Theses and Graduate Projects

5-19-1997

Evaluation of the Effects of a Conflict Resolution Program on the Behavior of Middle School Students

Julie A. Collins
Augsburg College

AUGSBURG
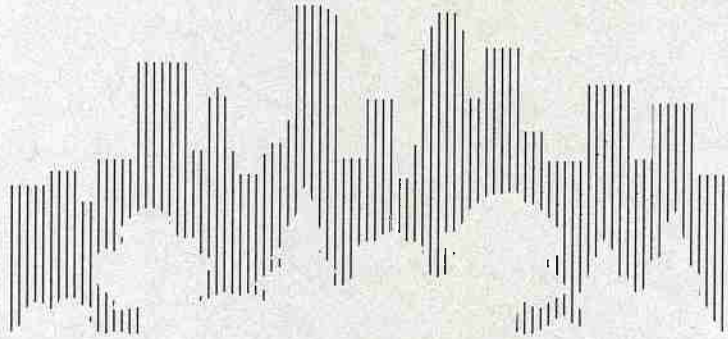
C·O·L·L·E·G·E

MASTERS IN SOCIAL WORK THESIS

Julie A. Collins

...ation of the Effects of a Conflict Resolution Program on the Behavior of Middle School Students

1997

Evaluation of the effects of a conflict resolution program

on the behavior of middle school students.

M.S.W. Thesis

by

Julie A. Collins

A thesis submitted to the

Graduate Faculty of Augsburg College

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Social Work

May, 1997

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK
AUGSBURG COLLEGE
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that the Master's Thesis of:

Julie Ann Collins

has been approved by the Examing Committee for thesis requirements for the
Master of Social Work Degree.

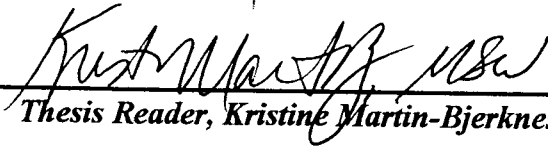Date of Oral Presentation: *May 19, 1997*

Thesis Committee:

_____

Thesis Advisor, Michael Schock, Ph.D.

_____

Thesis Reader, Tony Bibus, Ph.D.

_____

Thesis Reader, Kristine Martin-Bjerkness, MSW, LICSW

Acknowledgments

To my friends without your support and encouragement I would never have made it through the past three years.

To Sean and Ann, my brother and sister-in-law, your support and encouragement has given true meaning to family and friendship.

To my godchild and niece, Kayla -- through your smiles and laughs, you brighten every day and somehow you make my brightest days seem even brighter. I love you.

To my parents and brothers, thanks for always being there for me.

To Mike Schock, Tony Bibus, and Kristine Martin-Bjerkness thank you for patience, time, thoughtful words and assistance in completing this thesis.

To Sandy Witebsky, my field work supervisor, thank you for invaluable time and patience you showed me throughout the school year.

Abstract of Thesis

Evaluation of the effects of a conflict resolution program

on the behavior of middle school students.

by

Julie A. Collins

May, 1997

Interpersonal violence has become a leading cause of death and injury among

adolescents in the United States. The Unites States Department of Justice reports three

million crimes--or about 11% of all crimes, occur each year in public schools. With this

increasing trend, interventions are needed, to assist adolescents decrease levels of

individual anger and frustration and to learn skills to resolve conflict. A ten-week Conflict

Resolution group was implemented in an inner city school in Minneapolis, MN. Each

child was asked to complete a pretest/posttest, before the group began and following the

last group meeting. This questionnaire evaluated their knowledge of and skills used to

resolve conflict and what (if anything) they learned during participation in the group. Six

weeks following participation in the group, each child was asked to complete a follow-up

questionnaire that evaluated the relationship between intention to use conflict resolution

skills learned and self-reported aggressive behavior. Results of this study, limitations, and

areas for future research are addressed in this article.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Between 1980 and 1994, homicide rates among youth between the ages of twelve

and seventeen, increased 95% (Snyder, Sickmund, & Poe-Yamagata, 1996).

Interpersonal violence has become a leading cause of death and injury among adolescents

in the United States. Although persons ages ten to twenty-four years represent only 22%

of the total population, in 1991 they accounted for 33% of all homicide victims and more

than half of all arrests for murder. Furthermore, the United States Department of Justice

reports that three million crimes--or about 11% of all crimes--occur each year in public

schools (Sautter, 1995). Violence in the schools reflects the violence that is occurring in

the surrounding communities. Violence, in all its forms, is devastating the lives of our

children. Accordingly, it is essential that society recognize and refrain from violence, and

stop accepting it as an inevitable part of life. With this increase of violence among youth

in our society, it is imperative that we teach children peaceful ways of resolving conflict.

Educating our youth of alternatives to violence, is a beginning. Skills learned through

participation in a conflict resolution program could potentially decrease the violent deaths

occurring among youth in our society and increase peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Therefore, it is essential to evaluate children's knowledge of and intention to use skills

learned through participation in a conflict resolution program. The purpose of this

research was to evaluate the intent of eight middle school children to use skills that they

learned through participation in a conflict resolution program. Each child was given a

pre/posttest, and six a week follow up test that evaluated the skills learned and applied or

intended to apply toward conflict situations.

In 1993, 82% of school districts nationwide reported that student involvement in violence had increased during the past five years (NSBA, 1993). The most frequent form of violence reported among the school districts was interpersonal violence between students (NSBA). School, having unique access to a majority of youth at risk for violent or aggressive behavior, is an excellent place to address this rise of interpersonal violence and to educate youth of the risks associated with violent/aggressive behavior. The earlier in a child's life that a child begins learning skills needed to resolve conflict nonviolently and the more years the child spends learning and practicing these skills the more likely he/she will be to actually use the skills both inside and outside of school (Johnson, 1995). Implementation of conflict resolution programs within schools, will provide children the skills needed to resolve conflict peacefully, influencing their ability to cope with stress and to build and maintain positive relationships. Learning the skills to resolve conflict peacefully at an early age, is not only important for academics, but also as a life skill as future adult citizens (Berg, 1995). Dr. Prothrow-Stith (1991) affirms:

> When children learn how to assert their own needs and opinions without trampling on the right of other people, when they learn to express their angry feelings without losing control or hurting other people, they have mastered skills that enhance their lives and the life of the community. There is no better place than a school, where diverse groups of children congregate, to learn these important lessons (p.173).

Moreover, social work leaders define the profession of social work as promoting or restoring, "...a mutually beneficial interaction between individuals and society in order to

improve the quality of life for everyone" (Brieland,1990). Indeed, social workers can have a significant role in reducing violence at all levels in society through implementation and facilitation of programs, such as the one evaluated in this research.

To date, very little research exists validating the effectiveness of conflict resolution programs in school. The following pages examine the little research that exists and reviews: conceptual definition of key words; developmental progression of aggressive behavior; role of schools; students motivation to learn; theoretical frameworks; and previous program evaluations.

Review of the literature

The following paragraphs define key words that are used throughout this paper.

Conceptual Definition of Key words

Aggression - Bandura (1973) defines aggression as "...behavior that results in personal injury and in destruction of property" (p.5) with injuries being physical and/or psychological. Aggressive behavior will be measured according to self-reported aggressive behavior with in the past two months following group.

Interpersonal violence - threatened or actual use of physical force or power against oneself or another person which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in death, injury, or deprivation.

Frustration - Educational psychologists, Thompson, Gardner and DiVesta (1959) defined frustration as, "the result of failing to achieve one's goals, the use of an inappropriate response and/or not having or knowing the appropriate response to a particular situation (p.54)."

Middle School age - children between the ages of twelve and sixteen, who are in grades six through eight.
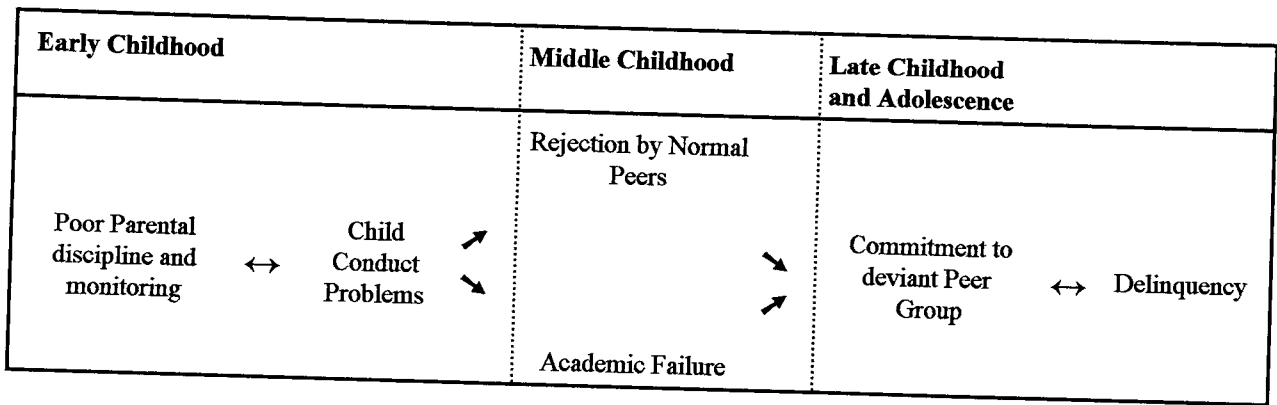
Skills learned - tactics learned through participation in the conflict resolution program, as evaluated through the pretest/posttest.

4

Developmental Progression of Aggressive Behavior

Aggressive behavior appears to be a developmental trait that begins early in life and often continues into adolescence and adulthood (Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1989). A child's early years are crucial in shaping the child's perspective on aggression and violence. Erik Erickson's eight stages of development suggest that in the first year of a child's life the degree to which the child comes to trust the world, other people and himself/herself depends considerably upon the extent of quality care that he/she receives. When the care is inconsistent, inadequate, and rejecting, an attitude of fear and suspicion is developed, often carrying through to later stages of development (Elkind, 1970). Loeber & Dishion (1983) confirm this in their findings that families of aggressive children are often characterized by harsh and inconsistent discipline, little positive parental involvement with the child, and poor monitoring of the child's activities.

Through daily interactions, these inept parenting practices encourage coercive behaviors by the child. Because these behaviors are not being modeled and replaced by constructive behaviors, there is often an indirect message being sent to children in these families that it is okay to use aggression or violence to get what you want. The child quickly learns that aggressive/coercive behavior works effectively in terminating aversive intrusions by other family members, making it possible to survive in a highly aversive environment (Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1989; Patterson, 1995; Fraser, 1996). For these children, aggressive behavior is highly functional in meeting their needs, giving these young children an early start in developing an aggressive and potentially violent interpersonal style of dealing with conflict (Patterson, 1995; Fraser, 1996).

Entering adolescence, teenagers are faced with physical development, psychological growth and intellectual and social changes. They are victims of hormonal change, seeking independence from their parents while at the same time trying to maintain satisfying relationships with them. They are constantly redefining themselves in an effort to expand their self-concepts. For many, adolescence is a positive and healthy developmental period with successful outcomes. They enter adolescence with an optimal level of self-esteem, positive relationships with family and effective coping resources (Germain, 1991). For those children, however, who suffer behavioral disorders in childhood, adolescence is experienced as stressful, exceeding their resources for coping (Germain). According to Erik Erikson's stages of life, if the child does not attain a sense of personal identity, he or she shows a certain amount of role confusion--a sense of not knowing who they are, where they belong, or to whom they belong (Elkind, 1970). Needing confirmation, comfort and a sense of belonging as they figure out their role, young adolescents often look to those who understand the nature of their struggles: their peers. "If school, community and home don't provide positive role models and appropriate moral alternatives, the young adolescent is left to choose behaviors and values on the basis of their acceptance in his or her peer group" (Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1989). For many aggressive adolescents this acceptance is often a membership into a deviant peer group. Patterson et al diagram this developmental progression of aggressive behavior as follows (p.331):

Early Childhood	Middle Childhood	Late Childhood and Adolescence
Poor Parental discipline and monitoring ↔ Child Conduct Problems ↗ ↘	Rejection by Normal Peers ↘ ↗ Academic Failure	Commitment to deviant Peer Group ↔ Delinquency

The child who receives aggressive training from the family during the preschool and elementary school years is likely to be denied access to positive socialization forces in the peer group (Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1989). Moreover, experimental studies show that aggressive behavior leads to peer rejection (Coie & Kupersmidt, 1983; Dodge, 1983). Dodge suggests that children who are rejected from "normal" peers are lacking cognitive skills, such as appropriate response to provocation and interpretation of prosocial interactions. The more they are rejected by others, the more violent their behavior becomes (Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey; Prothrow-Stith & Weissman, 1991).

