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ABSTRACT

Many politicians, policy makers, and citizens tend to ignore both the value of prevention and the voluminous research disproving the efficacy of punishment. This study offers a review of historical responses to school violence and discipline and offers some suggestions in these areas. After describing the American penchant for punitive correction, a brief overview of school violence and public policy toward discipline is given. It is argued that, in spite of sensational stories, schools continue to be one of the safer places for children. Next, the causes and cures of misbehavior and the complexity of behavior are explored. Solutions to misbehavior are carefully considered, which include an outline of the Ecological Problem-Solving Matrix, ideas on teacher variance, using a process approach, and insights on emotional maltreatment and sexual harassment. Pupil personnel workers are in a unique position to caution against hasty, simple, solution-driven policies and techniques used to deal with misbehavior, especially when these policies are not based on adequate social science research. Prevention of misbehavior should include clear guidelines and educational programs which sensitize students and faculty to causes and consequences of problem behavior. (Contains 58 references.) (RJM)

Policy and Practice in School Discipline: Past, Present and Future

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During the past 37 years I have become increasingly convinced of the folly of many of our policies toward misbehavior and delinquency (Hyman, 1990a, in press; Hyman & Wise, 1979). Therefore, I would be disingenuous not to share with you my feelings about ever-popular, quick-fix, punishment oriented, solution driven approaches to school discipline.

Many politicians, policy makers and citizens simplify causes and solutions regarding misbehavior. They tend to ignore prevention and the overwhelming research disproving the efficacy of punishment (Bongiovanni, 1979; Skinner, 1979). Yet, based on political, religious and personal grounds, we continually debate the utility of aversive procedures to change human behavior (Altemeyer, 1988; Axelrod & Apsche, 1983; Barnhart, 1972; Greven, 1980, 1991; Hyman, 1990, in press; Larzelere, 1986; Roberts, 1988; Skinner, 1979; Straus & Gimple, 1992). These debates reveal the extent to which we ignore and/or distort social science data and support punitive practices such as corporal punishment, school suspensions and expulsions, and questionable measures such as metal detectors, strip searches, and draconian sentencing for minors. Yet, we fail at preventive measures such as adequate services for early stages of substance by youth, effective gun control, and stemming the proliferation of media violence (American Psychological Association, 1993).

Our views concerning school violence and discipline have been shaped by (1) our own studies and synthesis other's research (Hyman, 1990), (2) our public policy efforts to eliminate physical and psychological maltreatment of students (Hyman, 1989), (3) our recognition of the interconnectedness between punitive religious/political/social/educational policy and student disruption and violence (Hyman & D'Allesandro, 1984; Pokalo & Hyman, 1993), (4) our amazement at the extent to which political campaigns are framed by issues of crime and punishment, (5) our experiences in developing and implementing acceptable, non-punitive disciplinary techniques (Hyman, 1990), (6) our work with the data and staff involved in the Safe Schools project (National Institute of Education, 1978; Hyman & Lally, 1982), (7) what we have learned in a variety of organization development projects too numerous to discuss here (Berkowitz, Hyman & Lally, 1984), and (8) the revelation that **America is the most punitive of all the Western democracies** (Hyman, 1990a, 1994, in press;Hyman & Pokalo, 1992).

America, The Punitive Society

The gradually successful efforts to abolish corporal punishment in schools, a form of violence against students, offers a metaphor for understanding a major cause of so many failures of American policy to prevent misbehavior and delinquency. This struggle illustrates the depth and breadth of Americans' deeply held faith in punishment and lack of support for prevention and habilitation. In the 1994 elections, shaped by obsessive concerns about violence, most politicians ignored the data demonstrating that violence comes from violence (Bandura, 1973; Bongiovanni, 1979; Eron, Walder, & Lefkowitz, 1971; Graziano, A. & Nameste,

1990: Greven, 1980, 1991; Haeuser, 1990; McCord, 1988a, 1988b, 1991). Our recent research demonstrates that many adjudicated delinquents suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder caused by violence in their lives, especially from severe discipline by caretakers (Curcio-Chilton, 1994; Hyman & Gasiewski, 1992).

