voluntary. If you do not want to participate, are uncomfortable with a question, or don't want to finish the questionnaire, just tell me and we can talk about your concern or I will take you back to class.

Your name will not be on the answers so you don't have to worry about your friends, teachers, or others knowing what you said. We call this "confidentiality" which means that we respect your privacy. The questionnaire will take about 90 minutes to finish. We will do part one and take a break; after the break we will complete the rest. We appreciate your participation and will give you \$5.00 if you choose to participate.

Now that I have explained the project, would you like to participate?

APPENDIX C
DEMOGRAPHIC SHEET

Demographic Sheet

Code # _____

1. How old are you? _____
2. Are you a boy ____ or a girl ____?
3. How do you describe your ethnicity?
Asian American _____
African American _____
Caucasian _____
Mexican American or Latino _____
Native American _____
Other _____
4. How do you feel about your ethnicity?
I love my ethnicity _____
I feel okay about my ethnicity _____
I don't like my ethnicity _____
I don't think about my ethnicity _____
5. In my family, we talk about ethnicity. Never ____ Sometimes ____ Often ____
6. Did you begin the school year at this school? Yes ____ No _____
7. How many schools have you been to up to now, including this one? _____
8. How many different places have you lived in up to now, including this one?

9. Did you have friends at this school when you entered 6th grade?
Yes ____ No _____
10. Write the first names of 5 kids you consider your closest friends. If you can't think of 5 friends, write as many names that you can think of.

11. Where do you usually spend time with these kids? Check all that apply.
 Home _____ Church _____
 School _____ Community center _____
 Sports & similar activities _____
12. Based on your experiences, how would you describe the kids at this school?
 (a) very friendly _____ somewhat friendly _____ very friendly _____
 (b) very unkind(mean) _____ somewhat kind _____ very kind (helpful) _____
13. Based on your experience, how would you describe the teachers at this school?
 (a) very friendly _____ somewhat friendly _____ very friendly _____
 (b) very unkind(mean) _____ somewhat kind _____ very kind (helpful) _____
14. If you had a problem with your teachers at school, is there an adult that would speak up for you? Yes _____ No _____
15. If this adult spoke up for you, do you believe that it would make a difference?
 Yes _____ No _____
16. Is there an adult you could go to if you felt you had a problem?
 Yes _____ No _____
 Who is it?
 Parent/guardian _____
 Other family member _____
 Someone outside the family _____
17. Name 3 of your favorite T. V. programs.

18. Name 3 of your favorite video games.

19. How often do you get to play your favorite video game?
(a) everyday _____
(b) about 2 times a week _____
(c) more than 3 times a week _____
20. The best thing I like about my school is _____
21. The one thing I don't like about school is _____

APPENDIX D
LIFE EVENTS

Life Events

Lots of things happen to children while they are growing up. Some of the things bother them but some don't. If any of these things happened to you in the past year (12 months), circle yes. Then circle the number that shows how much it bothered you:

			Didn't Bother At all	Bothered a Little	Bothered a Medium Amount	Bothered A Lot	Really, Really Bothered
1. Birth of a brother or sister	YES NO	1	2	3	4	5	
2. Increase in number of arguments with parents	YES NO	1	2	3	4	5	
3. Death of a parent	YES NO	1	2	3	4	5	
4. Not making an extracurricular activity (e.g., sports, band) that you wanted to be in	YES NO	1	2	3	4	5	
5. Death of a close friend	YES NO	1	2	3	4	5	
6. Suspension from school	YES NO	1	2	3	4	5	
7. Death of a grandparent	YES NO	1	2	3	4	5	
8. Having hassles/problems with girlfriend/boyfriend	YES NO	1	2	3	4	5	
9. Serious illness requiring hospitalization	YES NO	1	2	3	4	5	
10. Jail sentence of a parent	YES NO	1	2	3	4	5	
11. Increase in number of arguments or fights between parents	YES NO	1	2	3	4	5	
12. Parent remarrying or having a new "stepparent" move in	YES NO	1	2	3	4	5	
13. Jail sentence of a brother or sister	YES NO	1	2	3	4	5	
14. Failure of a grade in school	YES NO	1	2	3	4	5	
15. Rejection by peers	YES NO	1	2	3	4	5	
16. Death of a brother or sister	YES NO	1	2	3	4	5	

			Didn't Bother At all	Bothered a Little	Bothered a Medium Amount	Bothered A Lot	Really, Really Bothered
17. Brother or sister leaving home	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5
18. Serious illness requiring hospitalization of parent	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5
19. Becoming involved with drugs or alcohol	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5
20. Separation or divorce of parents	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5
21. Move to a new school district	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5
22. Move to a new house	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5
23. Death of a grandparent	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5
24. Hassles/fights with other kids	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5
25. Loss of job by a parent	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5
26. Trouble with police	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5
27. Brother or sister in trouble with the police	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5
28. Serious illness requiring hospitalization of brother or sister	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5
29. Please list any other event(s) that bothered you but were not in the list above							
_____			1	2	3	4	5
_____			1	2	3	4	5
_____			1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX E
COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES

Community Experiences.