Middle school aged children face enormous transitions and changes in their lives. Even for those children who view adolescence as a positive and healthy developmental period, it is a difficult time. Programs and strategies to ease the transitions that middle schoolers face could have great potential toward reducing school dropout rates, increasing academic success rates, and connecting children with a positive peer group.

The Role of Schools

Incidents of aggression and violence are increasing at alarming rates in our schools. The U.S. Department of Justice reports three million crimes--or about 11% of all crimes occur each year in public schools (Sautter, 1995). Teenagers more frequently are victims of crime than any other age group; and a quarter of the crimes committed against them take place in or near schools (Gable & Manning, 1996). Considering the fact that schools have access to the majority of these at-risk children, it seems most appropriate that interventions focused toward increasing skills to handle conflict nonviolently would take place within this setting.

To date, schools have been relatively detached players in developing proactive responses to the social changes that have occurred in our society and that are increasingly reflected in students' behavior in school and outside of school (Walker et al, 1996). Schools could have a crucial role in targeting at-risk children and youth early in their academic careers and implementing interventions with such students in order to divert them from a path that frequently leads to school failure and dropout; rejection by teachers, peers, and ultimately, care givers; investment in delinquency and violent behavior; gang membership; and for some prison (Walker et al). Keeping "at-risk" students engaged in school as long as possible is an important intervention, because it provides adults and other peers the opportunity to influence them in positive directions (Walker et al). Additional interventions must address the risk factors and precursors associated with aggressive behavior and provide social skills and problem-solving skills--well before

adolescents become invested in these behavior patterns. Johnson (1995) states that,

"...[gaining] competencies in resolving conflicts constructively also increases a child's

ability to build and maintain high-quality relationships with peers and to cope with stress

and adversity" (p.5). Ultimately, these competencies can help by keeping them involved in

school and preventing involvement with delinquent peers. Natale (1994) suggests that the

best programs, "...developmentally and systematically begin to teach children alternative

skills for solving problems, that challenge superficial beliefs that many youngsters hold

about the glories of violence, and that teach thoughtful analysis to social problems rather

than impulsive reactions" (p.40).

Many schools, instead of using interventions that promote development of

problem-solving skills, choose to deal with the problem through detentions, suspensions

and expulsions (Walker et al. 1996). Such interventions are common reactive responses.

These forms of "dealing with the problem" only transfer the problem to communities

where these children are forced to go once they leave school. Furthermore, research has

shown that punishment-based interventions for students with serious aggressive and

violent behaviors usually result in an increase in the problem behavior (Walker et al).

Moreover, this reactive response to students is teaching them there are only two solutions

to a problem situation: you either win or you lose. However, taking the time and

opportunity to problem solve provides children more options in resolving conflict

positively. Aggressive children have not had opportunities to learn appropriate ways of

behaving with peers and adults, nor have they been encouraged to substitute adaptive

responses for maladaptive ones (Walker et al; Fraser, 1996; Patterson, 1995). These

children need to be taught positive patterns of behavior for home, school, and other settings, be given opportunities to display what they have learned, and receive feedback regarding the effectiveness of their efforts. Walker et al (1996) state, "...prevention strategies and interventions appropriate for students who are at risk of academic and social failure...must be comprehensive, proactive and implemented as early as possible in these students' school careers--preferably at the beginning of the schooling experience (p.197)." Schools alone cannot effectively reduce aggressive and violent behavior; however, they can play a major role in providing adolescents with the skills and knowledge needed to choose alternatives to violent behavior. Furthermore, school social workers can play a key role in reducing aggressive and violent behavior, through communication and implementation of programs that assist with parental problem solving and support systems related to effective parenting.

Students Motivation to Learn

The primary goal of school is student learning. However, students must choose to learn if schools are to be successful in fulfilling their primary function. Several studies have shown that aggressive children show poor academic success (Hawkins & Lisher, 1987; Wilson and Herrnstein, 1985). Observations show that these children spend less time on task than their peers, and furthermore they show deficits in academic survival skills (e.g., attending school, remaining in seat) (Hawkins & Lisher). As mentioned earlier in this review, Patterson, DeBaryshe, and Ramsey suggest that academic failure and prosocial peer rejection are *causes* rather than *consequences* of antisocial behavior. In order for these children to invest a significant effort in school learning, they need to

perceive that *how* they will learn has as much meaning, relevance and value as *what* and

why they are asked to learn (Wingle & Manges, 1995; Patterson, DeBaryshe, and Ramsey,

1989). Research has shown that the level of violence in schools is related to students'

attachments to the values schools seek to promote. Violence rates in schools increased

with the percentages of students who did not aspire to good grades, who did not view

their curricula as relevant, and who did not believe their school experience could positively

influence their lives (Lowry et al, 1995). Students learn more when meaning, relevance

and purpose for group or classroom learning tasks are considered as important parts of the

learning process potentially contributing to the reduction of school dropout rates, an

increase in student motivation, and higher academic success rates.

Theoretical Framework

Reality Therapy/Control Theory

Student motivation is critical for learning; in fact, several models and theories of

motivation exist in the literature (Ugurogulu & Walberg, 1979). Reality Therapy/Control

Theory (RT/CT) approach focuses on the present, and the past is given little emphasis.

Glasser (1981) argues that the past cannot be changed and often provides an excuse for

present behavior. He found that clients made more progress when focusing on present

behavior, rather than discussing their childhood and life history. Glasser (1965) states the

basic concept of RT/CT as learning responsibility, which he defines as, "...the ability to

fulfill one's needs, and to do so in a way that does not deprive others of the ability to fulfill

their needs (p.29)." Kids who commit violent acts often do so because they believe their

choices are limited. There is almost a sense that everything is out of their control and they

11

do not know that it is their right to have that control. Psychologists say children with that view have learned aggression is a viable tool for resolving conflict--in fact they have learned it is one of their only tools (Natale, 1994). Reality therapy is a method of human interaction that allows clients to choose more effective behaviors to fulfill their needs.

Social Learning Theory

Cognitive theories, such as social learning theories, assume that humans have a basic need to understand their environment. Bandura and other social learning theorists postulate that a behavior does not need to be present in order for learning to occur; an individual can learn new behaviors through observation. According to social learning theory, children learn how to behave aggressively by watching others use violence to their advantage and then imitate what they have seen (Prothrow-Stith & Weissman, 1991). Furthermore, behavior that is followed by rewards and punishments, increases or decreases the likelihood of that behavior reoccurring. Bandura suggests that this likelihood is mediated by expectations. Low expectations that one can change will often reduce the motivation to learn and use new skills (Barth, 1988). As behavior changes these expectations often change. Thus, emphasizing the importance of demonstrating skills that can be used to resolve conflict, providing positive feedback, and continuously practicing these learned skills through role plays of actual situations.

Task-centered Theory and Strength-Oriented Model

Task-centered and strength-oriented models are essential in assisting children in group to identify and work on aggressive self-defeating behaviors. Larsen and Mitchell (1980) discuss guidelines for managing and modifying aggressive behavior in a group

setting using task-centered and strength-oriented models: first, and most important, they state the necessity of a structured format with the explicit group goal of individual change; second, the facilitator must respect the right not to participate; third, the facilitator should explain his or her responsibility to assist the children to use the group actively in resolving problems and conflicts; and finally, consistent use of positive feedback should be used to identify strengths, positive behaviors and growth of members.

Other

Another method to help aggressive children resolve conflicts nonviolently involves tweaking their imaginations. Studies show that aggressive individuals tend to have less developed patterns of imagination and constricted imaginative resources (Davis and Boster, 1992). Persons with active imaginations are able to produce a variety of responses to situations, most of which are nonviolent. Aggressive children, however, appear to have fewer available alternatives to a situation, have constricted problem-solving skills, show inability to reason abstractly and thus, tend to focus on violent outcomes (Davis and Boster; Dodge, 1983; Prothrow-Stith & Weissman, 1991). Davis and Boster suggest that because aggressive children are likely to have limited verbal skills and imaginative resources, the use of primary verbal interventions would be difficult. The use of art as an alternative to physical role plays can be quite valuable to help the student develop and experiment with alternative problem-solving approaches. Drawings of particular events or concepts and increasing nonviolent approaches and various responses help the youth to solve problems in a safe environment.

Conflict resolution programs that incorporate these theories and models provide the knowledge children need to develop skills that provide alternatives to conflict other than violence; skills that are not only transferable to school settings, but to nonschool settings. In addition, these theories and models focus on present behaviors and work toward attacking the problem of violence by altering early social processes that guide many children toward school failure and peer rejection, ultimately causing aggressive behavior (Fraser, 1996). The following section reviews research that supports the above theories and models.

Program Evaluations

Proactive/Reactive Aggression

As mentioned in the beginning, interpersonal violence has become a leading cause of death and injury among adolescents in the United States. For many young adolescents, these aggressive behaviors whether proactive or reactive may well be precursors to antisocial and prosocial behaviors in young adulthood. Lea Pulkkinen (1996) looked at reactive and proactive aggression characteristics of individuals in a longitudinal study of subjects at the ages of 8, 14 and 27. Pulkkinen defined reactive aggression as interpersonal aggression that was considered self-defense against a provoking target and defines proactive aggression as a provocative act towards a target with the aim of some manner of coercion or harassment. This longitudinal study began collection in 1968, consisting of 196 boys and 173 girls, drawn from second-grade pupils as a sample of 12 school classes. Subjects were selected by peer nomination questionnaire and teacher ratings. In 1974, when the subjects were 14 years of age, a follow up study of social

14

behavior was conducted with 189 males (96.4% of original) and 167 females (96.5% of original). In 1986, when the subjects were 27 years old, all subjects from original collection done in 1968 were mailed a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview was used for data collection. The questionnaire was returned by 166 men (85% of the original) and 155 women (90% of the original) and interviews were done with 150 men (77% of original) and 142 women (82% of original). Variables at all three age groups included reactive aggression, proactive aggression, constructiveness, compliance, anxiety, passivity and school success. Additional variables at age 27 included marital status, number of children, hobbies, length of education, stability of working career, smoking cigarettes and problem drinking based on arrests for alcohol abuse. At age 14, the subjects were divided into two groups: proactively aggressive individuals and reactively aggressive individuals based on the scores from the peer nominations and teacher ratings. A comparison group was formed by individuals who received a score below zero and were defined as nonaggressive controls.

The results suggest that proactively aggressive males were prone to externalizing problems in childhood and to adjustment problems in adolescence (noncompliance, conduct problems, poor attentiveness, and low school success). These difficulties carried through to adulthood as criminality. Proactively aggressive females were prone to internalizing problems (such as anxiety) in childhood and in adulthood and faced similar adjustment problems as males through adolescence. This research confirms Patterson, DeBaryshe and Ramsey's (1995) research on the developmental progression of aggressive behavior. Without interventions at an early age, these children who have learned that

aggressive or violent behavior meets their immediate needs, will continue this behavior, increasing the risk of subsequent, more severe problems in adulthood. Thus, this research emphasizes the importance of interventions, at an early age, that teach adolescents prosocial, anger management, and conflict resolution skills.

Youth on Probation

The following articles discuss different programs developed in an effort to reduce and/or prevent violence with middle school and high school age children. Goodman, Getzel and Ford (1996) in their research developed a quasi-experimental design targeting sixteen to twenty-year-old African American and Latino youth on probation who were at high risk for rearrest. The purpose was to teach youth on probation how to protect their physical safety and avoid rearrest by adopting prosocial skills in an effort to reduce recidivism rates among youth on probation. The research was both descriptive and explanatory in that it sought to describe these youths' behaviors before and during participation in this group and explain why participation in a group such as the one used in this research by Goodman et al contributes to reducing recidivism rates. The hypothesis was that youth probationers who participate in a cognitive-behavioral group will reduce rearrest rates. The youths attended the group, entitled SAFE-T (Self, Awareness, Feelings, Education and Tasks) for 32 sessions. Attendance to the group was mandated as condition of their probation. In addition, each youth who participated had been routinely exposed to criminal activity and violence associated with drug use, random shootings, easy access to handguns and intra-family violence.

Although this is a relatively new program and results were not yet specific, preliminary comparisons between youths who participated in the SAFE-T groups and those who received traditional probation supervision suggested a marked reduction in rearrest rates. The shortcomings of this study include that only a small number of youth have participated in this program to date, and it is difficult, therefore, to tell whether their rearrest rate has actually been impacted. A longitudinal study is needed to validate the hypothesis that the probationary youth arrest rate will decrease following participation in a SAFE-T group. The strength of this program is that it incorporates the youth's culture, socioeconomic background, and environment into the curriculum.