As pupil personnel workers, we are in a unique position to caution against hasty, quick fix, simple, solution-driven policies and techniques to deal with misbehavior, especially when they are not based on adequate social science research. Our research suggests that (1) discipline is a complex problem (Hyman, 1989a; Hyman & Lally, 1982), (2) there are few simple solutions, (3) there are no data to prove that any one discipline program is always better than other approaches in all situations (Blum, 1994; Hyman & Lally, 1982), and (4) that the best solutions must take into account the total ecology of the school situation (Hyman, Blum, Weiler, et al., in press).

School Violence and Public Policy Toward Discipline

Violence to and by students has always been a part of education in many Western democracies (Finkelstein, 1990; Hyman & Wise, 1979; Moles, 1990). Even ethnic gangs and their conflicts, which spilled over into American schools, are documented as far back as the late 1800's (Finkelstein, 1990). For a variety of political, social and economic reasons, various issue of school violence periodically surface as major crises (Rubel, 1977). The data that we present here indicates that there have been modest increases and decreases of school violence over the last several decades. Large fluctuations in reports may be artifacts of reporting procedures, reflections of larger social problems, and/or

actual increases in certain more violent activities such as shootings. However, schools are not as dangerous as perceived by the public.

Schools Are One Of the Safest Places For Children and Youth

Any school violence is too much, but it is disastrous to make policy on misinterpretation of data. Comparisons of violence in various settings indicate that schools are one of the safest institutions for children. In fact, they are much safer than homes. However, social policy, driven by media scares based on exaggerated and distorted data, political sound bytes about unsafe schools and citizen panic, only drives us deeper into a cycle of increasingly punitive solutions. In response to the current public rhetoric, we have begun a systematic examination of the data on the relative dangers in schools (Hyman, Olbrich & Shanock, 1994). We present only a few examples here.

The Criminal Victimization in the United States Reports (U.S. Department of Justice, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994) indicate that rape, robbery, and assault are more likely to occur in the home than in school. In 1990, 9.8% of violent crimes were on school grounds, while 24.2% occurred in or around the home. In 1993, the percentages remained about the same (12.1% school related and 23.3% home related).

In 1992, approximately 2.9 million children were abused or neglected (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1994). Family members accounted for 91% of the abuses. This resulted in 1068 deaths in 44 reporting States (The National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse estimates 1,260 deaths nationwide).

Death by guns in the schools is too high. Yet, it is inter-

esting to compare the data with deaths in homes. According to the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, 71 gun shot deaths occurred in schools in 1990. In 1993, there were 48 million school children (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1994). Even if the average rate of homicide in school was 1.0/100,000, which is twice as high as any reports we have seen, the total amount of deaths would be 480, which is still much less than in homes.

In 1991, the Texas homicide rate was 15.30 per 100,000 persons (Texas Department for Public Safety, 1993). The Houston homicide rate was 366.50/100,000 (US Bureau of the Census, 1993), while the schools rate was 0.71/100,000 (Houston Independent School District, 1994). The Dallas rate was 48.60 (US Bureau of the Census, 1993) while the school rate was 0.48/100,000 (Dallas Independent School District, Department of Safety and Security, 1994).

Between the academic years of 1992 and 1993, the Los Angeles Public Schools reported three homicides. One of those deaths was accidental (Los Angeles Unified Public Schools-Department of Security, 1994). Los Angeles homicide rate for 1991 was 29.30/100,000 persons (California Department of Justice, Division of Law Enforcement (1993) and for the schools in 1992, it was 0.12/100,000.

The research on aggravated assaults also support the notion that schools are relatively safe environments. In 1991, the aggravated assault rate in Chicago, a highly violent city, was 1502.00/100,000 while in 1992, the public school rate was 325.00/100,000 (Chicago Public Schools, The Bureau of Safety and Security, 1994).