Sometimes bad things happen to people, like they get beat-up, shot, robbed, etc. Has anything like this happened to you or someone you know? If yes, circle "yes" and then circle the number that shows how much it bothered you:

- 1=didn't bother you
- 2=bothered you a little
- 3=bothered you a medium amount
- 5=really, really bothered you

If yes, who did it happen to?

- A=you/yourself
- B=family member
- C=friend
- D=acquaintance/someone you know
- E=stranger

	How much it bothered you					Who it happened to						
	1=didn't bother 2=bothered a little 3=bothered a medium amount 4=bothered a lot 5=really, really bothered					A=self B=family member C=friend D=acquaintance E=stranger						
1. Stabbed	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5	A	B	C	D	E
2. Shot	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5	A	B	C	D	E
3. Beaten (with hands/fists)	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5	A	B	C	D	E
4. Beaten (with objects e.g., bat)	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5	A	B	C	D	E
5. Kicked	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5	A	B	C	D	E
6. Hit (by objects like stones thrown)	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5	A	B	C	D	E
7. Sexually Assaulted (e.g., raped, molested)	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5	A	B	C	D	E
8. Robbed (without weapon e.g., no gun, no knife)	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5	A	B	C	D	E
9. Robbed (with weapon e.g., gun, knife)	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5	A	B	C	D	E
10. Threatened (with weapon e.g., gun, knife)	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5	A	B	C	D	E
11. Murdered	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5	A	B	C	D	E
12. Committed Suicide	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5	A	B	C	D	E
13. Hearing guns go off close by	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5	A	B	C	D	E
14. Being bothered by or arrested by police	YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5	A	B	C	D	E

APPENDIX F

BEHAVIOR

Behavior

Please read each of the following questions and say how often you have been involved in something similar. Circle the number that fits best for you:

	Never	Once or Twice	Several Times	Often	Very Often
1. Gotten alcohol by asking someone else to buy it for you?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Skipped school without a proper excuse?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Gotten drunk?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Stayed out all night?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Broken into someone's house?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Gone for a ride in a stolen car?	1	2	3	4	5
7. Stolen a car?	1	2	3	4	5
8. Taken part in a gang fight?	1	2	3	4	5
9. Carried a knife or other weapon?	1	2	3	4	5
10. Came to school late in the morning?	1	2	3	4	5
11. Stolen things worth \$5 or less?	1	2	3	4	5
12. Set a fire?	1	2	3	4	5
13. Damaged property (broken things)?	1	2	3	4	5
14. Written on walls, doors, or other places not meant for writing on?	1	2	3	4	5
15. Hurt an animal on purpose?	1	2	3	4	5
16. Smoked marijuana?	1	2	3	4	5
17. Sniffed glue?	1	2	3	4	5
18. Smoked cigarettes?	1	2	3	4	5
19. Used hard drugs (like coke)?	1	2	3	4	5
20. Sold marijuana or other drugs?	1	2	3	4	5
21. Lied to get out of trouble?	1	2	3	4	5
22. Disobeyed your parents (to their face)?	1	2	3	4	5

	Never	Once or Twice	Several Times	Often	Very Often
23. Disobeyed teachers (to their face)?	1	2	3	4	5
24. Shouted at your mother or father?	1	2	3	4	5
25. Cursed your mother or father?	1	2	3	4	5
26. Hit your mother or father?	1	2	3	4	5
27. Shouted at a teacher?	1	2	3	4	5
28. Cursed a teacher?	1	2	3	4	5
29. Hit a teacher?	1	2	3	4	5
30. Run away from home?	1	2	3	4	5
31. Gotten in trouble with the police?	1	2	3	4	5
32. Picked a quarrel with someone?	1	2	3	4	5
33. Picked a physical (e.g., fist) fight?	1	2	3	4	5
34. Made fun of or teased someone?	1	2	3	4	5
35. Beat someone up?	1	2	3	4	5
36. Took part in a robbery?	1	2	3	4	5
37. Been suspended from school?	1	2	3	4	5
38. Been expelled from a school?	1	2	3	4	5
39. Thought about killing someone and planned how you would do it?	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX G
STUDENT DEBRIEFING FORM

Student Debriefing Form

Thank you for your participation. We are grateful for your time and effort. The questionnaire you just completed will help us understand the stress that children encounter at home, at school and in their communities. Your answers will also help us understand why some children are successfully dealing with stress and others are not. If you are interested in the results of this study or have any questions about the study, please contact Ms. Kellers and she will contact us.

If you feel uncomfortable about answering some of the questions, I want you to stay and talk to one of us about your concerns. We enjoyed meeting you, and we know that you have provided us with very important information.

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