Dating Violence

Lavoie, Vezina, Piche and Boivin (1995) developed and evaluated a primary prevention program implemented within the school setting that addressed different aspects of dating violence. The objectives of this study were to: 1) detail the program's effects on both boys and girls and on students who showed very negative attitudes or faulty knowledge beforehand; and 2) compare two forms of presentation, a short form (two sessions, approximately 60 minutes each) and a long form (which added viewing a film and writing fictional letters to a victim and to an aggressor). The experiment, conducted in two schools, was pretest/posttest design that measured knowledge and attitudes. The first school was randomly assigned the short program (school S) and the second school the long program (school L). The participants were students who answered both questionnaires and were present at program sessions given at their schools. There were

279 students (160 girls/119 boys) at the short term program, and 238 students (135 girls/103 boys) at the long term program.

Following participation in the program, boys and girls at both schools obtained comparable gains on the attitude scale. As far as the comparison of the long and short forms, results indicated that both schools improved to a similar degree on the attitude scale and that the school receiving the short version improved more on the knowledge items than the school receiving the long version. This outcome was against expectations. One explanation of this may be that because the schools were different on pre-program scores, the pre-program higher scores may indicate students had greater awareness before and better ability to receive the message. This was the first time that a specific program on dating violence was evaluated, thus there are still areas for more research. Future studies should include a control group that does not receive the program. Moreover, since the posttest was given directly following participation in the group, a follow up evaluation done several months later would indicate the long term effects the program may have on students who participate. However, the result should not be overlooked. The results indicate that adolescent children's retention of skills and knowledge learned may be better with intense brief groups. Further research in this area would be needed to validate this statement.

Violence Prevention

Prothrow-Stith's (1987) violence prevention program was originally developed for tenth grade health students focusing on violence between peers. This program is one of three programs that are combined for the conflict resolution program evaluated in this

18

research. Prothrow-Stith's curriculum focuses on showing high school students the extent to which they are at risk of homicide and demonstrates positive ways to deal with anger and conflicts, the major causes of homicide. Her program was evaluated in an inner city school in New York City. The curriculum was presented, over a two week period, to an experimental group (53 tenth grade students), while the remaining 53 students in the control group continued with a regular health curriculum. Both groups were evaluated by the same pretest and posttest instrument. The instrument tested for both knowledge and attitudes about anger, violence and homicide (Prothrow-Stith). Prothrow-Stith's program showed and continues to show a significant impact on attitudes and knowledge of skills learned by tenth grade high school students.

Johnson (1995) asserts that violence prevention programs in schools "don't work" because: a) many programs are poorly targeted. They mix together a broad range of violent behaviors and people, forgetting that people turn to violence for a variety of reasons; b) the programs provide materials but ignore the literature about successful implementation of these programs in schools; c) these programs often confuse methods of violence prevention that are effective in school with those that work on the streets. Johnson writes, "...it is naive and dangerous to assume that school violence prevention tactics should be used on the street (p.3)." and finally; d) many programs are unrealistic about the strength of the social forces that impel children toward violence. He suggests that there is a limit to what schools can do in reducing violence among adolescents and therefore violence prevention programs should be realistic and not promise too much. Johnson suggests the following six principles to accomplish a goal of an orderly and

19

peaceful place in which a high-quality education takes place: a) go beyond violence prevention to conflict resolution training; b) don't attempt to eliminate all conflicts--some conflicts can have positive outcomes. They can increase achievement, motivation to learn, higher-level reasoning, and cognitive development;. c) create a cooperative context; d) Decrease in-school risk factors such as alienation from schoolmates and academic failure; e) Use academic controversy to increase learning, and; f) teach *all* students to resolve conflicts constructively (Johnson). He further asserts that effective conflict resolution programs seek to change more than the individual students, but instead, try to transform the total school environment into a learning community in which students live by a belief of nonviolence (Johnson).

Summary of Literature Review

The above reviews of research articles emphasize the importance of programs that are directed toward reducing violence and aggression among middle school age children and that these programs must include characteristics that address the specific needs of this age group. Interventions must include cultural and social factors in their assessments. Pulkkinen's findings that proactive and reactive aggressive behaviors in adolescence are precursors of behaviors in adulthood reiterate that the foundation for violent, aggressive behaviors is laid in childhood, activated in adolescence and, without interventions at this impressionable age, are carried through into adulthood. Schools have an important role to play in influencing youth values and behavior and in reducing youth violence. This

20

research study attempts to add to the knowledge of literature by evaluating whether middle school students who attend a conflict resolution program learn skills and if they intend to use the skills learned (if any).

Program Description

Program Goal

As mentioned earlier, children need to know why they are learning in order for them to become interested in learning. According to Prothrow-Stith (1991), "...students want to know about violence prevention...they have never had the chance to talk to anyone about fighting, violence, or death" (p.176). It is hoped that students participating in this program will be readily and actively involved in discussions and activities because the subject matter interests them.

For many children, violence is a part of their everyday lives. They have learned that in order to survive on the streets, they have to be able to fight. They have learned that aggressive/violent behavior often gets their immediate needs met. They have learned that aggressive/violent behavior is one, if not the only, option available to resolve conflict. This program recognizes that tactics learned to resolve conflict within the school setting often are not transferable to the streets. However, children who participate in this program will learn negotiation skills, positive self-talk skills, and deescalating skills, which could be transferred to a non-school setting. In addition, they will learn that some conflicts can have positive outcomes, impacting their relationships and increasing their ability to effectively cope with stress and adversity within and outside of the school setting.

This program recognizes anger as a normal and potentially constructive emotion, while teaching the children an understanding that aggressive and violent responses to anger are unhealthy ways to respond to a "problem" situation. They learn how to respond

to a problem situation in a healthy way that meets their needs versus getting their needs met in an unhealthy way, through aggressive and violent behavior. Through involvement in this program it is hoped that the students will increase their awareness of the causes and effects of violence; recognize that violence is a choice that has negative consequences; and increase their awareness of and skills needed to resolve conflict peacefully.

Setting

Chiron Middle School, is located in North Minneapolis, Minnesota. Chiron Middle School is a relatively small middle school compared to other Minneapolis Public Middle Schools with a student population of 192. 49.5% of these children are of color (American Indian, Asian American, Hispanic, and African American) and the remaining 50.5% are Caucasian.

Program Staffing

The Conflict Resolution program was facilitated by this researcher and the School Social Worker at Chiron Middle School.

Overview of Conflict Resolution Program

The conflict resolution program (see Appendix A) used for this study was originally designed, by myself. I designed the program for youth, between the ages of twelve to eighteen, who are in a correctional facility, the Hennepin County Home School. Considering many of these youth committed violent offenses, it seemed appropriate to develop a program that was directed toward learning skills of anger management, and peaceful conflict resolution in hope that they would apply the skills learned as they reintegrate into society. I facilitated this group for two years and was surprised at the

interest and investment the youth committed to the program. I began to see the youth

using the skills learned in the group, to not only solve personal conflicts, but to assist

fellow peers in resolving conflicts. Knowledge of these skills prior to their commitment,

may have provided them alternative choices, other than violence, to resolve their conflicts.

Thus, there appeared the need to evaluate whether skills learned through participation in a

conflict resolution program, would provide alternative choices to resolve conflict. Most

of the youth committed to the Hennepin County Home School are from low socio-

economic communities (the majority from the inner city of Minneapolis) and are raised

within abusive, neglected or absent families. Since most of these children are from the

inner city, and attend or have attended inner cities schools, implementation and evaluation

of this program at an inner city school seemed most appropriate.

The program is a combination of: a) Goldstein's (1988), The Prepare Curriculum:

Teaching Prosocial Competencies; b) Project Charlie's: Peaceful Partners; c) Prothrow-

Stith's, M.D. (1987) Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents and; d) ideas and

activities that I developed. Goldstein's, Prepare Curriculum was designed to teach

prosocial competencies, anger control, and problem solving skills to adolescents and

younger children who are demonstrably deficient in such competencies. His program has

been evaluated at several youth residential facilities which reported enhancement of

prosocial skills, reduced levels of rated impulsiveness and decreased frequency and

intensity of acting out behaviors. He states, "...it is clearly an intervention deserving of

both continued application and continued rigorous evaluation" (p.237).

24

Project Charlie: Peaceful Partner's is a comprehensive violence prevention curriculum emphasizing social skill building and safety issues that help schools establish an atmosphere of peace and safety. The curriculum was developed for children between the grades of kindergarten and eighth.

Prothrow-Stith's program focuses on violence between peers. The curriculum was designed for high school students, and focuses on showing them the extent to which they are at risk of homicide and positive ways to deal with anger and conflicts, the major causes of homicide. Her program was evaluated in an inner city school in New York City. The curriculum was presented, over a two week period, to an experimental group (53 tenth grade students), while the remaining 53 students in the control group continued with a regular health curriculum. Both groups were evaluated by the same pretest and posttest instrument. The instrument tested for both knowledge and attitudes about anger, violence and homicide. The project showed a significant impact on their attitude and their knowledge.

The Conflict Resolution Program for this research is a ten session, one hour per day curriculum. An overview of the program is shown in Figure 1 on page 28. The children who participated in this research, attended the group once a week, for nine weeks. Week nine and ten were combined due to the children leaving for a one week break. Each group meeting began with a review of the previous week and ended discussing the "Stop and Think" logs[1] and role playing situations that happened during the

---

[1] Students did not remember to complete this every week, so often the group ended with role plays depicting problem situations that occurred over the past week.

past week. The following gives a brief weekly synopsis of the nine week program that the children participated in:

Week One: It is essential in the first week of the program, to gain the student's interest. As mentioned earlier in this paper, for learning to be effective, students must perceive what they are learning to be meaningful and important (Wingle & Manges, 1995; Dweck, 1985). Wigle and Manges (1995) suggest that by connecting what happens in school to important nonschool knowledge and skills, children may perceive the tasks they are asked to participate in as meaningful and important. We started the group with a discussion about the difference between "street life" and the school setting, which led into a discussion on why it is important to have a nonviolent school setting. The students developed a list of rules and expectations for each group. They also gave feedback on what they would hope to learn while participating in a conflict resolution group. We ended the group playing Pictionary with different feelings for the words (sad, anxious, mad, happy)[2].

Week Two: The students defined the word "problem"- a goal with an obstacle in the way and did role plays of various problems that had occurred over the past week, identifying what the goal was and what the obstacle was that prevented them from achieving their goals. The students then wrote the word "violence" on the board and brain stormed all the ways that they have learned violence. They then discussed the difference between violence on the streets, sports, television, war, etc. Each student was given the Stop and Think Log and a worksheet to complete on violence on television and/or movies.

---

[2] Due to time the silhouette activity was not completed (see Appendix A, Week One).

Week Three: The students brainstormed and wrote down on poster board reactions to problems (i.e. cry, sad, angry, kicking). They then identified which reactions were positive responses by putting a "+" next to the word. This board was posted in the classroom throughout the remaining six weeks. We then began a discussion on how each student recognizes when he/she is angry and began a list of anger reducers (additions were made throughout the program.).

Week Four: We began the group with a role play of a conflict situation between myself and the co-facilitator (students were unaware that conflict was a role play). We then discussed each students reaction to the conflict, which led into a discussion about internal and external triggers. Through role plays students learned to use "I" statements to confront a problem situation.

Week Five: Upon entering the room, each student wrote down what they saw in the room (e.g., table, people, window) and then discussed what each student wrote down. We talked about how each student saw the room differently and the importance of understanding and seeing the whole picture before making a judgment or reacting to a problem situation. Students then were given parts of a picture, and tried to depict what the individual in the picture was doing. They talked about how not having the whole story, can lead to bad judgements and bad decisions[3].

Week Six: Discussed short/term and internal/external consequences of using violence to resolve conflict. Each student completed and colored a "Personal Power" sheet.

---

[3] Due to time "Mood Story" activity was not completed (see Appendix A, Week Five).

Week Seven: Watched movie "Roc III: Terrence got his gun." Following movie discussed Terrence's choices reflecting on previous weeks discussions.

Week Eight: Discussed the importance of judging how they handled a situation, such as they had been doing on the "Stop and Think" logs. Each student then developed a list of self-rewarding statements and colored sheet.

Week Nine: Discussed how over the past weeks we had been focusing on things others do to make us mad (sad, angry, etc.), and then talked about things we do intentionally to make others mad. Students reviewed past week sessions through role plays. The students gave feedback for future groups, and completed posttest[4].

---

[4] Due to small attendance "Rap Song" activity was not completed (see Appendix A, Week Ten).

Overview of Conflict Resolution Program

Figure 1

	Week One	Week Two	Week Three	Week Four	Week Five	Week Six	Week Seven	Week Eight	Week Nine	Week Ten
Goal	① Introduction and relevance of a conflict resolution program. ② Values of education and how violence interferes. ③ Be able to identify and become familiar with feelings often masked by anger.	① Define problem: GOAL with OBSTACLE in the way. ② Brainstorm where violence is learned. Discuss difference between violence in sports, streets, school. ③ Introduce "Stop and Think" Log.	① Recognize reactions to problems (i.e. isolation, swearing, yelling). ② Be able to identify cues to know when angry. ③ Begin a list of anger reducers. ④ Review Stop and Think log.	① Define internal and external triggers. ② Discuss and role play the use of "I" statements. ③ Review Stop and Think log	① Gain understanding of self-reminders. ② Discuss importance of seeing whole picture -- being a good investigator. ③ Review Stop and Think Log.	① Discuss short and long term consequences of violence. ② Discuss internal and external consequences. ③ Review Stop and Think Log.	① Watch Movie "Roc III: Terrence got his gun." ② Discuss Terrence's choices, reflecting on previous weeks discussions.	① Learn importance of judging how handled situation. ② Develop self-rewarding statements. ③ Review Stop and Think Log.	① Be able to recognize things done intentionally to make others angry. ② Review Stop and Think Log.	① Review previous weeks through use of role plays and art. ② Review Stop and Think log.
Activity	Feelings game, silhouettes, and group work.	Make web of word "violence.", television/ movie worksheet	Hand out stop to think questions, brainstorm on poster board reactions to problems		Objects in room, mood story, ambiguous pictures.	Complete "Personal Power" Sheet		Complete and color self-reward sheet.		Create a rap song

Methodology

Research Statement

This research is a summative evaluation of middle school age children's knowledge

of and intention to use skills they have learned through participation in a conflict

resolution group.

Study Population

The study population consisted of eight middle school children ranging in age from

twelve to fifteen. Three boys and five girls participated in the group and were of various

ethnic backgrounds (see Figure 2) This information was obtained through their student

records. The students were referred to the group by one of the following three ways: a)

selected by their teachers as children who had a history of behavior problems in the school

system; b) by the principle of the school, as an intervention to avoid expulsion, and/or; c)

voluntarily stated they would be interested in participating in the group. Twelve students

were originally selected to participate in the program. One student was not interested in

participating, one student did not return his consent forms

Ethnicity of Sample (n=8)

Figure 2

African American | White

Mixed
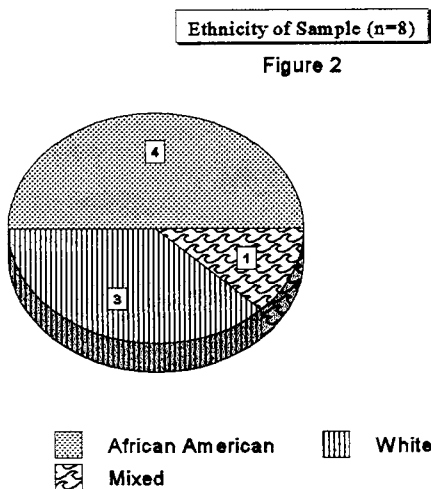
prior to matriculation of the group (therefore was not able to participate), and two

children were absent more than 50% of the group meetings, so were not considered in this

research.

<u>Attendance</u>

Attendance for the eight students involved in this research ranged from 100%

attendance to attending 56% (were present five of the nine group meetings). The average

attendance was 82.5% attendance (eight of the nine meetings) (see figure 3). Group

attendance as a whole fluctuated from week to week. There was not a consistent pattern

of group absenteeism throughout the nine weeks, although the last three weeks of the

program attendance did gradually drop (see figure 4). Additionally, there were several

group sessions that students needed to leave early, due to other school activities or their

behavior warranted them being excused from the group. Figures 5 -7 will display

individual outcome results in the order of their attendance shown in figure 3.

Attendance

Figure 3

Attendance by Session

Figure 4
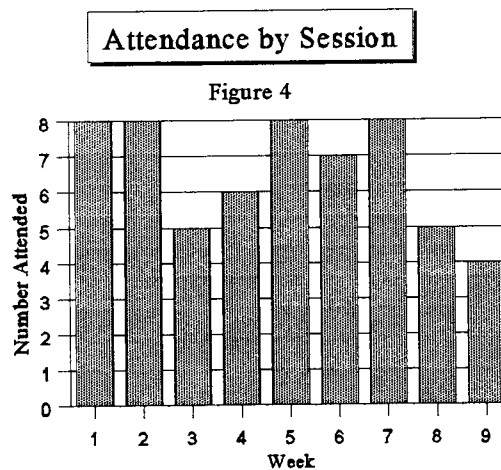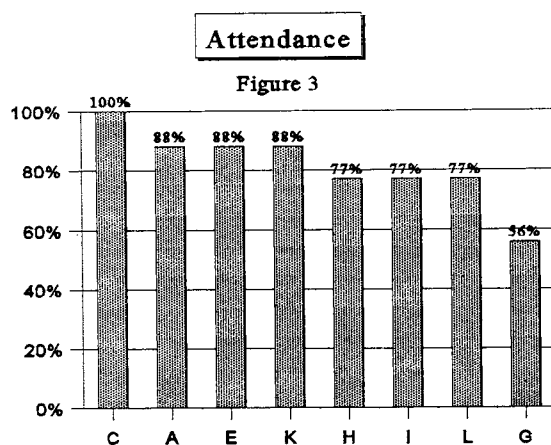
Confidentiality/Limiting Risks

An institutional Review Board process for Augsburg College was completed and approved. In addition, the Minneapolis Public School (MPS) required a review process for research in the school system. The primary concerns of the MPS review board was to gain an understanding of the research, its methodology and how the MPS would benefit from the study. An application to conduct a study in the MPS was submitted and approved.

The following precautions were taken to minimize risks for the students involved with program and research participation. The student's were informed that consent from their parents was needed in order for them to participate in the group and research (see Appendix B). They were informed that their decision to participate in the group was completely voluntary. They could make the choice at any time during the group to stop participating and that their name and any information that would make it possible to identify them would be kept secure and confidential. In addition, each child was informed prior to matriculation that group topics may bring up feelings or experiences that are not positive, and that they may choose not to discuss any topic that feels uncomfortable without affecting their participating in the group and/or current or future relationships with Augsburg College or with Chiron Middle School. If needed, each child was able and continues to be able to process his or her feelings with myself or Sandy Witebsky, School Social Worker, following group meetings.

Data Collection, Measurement Instruments and Procedures

A pretest/posttest design was used for this study. The test was developed to explore knowledge of anger reducing tactics and skills learned following participation in a ten week conflict resolution group. There were two instruments used to collect the data: the Skills Achievement Assessment (SAA) and the Aggression Questionnaire (TAQ) (Buss & Perry, 1992). The SAA (see Appendix C) is a nine-item, open-ended questionnaire, specifically designed, by this researcher, from information contained in the ten-week conflict resolution curriculum to evaluate skills learned following participation in the conflict resolution program. All eight children completed the SAA before the beginning of the first session and immediately following participation of the last group session. The responses to the questionnaire were based on a three point Likert type scale anchored by: "No Achievement" and "Substantially Achieved". It is anticipated that students will not respond favorably on the SAA prior to participation in the program (i.e. most responses will be toward the No Achievement end of the likert scale) and that the students will respond favorably following participation in the program (i.e. most responses will be toward the Substantially Achieved end of the likert scale); they will have learned skills to resolve conflict peacefully. The pretest and posttest questions were analyzed individually according to the key for the SAA (see Appendix D).

The TAQ (see Appendix E) is a 21 item questionnaire which reports self-reported aggressive behavior. Each statement is rated on a five point Likert type scale anchored by Never and Always. The TAQ was distributed to all eight students six weeks following participation in the conflict resolution program. The TAQ is one of the most frequently

used questionnaires on aggression, mainly because of the division of the inventory into four scales: physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger and hostility (Buss & Perry, 1992). Therefore, the TAQ not only looks at how aggressive a person is but how the aggression is manifested. For the purpose of this research, the TAQ will be used to evaluate the relationship between self-reported aggressive behavior and the intent to use conflict resolution tactics learned through the ten week curriculum. The last eight questions were deleted from the questionnaire (which measured how the aggression was manifested). A low score on the TAQ and a high response to question number nine of the SAA (i.e., Do you intend to use the skills learned?) would indicate that students intended to apply conflict resolution skills to behaviors.

Each child's pre/posttest and questionnaire was marked with a letter, corresponding to his/her name and will be used to present findings. This letter ensured confidentiality of the student. The key for the letter connected with the child's name was kept locked in a file cabinet, accessible only by myself or the school social worker.

The following chapters review the results and discuss the data obtained from the above methods.

Results

Data in this section will be presented in the following order: a) the results of

pre/post test--Student Achievement Questionnaire (SAA); b) the results of the follow-up

test--The Aggression Questionnaire (TAQ); c) the relationship between the SAA test and

TAQ results will be identified, and; d) feedback from the students regarding the Conflict

Resolution Program.

Pre/Post Test-SAA

The pre/post questionnaire was completed by all eight middle school students.

Seven of the students showed an increase in scores from the pretest to the posttest, while

one student (G) showed a dramatic decrease. One reason for this decrease could be

related to this child having a very difficult day connecting with adults, and may have

carried this attitude through on the questionnaire in an attempt to oppose more adults. He

was, however, given the choice not to complete the questionnaire, and chose to complete

it. In addition, this child answered several of the questions "don't know" so that he would

be able to leave group sooner (he was truant from school the last hour of the day

following group).

Questions four and five on the questionnaire needed to be eliminated because they

indicated learning of vocabulary versus learning of skills. All students left these two

questions blank on the pretest (which it is assumed indicates they did not know the terms),

and completed them on the posttest. While this is not relevant to skills achievement, it

does indicate that these students learned information from group participation that they

were able to apply to themselves in recognizing what precipitates angry feelings that often

lead to aggressive behavior.

For both the pretest and posttest the lowest score on the SAA was zero (No

Achievement), the highest score that students could achieve was twenty-one (Substantially

Achieved) and, the mean score was fourteen (Partially Achieved). The following table

shows the low, high and mean results of the pretest/posttest (the letter following the score

corresponds to the child):

Results of Pretest/Posttest Table 1			
	Low Score	**High Score**	**Mean Score**
Pretest (n=8)	7 (E)	17 (G)	11.7
Posttest (n=8)	9 (G)	17 (L)	13.25

Figure 5 illustrates the pretest results compared to the posttest SAA results by individual

child. Six of the eight children showed an increase in knowledge gained during

participation in the conflict resolution program.

SAA SCORES-Pre/Posttest

Figure 5

Pretest   Posttest

36
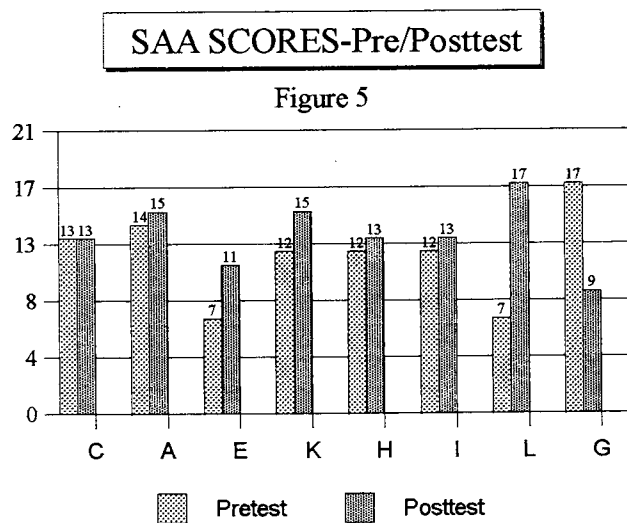
Follow-up Test--TAQ

The TAQ was completed by all eight middle school students six weeks following the last group meeting. The lowest possible score on the TAQ was a seven (Never like me), the highest possible score was a 105 (Always like me) with a midpoint score of 63 (Sometimes like me). The mean score of the TAQ taken by the eight students was 63.7-- sometimes like me. Figure 6 shows the individual scores.

TAQ Scores

Figure 6
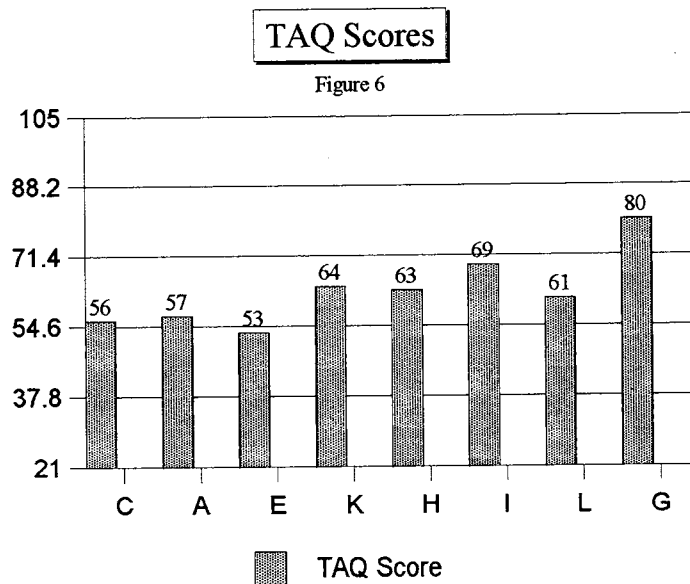
Comparison of the SAA/TAQ Scores

Five of the eight students responded to question number nine (i.e., Do you intend to use the skills learned?) stating that they might use the skills learned, and two responded that it was highly likely they would use the skills learned following participation in the conflict resolution program. One student (G) wrote "don't know." The results do not appear to indicate there was a relationship between their stating their intent to use skills learned and their self-reported aggressive behavior. Figure 6 illustrates that the mean

score of the eight students on the TAQ was 63.7--sometimes like me. The two students,

A and L, who responded to question number nine with highly like me achieved a score on

the TAQ of 57 and 61, both below the mean score of 63.

Students feedback to Conflict Resolution Program

Question: What was the most useful information that you learned from the group?

Half of the students thought that the role play between myself and the co-facilitator,

demonstrating the importance of understanding the whole picture before making a

judgement or reacting to a situation was the most useful information learned. The other

half thought that the movie "Roc III: Terrence got his gun" and discussion about thinking

about long/short term consequences before making a decision was the most useful

information learned. All students felt that the role plays helped them understand the skills

discussed in groups.

Question: What would you change if you could change anything about the group?

All students agreed that they would change the time of the group. The group took place

at 1:00 pm on Mondays. Students suggested that the group be in the morning, because at

1:00 pm they were focused on getting out of school for the day. Students also suggested

that activities such as guest speakers and field trips would make the group more

interesting for them.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to evaluate middle school age children's knowledge of and intention to use skills they learned through participation in a conflict resolution program. The results of the pretest/posttest indicated a slight increase of knowledge and skills learned following participation in the conflict resolution program. The results also showed a slight intent of the children to use skills learned following participation in a conflict resolution program as indicated through the comparison scores of the SAA and TAQ. The following discussion interprets and analyzes the results of pretest/posttest; the results of the follow-up test; the size of the sample study; and developmental issues that may have affected the outcome of this study.

Several factors could reflect the slight increase of scores from the pretest to the posttest. First, the eight students who participated in the group were referred by teachers and the principal because of consistent behavior issues (i.e. sent to quiet room daily, several suspensions). Future studies may want to include children who do not show consistent behavior issues. Secondly, while the attendance rate was high (majority of students present eight out of nine meetings), their investment in the group appeared to be relatively low. The group often got side tracked on he said/she said conversations, and with activities and events that were going on within the school. Furthermore, having both boys and girls in the group, appeared to detract attention away from the focus of the discussion, and towards concerns of appearance and a high interest in side conversations regarding students of the opposite sex.

Two of the eight children, however, showed a substantial increase in knowledge of skills (students E and L). Several factors may have contributed to these results. First, these two children are both special education students. Therefore, as part of their individual education plan (IEP) they were required to receive a certain number hours of direct service related to their behavior. Secondly, they were referred daily to the principal, behavior specialist or social worker due to behavior problems within the school. If these children were referred to myself (Social Work Intern) or the other school social worker, who co-facilitate the group, the skills they learned in group were reinforced. Thus, they were receiving interventions at a higher rate than the other children who attended the group.

The purpose of TAQ was to evaluate the relationship between the students knowledge of skills (data that was obtained from the SAA) and their intention to use skills to resolve conflict peacefully, following participation in a conflict resolution program. However, the difference is so small that it would be difficult to say that in fact, the sample study intended to use the skills learned through the conflict resolution program to resolve conflict. This could also indicate that while the children learned the skills, they were hesitant to apply the skills learned to situations because of comfort level or fear of peer rejection. Future studies should include TAQ as a pretest and a posttest, to compare behavior intentions prior to and following participation in the program. This would give a more valid interpretation of the intent to use the skills learned. Future studies may also explore other measurement instruments that more accurately assess the skills learned following participation in this conflict resolution program.

This research only included eight students of the 190 students that attend Chiron Middle School. While this program did address some of the individual needs of these eight children, maximum efficacy may have been possible if it were incorporated school wide. Children learning these skills may have felt isolated and not supported in using the skills. Support and reinforcement of the skills throughout the entire school may have assisted the children in not feeling isolated, because their peers would have been learning the same skills. Training only a small number of students to manage conflicts constructively will not change the way other students manage their conflicts. Future studies may want to present the program to an entire class, thus targeting all students, not just students with behavior issues. This may also contribute to a higher intention to use skills, because a larger number of students would have knowledge of skills, thus the student wouldn't feel so isolated when using skills learned. Additionally, this approach would involve the teacher, and he/she may be able to incorporate the skills learned into their teaching curriculum.

Future studies should work toward not only presenting the program to an entire class or school, but also involving family and community organizations. One of the students who participated in this research was on probation with juvenile corrections, thus had a probation officer assigned to him. I contacted this child's probation officer and mother weekly updating them on the skills discussed that week, in an effort to have as many people as possible reinforcing the skills learned to resolve conflict peacefully. While this student continued to have behavior issues throughout the school year, he was

successful in developing interventions that reduced his suspensions and the time spent out of class.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, aggressive children learn early in life the concept of trust versus mistrust. For many of these children, relationships that they have developed with adults have been inconsistent, inadequate and often times rejecting. Thus they surround themselves with behaviors that give them a feeling of security; building a wall that protects them from being hurt, as they have many times before, by someone they have become attached to. I realized toward the end of this program, that ten weeks is not enough time to break this wall. For these children, they must first gain trust with the facilitators of the group. Not until trust is established, through consistency and conveyance of adequacy, will these children let go of their fear and suspicions. They need to know that even though their behaviors are inappropriate, they are special individuals and that they will not be rejected by yet another adult. As suggested earlier, extending the length of the group, may contribute to a higher rate of overall success.

Limitations to study

While the results of this study show a slight increase in knowledge of skills and a slight intent to use these skills learned, there are several factors that must be considered if an accurate assessment of the data is to occur. First, the sample size was exceedingly small. Only eight students participated in this study. Future research should expand the evaluation to include a homeroom class, which would not only increase the sample size, but would include children who are not consistent behavior problems.

Secondly, the conflict resolution group was not the only intervention occurring in the school at the time of this study. Several of the students in this sample study were also involved in the STAR Program (Success Through Affiliative Responses). The hypothesis of this program is that at-risk learners who experience mentoring, feedback and support at a higher rate than regular learners will demonstrate competence along certain dimensions relative to a control group of peers who experience "regular" programming. Additionally, two of the students five weeks into the program participated in training to be peer mediators. It may be the influence of these interventions, combined with the conflict resolution group that was responsible for the positive outcome in results.

Third, the scores on the TAQ were indicated by self-reported aggressive behavior. Social desirability can affect self-reports especially when connected with negative emotions and behaviors (Giumarra, 1996; Buss & Mark, 1992). Furthermore, a self-serving bias can influence ratings in which there is a tendency for individuals to rate themselves above average on positive personal traits. Both of these factors may contribute to the invalidity of this study.

43

Fourth, the scoring of the SAA was completed and evaluated by this researcher. All attempts were made not to assume the meaning of the information given (through prior knowledge of the student), and to be consistent through scoring both the pretest and posttest results.

Finally, the time frame of this study was relatively short. Beginning the group in the first month of the school year, and as suggested earlier completion of a pretest such as the TAQ, would give more time between the last group meeting and the follow-up test. This study only allowed six weeks to evaluate intention to use skills learned through participation in the conflict resolution program.

Conclusion

Clearly the existing methodology needs further research and development for an accurate evaluation of the intent of middle school children to use skills learned through participation in a conflict resolution program. The current trend of interpersonal violence among youth, however, emphasizes the need for every child to learn how to manage conflicts constructively. Without training, many students may never learn how to resolve conflict peacefully (Johnson, 1995; Prothrow-Stith & Weissman, 1991).

Although the results were minimal, the students high attendance rate demonstrated to me that children were eager to talk about violence and the consequences of using violence to resolve conflict. I believe participation in the group made them think about their behaviors and the control they have over their behaviors, ultimately questioning the inevitability of fighting. It took thirty years to decrease the incidence of smoking in America, and it took twenty years to reduce the rate of drunk driving (Prothrow-Stith & Weissman, 1991; Johnson, 1995). The same thing can be done for violence.

Dr. Prothrow-Stith asserts that, "All of our great black leaders, from Harriet Tubman to Martin Luther King to Nelson Mandela, have channeled their anger at injustice into a force to reshape the world...It is not about passivity. It is about using anger not to hurt oneself or one's peers, but to change the world" (p.183). The message that anger can be managed and conflicts can be resolved peacefully needs to be communicated through schools, local community organizations, churches and media. Moreover, targeting children who are at risk for aggressive/violent behavior early in their lives, and connecting them to programs such as the one illustrated in this research will ensure that future

45

generations are prepared to manage conflicts constructively in career, family, community, national and international settings.

<u>Implication for Social Workers</u>

School social workers work with children who have emotional and family problems, low self-esteem and behavior problems. They are part of a multi-disciplinary team within the school setting. They identify needs of students that interfere with learning and make appropriate referrals. They are the connection between the school, family, and local communities. Whether the school social worker takes on the responsibility of implementing conflict resolution programs or facilitating a program that works toward reducing violence among children, they are positively impacting all of the above components of their job, while improving the quality of life for everyone.

Frequently, the causes of school violence are attributed to the individual, community, or family, not the school organization. Schools have yet to conceptualize the strength of the social system, as it relates within the family and community systems, toward reducing violence. Social workers can have a significant role in reducing violence at all levels of society through building and strengthening interrelationships between schools, community organizations, and families.

We all need to work together to solve problems related to interpersonal violence among youth. It is not about something that happens to other people; it is about something that happens to us and to our children's children!

References

Bandura, A. (1973). <u>Aggression: A social learning analysis</u>. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Barth, R. P. (1988). Theories guiding family preservation services. In Whittaker, J. K., Kinney, J., Tracy, E. M., & Boothe, C. (Eds), <u>Improving practice technology fro work with high risk families</u>. (pp. 91-113). Seattle, WA: University of Washington.

Berg, D. E. (1995). <u>Evaluating the effectiveness of a peer mediation program in a elementary school</u>, (unpublished thesis), Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg College.

Blumenfeld, P. C. (1992). Classroom learning and motivation: Clarifying and expanding goal theory. <u>Journal of Educational Psychology, 84</u>, 272-281.

Brieland, D. (1990). The hull-house tradition and the contemporary social worker: Was Jane Addams really a social worker? <u>Social Work, 35</u>, 134-138.

Brophy, J. (1983). Conceptualizing student motivation. <u>Educational Psychologist, 18</u>, 200-215.

Coie, J. D. & Kupersmidt, J. B. (1983). A behavioral analysis of emerging social status in boys' groups. <u>Child Development, 54</u>, 1400-1416.

Davis, D. L., & Boster, L. H. (1992). Cognitive-behavioral-expressive interventions with aggressive and resistant youths. <u>Child Welfare, LXXI</u>, 557-574.

Deci, E. L., Vallerand, R. J., Pelletier, L. G., & Ryan, R. M. (1991). Motivation and education: The self-determination perspective. <u>Educational Psychologist, 26</u>, 325-346.

Dodge, K.A. (1983). Behavior antecedents of peer social status. Child Development, 54, 1386-1399.

Dweck, C. (1985). Motivation. In R. Galser & A. Lesgold (Eds.), Handbook of psychology and education. Hillside, NJ: Erlbaum.

Elkind, D. (1970, April 5). Erik Erikson's eight ages of man: One man in his time plays many psychosocial parts. The New York Times Magazine, 23-30.

Feindler, E. L. (1984). Group anger control training for junior high school delinquents. Cognitive Therapy and Research, 8, 299-311.

Fraser, M. W. (1996). Aggressive behavior in childhood and early adolescence: An ecological-developmental perspective on youth violence. Social Work, 41, 347-361.

Gable, R. A., & Manning M. L. (1996). Facing the challenge of aggressive behaviors in young adolescents. Middle School Journal, 27, 19-25.

Germain, C. B. (1991). Human behavior in the social environment: An ecological view. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Gibbs, J. I. (1996). A values approach to conflict resolution. Middle School Journal, 27, 14-18.

Giuliano, J. D. (1994). A peer education program to promote the use of conflict resolution skills among at-risk school age males. Public Health Reports, 109, 158-161.

Glasser, W. (1965). Reality therapy: A new approach to psychiatry. New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers.

48

Glasser, W. (1981). Stations of the mind: New directions for reality therapy. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers.

Goldstein, A. P. (1988). The prepare curriculum: Teaching prosocial competencies. Champaign, IL: Research Press.

Goldstein, A. P., Glick, B., Reiner, S., Zimmerman, D., & Coultry, T. M. (1987). Aggression replacement training: A comprehensive intervention for aggressive youth. Champaign, IL: Research Press.

Goodman, H., Getzel, G. S., & Ford, W. (1996). Group work with high-risk urban youths on probation. Social Work, 41, 375-381.

Guimarra, D. (1996). The Development of an instrument to measure anger expression in middle school students. Unpublished Master's thesis, Goucher College, Maryland.

Hawkins, J. D., & Lishner, D. M. (1987). Schooling and delinquency. In E.H. Johnson (Ed.), Handbook on crime and delinquency prevention (pp. 179-221). New York: Greenwood Press.

Huphrey, L. L. (1982). Children's and teachers' perspectives on children's self-control: The development of two rating scales. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 50, 624-633.

Johnson, D. W. (1995). Why violence prevention programs don't work - and what does. Educational Leadership, 52, 63-69.

Kaufman, M. J. (1996). Integrated approaches to preventing antisocial behavior patterns among school-age children and youth. Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 4, 194-209.

Larsen, J. A. & Mitchell, C. T. (1980). Task-centered, strength-oriented group work with delinquents. Social Casework: The journal of Contemporary Social Work, 3, 154-163.

Lavoie, F., Vezina, L, Piche, C. & Boivin, M. (1995). Evaluation of a prevention program for violence in teen dating relations. Journal of interpersonal violence, 10, 516-524.

Lochman, J. E., Nelson, W. M. III, & Sims, J. P. (1981). A cognitive behavioral program for use with aggressive children. Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 146-148.

Loeber, R., & Dishion, T. J. (1983). Early predictors of male delinquency: A review. Psychological Bulletin, 94, 68-99.

Lowry, R., Sleet, D., Duncan, C., Powell, K. & Kolbe, L. (1995). Adolescents at risk for violence. Educational Psychology Review, 7, 7-39.

Mickel, E. (1994). Violence is a chosen behavior. Journal of Reality Therapy, 13, 7-13.

Natale, J. A. (1994). Roots of violence. The American School Board Journal, 181, 33-40.

Newby, T. J. (1991). Classroom Motivation: Strategies of first-year teachers. Journal of Educational Psychology, 83, 195-200.

Patterson, G. R. (1995). Coercion as a basis for early age of onset for arrest. In J. McCord (Ed.), Coercion and punishment in long-term perspectives (pp. 81-105). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Patterson, G. R., DeBaryshe, D., & Ramsey, E. (1989). A developmental

perspective on antisocial behavior. <u>American Psychologist, 44,</u> 329-335.

Project Charlie. (1993). Peaceful partners: A violence prevention program.

Minneapolis, MN:

Prothrow-Stith, D. B., & Weissman, M. (1991). <u>Deadly consequences: How violence</u>

<u>is destroying our teenage population and a plan to begin solving the problem.</u> New York,

NY: Harper Collins

Prothrow-Smith, D. B. (1987). <u>Violence prevention curriculum for adolescents.</u>

Newton, MA: Education Development Center, Inc.

Pulkkinen, L. (1996). Proactive and reactive aggression in early adolescence as

precursors to anti and prosocial behavior in adults. <u>Aggressive Behavior, 22,</u> 241-257.

Reiss, A. J., Jr., & Roth, J. A. (1994). Understanding and preventing violence. In

Cohen, M. A., Miller, T. R., & Rossman, S. B. (Eds.), <u>The costs and consequences of</u>

<u>violent behavior in the United States.</u> (4th ed., pp. 67-166). Washington, D.C.: National

Academy Press.

Sautter. R. C. (1995). Standing up to violence. <u>Phi Delta Kappan, 76,</u> K1-K12.

Schunk, D. H. (1991). Self-efficacy and academic motivation. <u>Educational</u>

<u>Psychologist, 26(3 & 4),</u> 207-231.

Snyder, H. N., Sickmund, M., & Poe-Yamagata, E. (1996). <u>Juvenile Offenders and</u>

<u>Victims: 1996 Update on Violence.</u> Washington DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and

Delinquency Prevention.

Thompson, G. G., Gardner, E. F., & Di Vesta, F. J. (1959). Educational psychology. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc

Toepfer, C. F., Jr. (1996). Caring for young adolescents in an ethnically divided, violent, poverty-stricken society. Middle School Journal, 27, 42-48.

Ugurogulu, M., & Walberg, H. (1979). Motivation and achievement: A quantitative synthesis. American Educational Research Journal, 16, 375-389.

Walker, H. M., Horner, R. H., Sugai, G., Bullis, M., Sprague, J. R., Bricker, D., & Kaufman, M. J. (1996). Integrated approaches to preventing antisocial behavior patterns among school-age children and youth. Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 4, 194-208.

Wilson, J. Q., & Hernstein, R. J. (1985). Crime and human nature. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Windom, C. S. (1989). Cycle of violence. Science, 244, 160-166.

Wingle, S. E. & Manges, C. D. (1995). Meaning, relevance and purpose: Motivational factors in quality schools. Journal of Reality Therapy, 14, 9-14.

Appendix A

Conflict Resolution Program

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

SKILLS

Week Number One

Objectives:
- Discuss goals and rules of group (See Handout #1)
- What does Conflict Resolution mean?
- School Values - Discuss most important reasons for being in school. See activity below.

Activities:

☞ Write different feelings on small pieces of paper such as happy, sad, excited, frustrated. Have one piece of paper for each student in the group. Attach one of feelings to the back of one of the students. The remaining students need to guess what is written on this students back. The only way they can get clues is by asking yes or no questions. Have each child take a turn.

☞ Divide students into 2-3 groups. Divide students into small groups with each giving reasons for being in school (i.e. get a good job, see friends, diploma). Have them write their responses on poster board. As a whole group discuss major differences between street and school. In small groups discuss the possible benefits of nonviolence in the school. At least three reasons why nonviolence would be a value in the school system (i.e. to be able to concentrate on learning, feel safe, and learn to get along with many different types of people).

☞ Have students draw outline of their bodies on piece of paper. Have each student write inside things they value about themselves, positive things about themselves, and things that they can do to promote a peaceful school environment. Post around the school.
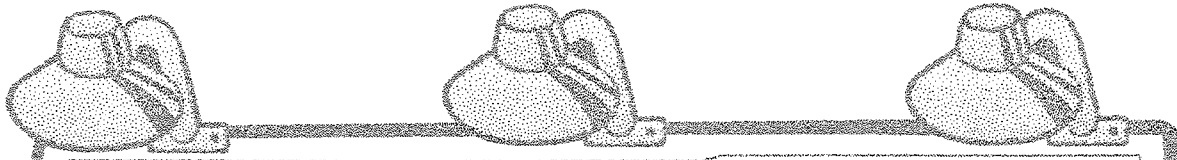
Objectives and Goals
Resolve conflict peacefully
Ways to prevent violence in schools

Rules for Group
Group will meet once a week for 10 weeks
Participation from everyone
Respect for others
Role Plays
Confidentiality
Additional Rules developed by students:
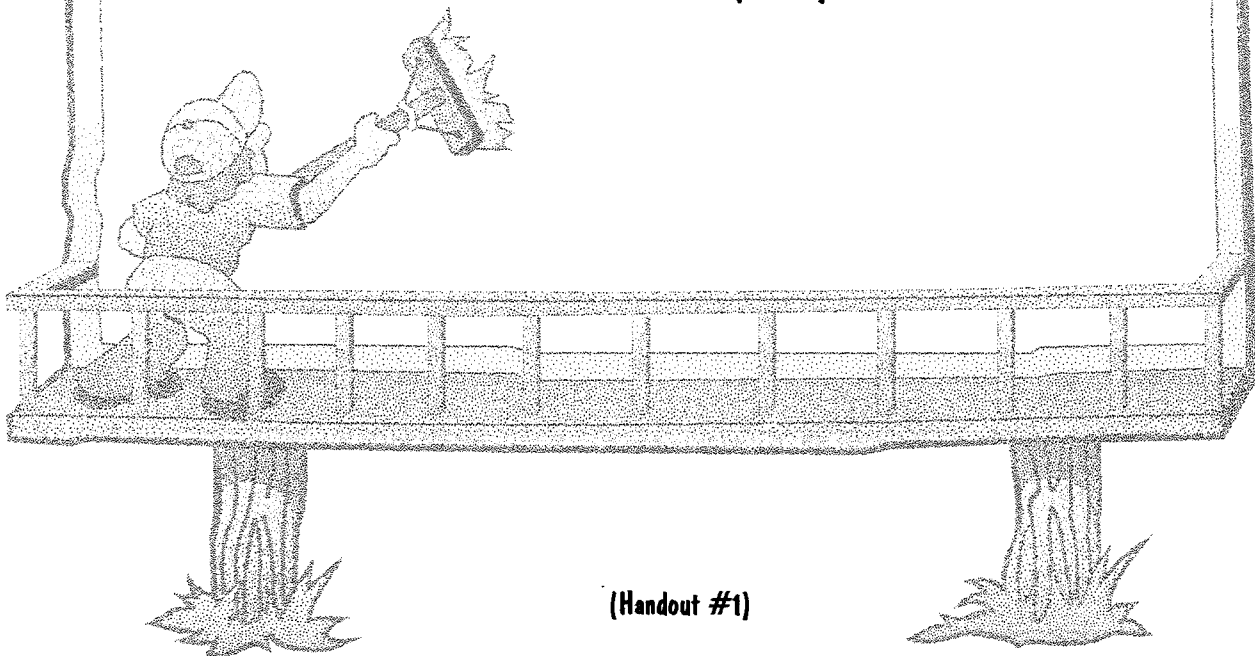
(Handout #1)

Week Number Two
Greater Self Control = Greater Personal Power

Objectives:

■ Define aggression, anger, violence (where learned). See activity below.

■ Define problem: **PROBLEMS** are difficult situations because we have a **GOAL** or something we want and there is an **OBSTACLE** or something that gets in the way of what we want.

      Problems can be solved: You do not need to do the first thing that comes to mind OR give up OR do nothing.

      ☆Experiencing bad feelings can be a sign that there is a problem. Asking self questions can help to understand exactly what the problem is. For example:

            What do I really want? What is my goal?

            What don't I like?

            What is getting in the way of what I want (Obstacle)?

            What change is needed?[1]

■ Learn to stop and think. (Handout #2)

    1. Learn to **STOP AND THINK**[2]

    2. Ask the following questions

        What is the problem?

        What are the facts? What do I need to know?

        What can I do or say?

        What are my choices?

        What will happen if I do this?

        How can I make a choice and check out what happens?

Activities:

☞ Write **VIOLENCE** on poster board. Discuss with students where we learn violence. (For example: TV, friends, family, school, sports). Draw lines for every word mentioned -- including words that may appear to have nothing to do with violence. Discuss difference between sports related violence, street violence, and war violence, and self-defense violence.[3]

☞ Have students complete for next group session Television/Movie Violence Sheet(Handout #4)

☞ Introduce Stop and Think Logs (Handout #3)
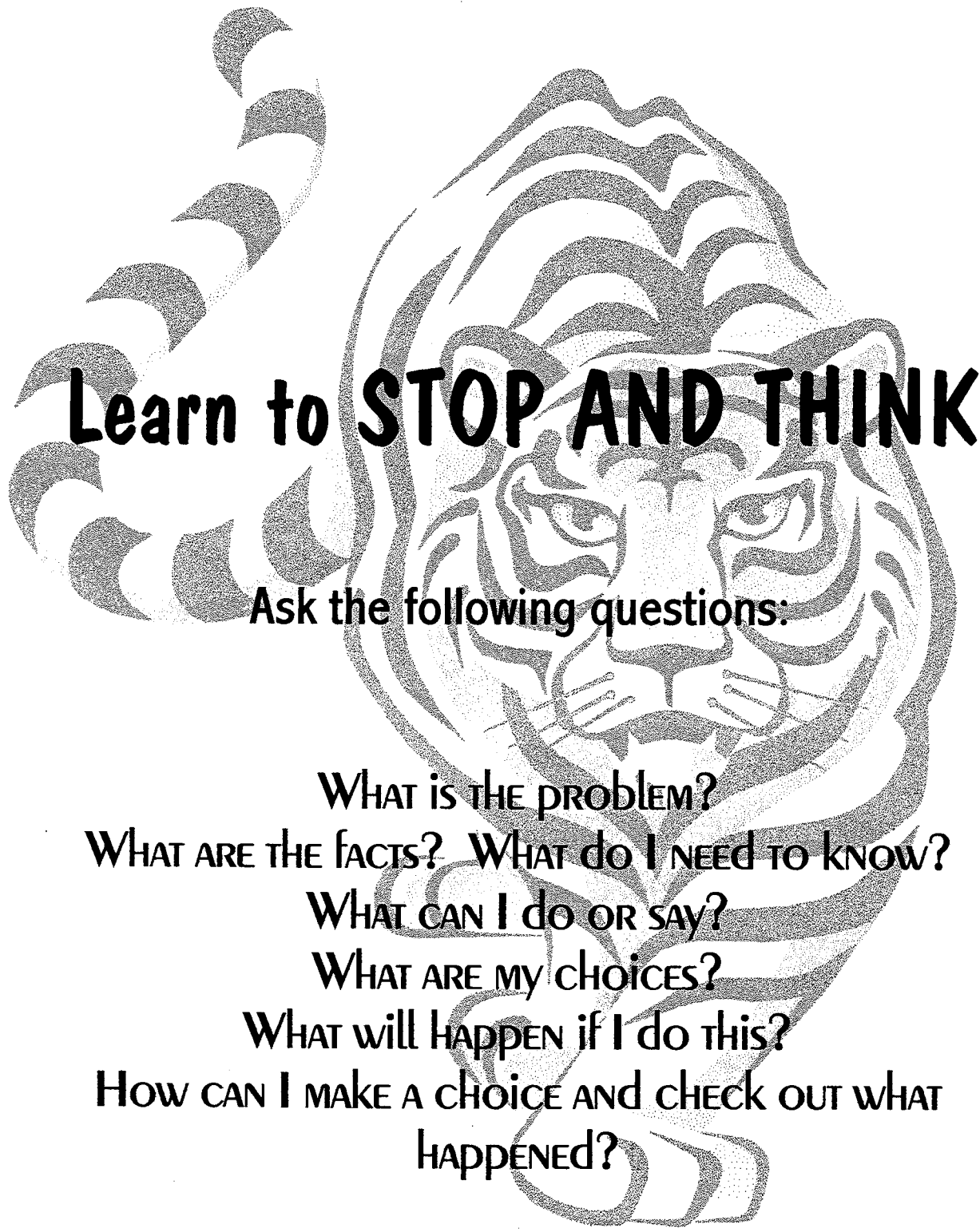
Learn to STOP AND THINK

Ask the following questions:

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?
WHAT ARE THE FACTS? WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?
WHAT CAN I DO OR SAY?
WHAT ARE MY CHOICES?
WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I DO THIS?
HOW CAN I MAKE A CHOICE AND CHECK OUT WHAT
HAPPENED?

(Handout #2)

STOP AND THINK....STOP AND THINK...STOP AND THINK...STOP AND *

Name_____

Date_____

Where were you?

Classroom	_____	Gym	_____
Bathroom	_____	Lunchroom	_____
Outside	_____	Other	_____
Bus	_____		

STOP AND THINK

What happened?

Somebody teased me.

Somebody took something of mine.   _____

Somebody told me to do something.   _____

Somebody was doing something I didn't like. _____

I did something wrong.   _____

Other

_____

_____

_____.

Who was that somebody? _____

STOP AND THINK

What did you do?

Hit back	_____	Walked away calmly	_____
Ran away	_____	Talked it out	_____
Yelled	_____	Told another student	_____
Cried	_____	Ignored it	_____
Broke something	_____	Told an adult	_____

How did you handle yourself?

1	2	3	4	5
Poorly	Not so well	OK	Good	Great

STOP AND THINK

How might you do it...

1	2	3	4	5
Poorly	Not so well	OK	Good	Great

(Handout #3)

59

Extra
Info:_____

STOP AND THINK

_____
_____
_____
_____

Task	Date	Signature/Initial
On time for school for the week		
Perfect attendance for the week		
Helped another student today		
Resolved conflict		
Used an intervention		
Completed hassle log		
Own goal:		
Own goal:		

*Must have at least two of the above dated and signed in order to receive a
piece of your prize.

Television/Movie Violence

Name of show:_____

Type of show:_____

Station saw it on:_____

How many violent incidents in the show? What Happened?_____

_____

_____

_____

How many of these were committed by "bad guys"?_____

How many of these were committed by "good guys"?_____

Draw a picture below, of other choices they had besides violence (if any)..............

Week Number Three
Stop and Think before you act or you may decide to quickly!

Objectives:

■ Understanding *reactions to problems:* People have different reactions to problems -- We need to be able to recognize there is a problem by recognizing how we are thinking and feeling.

■ Recognizing cues to know when angry: Must know when we are angry, before we can use self-control. Identify cues to know when angry (i.e. muscle tension, crying, knot in stomach).

■ Use of anger reducers (interventions): STOP & THINK: Have group brainstorm anger reducers:
For example: deep breathing
Counting backwards or saying ABC's backwards
Imagine/picture of something else

Activities:

☞ Have group describe reactions to problems:

inadequate	confused	restless
angry	uncertain	want to escape
annoyed	uptight	avoid/do something else
unhappy	tense	frustrated
uncomfortable	doubtful	sad
put down	feel like giving up	sleep
questioning	worried	

☞ Have group write down how they recognize when they are angry. What are the cues that they are angry?

☞ Role plays anger reducers

☞ Discuss Stop and Think logs and role play situations if possible

Week Number Four
A (Action/Attitude) + B (Behavior) =
C (Consequence - Positive or Negative)

Objectivess:

■ Understanding of Internal and External triggers. Have group define Internal and External.

- *External Triggers:* Things that are done by one person that makes another person angry. (For example: being told what to do, or a non-verbal push or gesture). Have group identify external triggers that have led to anger or aggressive behavior.

- *Internal Triggers:* Things we say or think to ourselves - Self-statements. (For example: <u>Negative:</u> He's making me look dumb, I'm going to punch him- versus <u>Positive:</u> He's making me look dumb, I know what he's saying isn't true.)

■ Discuss "I" statements

Activities:

☞ Review Stop and Think logs

☞ Do role plays discussing what Problem is and using "I" statements[6]:
    What do I really want? What is my <u>Goal?</u>
    What <u>don't I like?</u>
    What is getting in the way of what I want? (<u>Obstacle</u>)
    What <u>change</u> is needed?

Week Number Five
Choices

Objectives:

■ Review: Problem, recognizing when angry, STOP and THINK, Triggers,

■ Reminders: Are opposite of internal triggers. (What are internal triggers?)
   Are intended to reduce anger (Eg. Foul shot in basketball "Bend knees and follow
   through on shot")
   Help us gain self control and Personal power
   Need to make a CHOICE to use them in a conflict situation. May take a while to
   get use to them.

■ Rationale: In order to figure out what to do or say when we have a problem we need
   information on:
   Goal + Obstacle
   How we seen the situation, and how others see the problem
   To be a good problem solver , you have to know the difference between what is
   true and what you think may be true. (See activity)
   Acting quickly on a situation can make the problem worse. We need to look at the
   facts and our CHOICES

Activities:

☞Beginning of group, have each member write down what they see in the room. Have each
member discuss their observations. Talk about how each member sees the room differently.

☞Read Mood Story. (Handout #5)[7] Discuss what happened in the story. How do you feel when
people snap at you when you haven't done anything to deserve it? How can you keep from taking it
out on someone else? Can you think of an instance when you behaved badly to someonebecausee of
what someone else did to you? Do you want other people deciding what mood you'll be in? What
can we do to let other people's moods control us (Don't react impulsively. Try to find out what's
going on with the other person.) Has something like this happened to anyone? Important to be

aware of how we see the situation.

☞Cut out pictures from magazines that are ambiguous or cut an half so not all information is available. Have group discuss what they think is happening in picture. Then discuss what is actually happening. Discuss importance of having all information before making an accurate decision.

☞Do role plays. For example: Your walking down the hallway and you see another boy in the school give your girlfriend a hug. You decide she's cheating on you, so you break up with her. Later you find out that they have been friends since they were little kids and he had just found out somebody died.

☞ Discuss Stop and Think Logs

The Howard's

Mrs. Howard has a very important business meeting today. She is anxious about it because a big promotion may be just around the corner for her if the meeting goes well. She has taken great care to make sure she looks her best today and is running a few minutes behind schedule.

She enters the kitchen where Mr. Howard is making breakfast. She says, " Please hurry with my breakfast dear, I'm a little late." Suddenly, smoke starts pouring from the toaster. Mrs. Howard, in a loud voice, says, "You burned my toast!" Mr Howard says, "I'm sorry. I'll make you some more. Mrs. Howard says, "Never mind! I don't have all day. I'll go without breakfast."

She exits, slamming the door behind her. Jesse Howard then enters the kitchen. "Hi, Dad. Will you make my lunch today? I don't like what they're having at school." Mr. Howard, who is usually happy to make lunch says, "No, Jesse, if you have to be such a picky eater, you can make it yourself. I have a million things to do today, and furthermore, when you get home from school today, I want that messy room of yours cleaned up before you do one other thing!"

Jesse quietly eats his breakfast, makes his lunch and goes off to his the bus. His buddy, Alex, comes along and gives him a friendly pat on the back. "How are you doing, Jesse?" Jesse becomes enraged, turns to Alex, shoves him and says, "Get you hands off me!"

Alex arrives at school, gloomily takes his seat, at which point, Amy, the girl sitting next to him asks, "Alex, could I borrow a sheet of paper?" Alex replies "Why don't you buy your own paper, Amy?" Amy, feeling very put-down, didn't ask anyone else for paper, and so she didn't get her math problems turned in on time that morning. At lunch, she was very quiet and her girlfriend, Jody, said, "You're so quiet, Amy. What's the matter? Is something wrong? Amy snarls, "Just leave me alone, Jody. Mind you own business."

(Handout #5)

Week Number Six
Thinking Ahead

Objectives:

■ Review past weeks

■ Thinking ahead helps to figure out C = Consequence. For example: If I do this now, then this will probably happen later.

- Look at difference between short term consequences and long term consequences
- Internal consequences versus external consequences

> *External consequences* - getting suspended from school, missing field trips, grounded at home.
> *Internal consequences* - feeling terrible about yourself, losing self-respect

☆ A greater number of choices increases your control over the outcome of your decision. .
To make a good decision we have to think of more than one way to act out.

Activities:

☞ Have students list short term and long term consequences that they have engaged in over the past few months. (i.e.: Behavior in classroom = removed from classroom, sent to quiet room, suspension from school.)

☞ Have students list two cues to know when angry, two interventions to use when getting angry and two positive self-reminder statements on Personal Power sheet (Handout #6). Have them color and encourage them to hang in an area that they see daily (i.e bedroom).

☞ Role play--If I do this....then this will happen.

☞ Review Stop and Think logs

INCREASE PERSONAL POWER BY CONTROLLING REACTIONS TO OTHERS. STOP AND THINK BEFORE YOU ACT OR YOU MAY DECIDE TO QUICKLY.

Cues to know when angry:

☆

☆

Anger Reducers (Interventions):

✌

✌

Self-Reminders:

☺

☻

Handout #6

68

Week Number Seven

Objectives:

■ Review past weeks

Activity:

☞ Watch movie: "Roc III: Terrence got his gun." Movie is about a middle school boy, who gets frustrated with bullies (gang members) from another school, stealing stuff from him. Makes the decision to bring a gun to school, in an effort to stop them from bullying him.

☞ Following the movie discuss:
        What were other choices Terrence had, if any.
        What were the long term and short term consequences of bringing the gun to
            school.

Week Number Eight
Self-Evaluation

Objectives:

■ Review past weeks.

■ Learn to self-evaluate behavior by judging for themselves how they handled situation. (Hassle Log is a good beginning.)
> Reward self for handling situation well.
> Look at how could have handled situation better.

Activities:

☞ Have group work together to develop a list of self-rewarding and self-coaching statements to use in conflict situations. (i.e.: I really kept cool, I was really in control, I need to pay more attention to my anger cues, I did a great job.)

☞ Have each student complete and color self-reward sheet (Handout #7).

☞ Review *Stop and Think* logs.
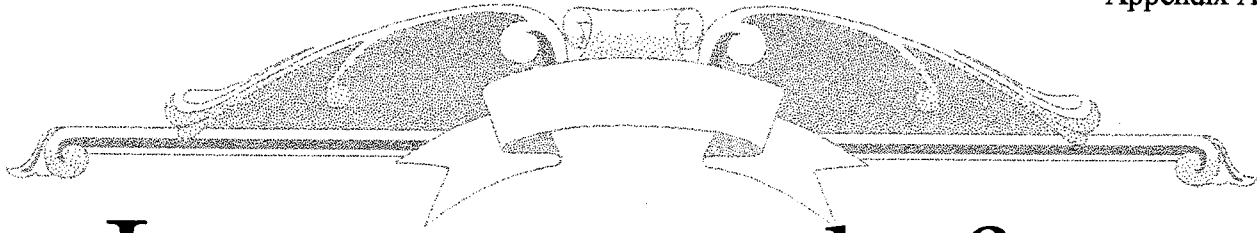
I am so proud of myself because I...

_____

_____

_____

...to peacefully resolve conflict!

Handout #7

Week Number Nine

Objectives:

■ Review: Problems, Recognizing Anger, Stop and Think, Triggers, Interventions

■ Things that we do that make others angry. So far we have been focusing on what to do when someone else makes you angry. For example: Calling someone a name, making fun of someone's appearance, mocking people

Activities:

☞ Try and get an agreement that will try and change one problematic behavior by using thinking ahead procedure. (Eg. If I do this, then this person may get angry and the situation may get out of hand. Long term versus short term consequences.)

☞Role plays situations that intentionally make others angry.

☞ Review Stop and Think logs

Week Number Ten

Objectives:

■ Review previous weeks

Activities:

☞ In groups of two or more create a rap song: with a Nonviolence theme (incorporating skills learned).

Endnotes

1.	Goldstein, A. P. (1988). The prepare curriculum: Teaching prosocial competencies. Champaign, IL: Research Press.

2. See endnote #1

3.	Prothrow-Smith, D. (1987). Violence prevention curriculum for adolescents. Newton, MA: Education Development Center, Inc.

4. See endnote #1

5.	Project Charlie. (1993). Peaceful partners: A violence prevention program. Minneapolis, MN:

6. See endnote #1

7. See endnote #5

Appendix B

Consent Forms

Conflict Resolution Program
Chiron Middle School
Program Consent

Your son/daughter is being invited to participate in a Conflict Resolution program at Chiron Middle School. Your son or daughter was selected by faculty at Chiron Middle school. Please read the following information and if you have any questions please call me, Julie Collins at   . If you agree to allow your son or daughter to participate in this **_program_** and your son or daughter want to participate, please sign below and return in the self-addressed envelope enclosed or return with your child.

The purpose of the program is to assist children in finding ways to decrease levels of individual anger and frustration and to channel these emotions positively through education, recreation and work. If your son or daughter participates in this program, they will be asked to participate once a week for ten, one hour meetings from 1:15pm to 2:15pm.

Group topics may bring up feelings or experiences that are not positive. Please be assured that your child may choose not to discuss any topic that feels uncomfortable without affecting his or her participation in the group and, if needed will be able to continue to process his or her feelings with myself or Sandy Witebsky, School Social Worker, following group meetings.

Your decision and your son or daughter's decision to participate in this program and/or research is completely voluntary and will not affect your current or future relations with Chiron Middle School or Augsburg College. Please know that even if your child would like to participate, without your approval by signing this form, he or she will not be able to participate in this group. You or your child will be free to make the choice at any time during this group to discontinue participation.

Please feel free to contact me, Julie Collins, Social Work Intern, Sandy Witebsky, School Social Worker at 627-3250 or Mike Schock, Ph.D. at 330-1725 who is my Thesis advisor at Augsburg College with any questions you may have regarding this program. I will be at the school on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays throughout the school year.

Thank you for taking the time to read this,

Julie Collins
Social Work Intern

I have read, or have had read to me, the above information. I have asked any questions I have, and have received answers. I give permission for my child to participate in this program.

Signature_____ Date _____

76

Conflict Resolution Program
Chiron Middle School
Research Consent

Your son/daughter is being invited to participate in a Conflict Resolution program at Chiron Middle School. Your son or daughter was selected by faculty at Chiron Middle school. Please read the following information and if you have any questions please call me, Julie Collins at   . If you agree to allow your son or daughter to participate in this *research* and your son or daughter want to participate, please sign below and return in the self-addressed envelope enclosed or return with your child.

The purpose of the research is to evaluate the usefulness of this group for students at Chiron Middle School. For this evaluation, they will be asked to complete a questionnaire, which will be kept secure and confidential, before the group begins and follwoing the last group meeting. In March, they will bae asked to complete a follow up questionnaire on anger management. This information will help me to evaluate their application of skills used to resolve conflict. This research is being conducted by myself, Julie Collins, a graduate student at Augsburg College as part of my Master's Thesis.

Your child's name and any information that could make it possible to identify your child willl be kept secure and confidential. In any report we might publish, there will be no information used that will make it possible to identify your son or daughter.

Your decision and your son or daughter's decision to participate in this program and/or research is completely voluntary and will not affect your current or future relations with Chiron Middle School or Augsburg College. Please know that even if your child would like to participate, without your approval by signing this form, he or she will not be able to participate in this group. You or your child will be free to make the choice at any time during this group to discontinue participation.

Please feel free to contact me, Julie Collins, Social Work Intern, Sandy Witebsky, School Social Worker at 627-3250 or Mike Schock, Ph.D. at 330-1725 who is my Thesis advisor at Augsburg College with any questions you may have regarding this program. I will be at the school on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays throughout the school year.

Thank you for taking the time to read this,

Julie Collins
Social Work Intern

I have read, or have had read to me, the above information. I have asked any questions I have, and have received answers. I give permission for my child to participate in this program.

Signature_____ Date _____

Appendix C

SAA Pretest/Posttest

The Conflict Resolution Pre/Post Assessment

The Conflict Resolution Pre/Post Assessment is designed to measure the degree to which youth use problem-solving and self-control skills. Each youth will be interviewed prior to the commencement of a 10 week conflict resolution group. The youth will respond to each question and responses. A Skill Achievement Scale corresponds to each question in the questionnaire. The Skill Achievement Scale measures the degree to which each youth has responded favorably or achieved specific problem-solving and anger management skills. The interview consists of nine open ended questions.

Directions: Read over the descriptions of the three scale categories. Then, rate the reposes to each question using the Skill Achievement Scale By circling one of the three scale categories. When completed, add up the total number of points in each column. Divide the total number of points by 27. Record the percentage in the space provided.

Scale Categories

Substantially Achieved....Skill is accomplished although further action may need to be taken before full accomplishment is realized.

Partially Achieved....demonstrable progress has been made on the skill but still more work needs to be done. Specific evidence of skill accomplishment is required.

No Achievement....No progress or an impulsive, violent answer is given. No response is given at all. The youth can not give an answer to a question.

Violence Prevention Pre/Post Assessment

Instructions: Read each question slowly and record response in the space provided. After the interview use the Skill Achievement Scale to rate each response.

1) How would you handle this situation?

You are walking down the hallway and someone calls you a name that you don't like.

Response_____

_____

_____

_____

2) How do you know when you are angry?

Response_____

_____

_____

3) When you become angry what are you most likely to do?

Response_____

_____

_____

4) List your own internal triggers.

Response_____

_____

_____

5) List your own external triggers.

Response_____

_____

_____

6) Name positive self-reminders that you could use before you become violent.

Response_____

_____

_____

7) List things that you do on purpose to make people angry?

Response_____

_____

_____

8) List ways (interventions) to reduce your anger.

Response_____

_____

_____

9) Do you intend to use the skills learned?

|_____|_____|

Highly   Might   Highly
Unlikely   Use   Likley

Skill Achievement Scale (Circle Only One)

Question #	Rating Scale		
1	No Achievement 1	Partially Achieved 2	Substantially Achieved 3
2	No Achievement 1	Partially Achieved 2	Substantially Achieved 3
3	No Achievement 1	Partially Achieved 2	Substantially Achieved 3
4	No Achievement 1	Partially Achieved 2	Substantially Achieved 3
5	No Achievement 1	Partially Achieved 2	Substantially Achieved 3
6	No Achievement 1	Partially Achieved 2	Substantially Achieved 3
7	No Achievement 1	Partially Achieved 2	Substantially Achieved 3
8	No Achievement 1	Partially Achieved 2	Substantially Achieved 3
9	Highly Unlikely 1	Might Use 2	Highly Likely 3
Column Scores			
Total Score	///////////////////////////	Total ÷ 21 = score	_____ ÷ 21 = _____%

Appendix D

Key for SAA

KEY for SKILLS ACHIEVEMENT ASSESSMENT

Definition of skills:

Question 1 = Avoidant or de-escalating skills (e.g. Walk away, find mediator).

Question 2 = Checking internal and external cues attached to emotions

Question 3 = Avoidant or de-escalating skills

Question 4 = Checking awareness of internal cues attached to emotions.

Question 5 = Checking awareness of external cues attached to emotions.

Question 6 = Listing three positive self-reminders would be substantially achieved, one to two partially achieved, and listing zero equals no achievement.

Question 7 = Listing three things that they do to make people angry would be substantially achieved, one to two partially achieved, and listing zero would equal no achievement.

Question 8 = Listing three interventions would be substantially achieved, one to two partially achieved, and listing zero would equal no achievement.

Question 9 = Intention to use skills learned rated on a likert scale anchored with highly unlikely and highly unlikely.

Appendix E

Follow-up Test-TAQ

The Aggression Questionnaire

Answer each question reflecting over the past six weeks. Circle on the scale the most appropriate response to the statement: Never, Less than half the time, sometimes, more than half the time or all the time.

In the last six weeks...

1. Once in a while I can't control the urge to strike another person.

Never 1	Less than half the time 2	Sometimes 3	More than half the time 4	All the time 5

2. If "pushed" enough, I may hit another person.

Never 1	Less than half the time 2	Sometimes 3	More than half the time 4	All the time 5

3. If somebody hits me, I hit back.

Never 1	Less than half the time 2	Sometimes 3	More than half the time 4	All the time 5

4. I get into fights a little more than the average person.

Never 1	Less than half the time 2	Sometimes 3	More than half the time 4	All the time 5

5. If I have to be violent to protect my rights, I will.

Never 1	Less than half the time 2	Sometimes 3	More than half the time 4	All the time 5

6. There have been people who have pushed me so far that we came to blows.

Never 1	Less than half the time 2	Sometimes 3	More than half the time 4	All the time 5

7. I can think of no good reason for ever hitting a person

Never 1	Less than half the time 2	Sometimes 3	More than half the time 4	All the time 5

8. I have threatened people I know

Never 1	Less than half the time 2	Sometimes 3	More than half the time 4	All the time 5

9. I have become so mad that I have broken things

Never 1	Less than half the time 2	Sometimes 3	More than half the time 4	All the time 5

In the last six weeks...

10. I told my friend openly when I disagree with them.

Never 1	Less than half the time 2	Sometimes 3	More than half the time 4	All the time 5

11. I often found myself disagreeing with people.

Never 1	Less than half the time 2	Sometimes 3	More than half the time 4	All the time 5

12. When people annoy me, I may tell them what I think of them.

Never 1	Less than half the time 2	Sometimes 3	More than half the time 4	All the time 5

13. I can't help getting into arguments when people disagree with me.

Never 1	Less than half the time 2	Sometimes 3	More than half the time 4	All the time 5

14. My friends say that I'm somewhat argumentive.

Never 1	Less than half the time 2	Sometimes 3	More than half the time 4	All the time 5

In the last six weeks...

15. I flare up quickly but get over it quickly.

Never 1	Less than half the time 2	Sometimes 3	More than half the time 4	All the time 5

16. When frustrated, I let my irritation show.

Never 1	Less than half the time 2	Sometimes 3	More than half the time 4	All the time 5

17. I sometimes feel like a powder keg ready to explode.

Never 1	Less than half the time 2	Sometimes 3	More than half the time 4	All the time 5

18. I am an even-tempered person.

Never 1	Less than half the time 2	Sometimes 3	More than half the time 4	All the time 5

19. Some of my friends think I'm a hothead.

Never 1	Less than half the time 2	Sometimes 3	More than half the time 4	All the time 5

20. Sometimes I fly off the handle for no good reason.

Never 1	Less than half the time 2	Sometimes 3	More than half the time 4	All the time 5

21. I have had trouble controlling my temper.

Never 1	Less than half the time 2	Sometimes 3	More than half the time 4	All the time 5