The Causes and Cures of Misbehavior are Complex

The complex causes of school misbehavior, each of which is amply documented in our writings and research, include (1) the size of **birth cohorts**, (2) **family factors** including transgenerational patterns of violent disciplinary techniques or lack of discipline, hereditary conditions which predispose violence, economic stress on families, divorce, child abuse and loss of parental authority, (3) the **political and economic structures of society** which result in financial and work related stress by large groups of people, work related stress, unemployment and lack of recreational activities for large numbers of youth and young adults, the availability of guns designed to kill people rather than game, racism, sexism, drugs, the extolling of violence in the media and in sports and the loss of sense of community in large urban and suburban areas, (4) **school related factors** such as schools which are too large, inadequately funded, overly punitive and/or governed by incompetent principals, and rigidly bureaucratic, and those schools which implement ineffective and inane rules, emphasize competition over cooperation, invade students' rights and provide inadequate numbers of student personnel workers to develop and implement programs of prevention and treatment, (5) **teachers** who are overly punitive, ineffective in classroom management, not trained in the recognition and prevention of students' explosive behavior, unable to provide instruction at appropriate levels for at-risk students, and are psychologically abusive, (6) **peer groups** that are allowed to develop norms and values which are contrary to decent treat-

ment of others, (7) **media** depictions of children and youth happily and successfully aggressing against peers, parents, teachers and other adults and portrayals of inappropriate heroes and anti-heroes, and (8) **students** who have untreated predispositions to violence, poor motivation to meet the demands of schools, and lack of responsibility and appropriate moral behavior toward others.

Obviously, many misbehaviors are relatively straightforward and the solutions easily apparent. However, if this were the case for the majority of problems, we wouldn't have so much concern about school discipline. Solutions, which are too lengthy to discuss here, must include (1) a broad systems/ecological approach, (2) improved pre and inservice discipline training for teachers (Blum, 1994), (3) recognition that there is no one best approach to discipline (Hyman & Lally, 1982; Hyman et al., in press), (4) use of our model of Teacher Variance which recognizes five distinct approaches to discipline and demonstrates that the best approach is the one with which teachers are most comfortable (Hyman et al., in press; Hyman, Lally, Lennox, Marchon, Pokalo, & Klein, 1994), and (5) and use of process approaches (Hyman & Lally, 1984). Following are a few specifics.

Solutions are Multifaceted

Organizational approaches to school discipline and violence offer the best long term solutions. We have developed a model based on a four year discipline and violence prevention project in Trenton, N.J. schools (Pokalo, Hyman & Moore, 1984). This project is too lengthy to describe here, but it is helpful to consider the **Ecological Problem-solving Matrix** which we designed to

approach each discipline problem (Hyman, 1990b). The matrix in Figure 1 is designed to consider various levels of intervention within each system which impacts on a particular misbehavior. Staff identify problems through climate assessment and other organizational development approaches and then brainstorm a comprehensive set of solutions by filling in every cell of the matrix. Then, the real work of implementation begins.

Place Fig. 1 About Here

For instance, in approaching the problem of student gun possession, a primary prevention approach, at the family and school levels, might be curricula informing children of the dangers of handguns. At the secondary prevention level, in the schools, metal detectors might be considered. At the punishment level, within the schools, staff must consider the efficacy of complete expulsion, suspension, or offering the possibility of restitution by the student who brought the gun to school.In addition to a broad based ecological approach we have developed the individually tailored Teacher Variance model.

Teacher Variance

Teacher Variance is based on the assumption, backed by research, that there is no one best way to handle discipline. We believe the reasons for misbehavior may best be understood within the framework of theory and research. Discipline is most effective when the underlying theory is compatible with the individual teacher's belief system, teaching style and personality. Teachers

need to find the discipline orientation with which they are most comfortable. The training, which we have developed during almost fifteen years of presenting all day workshops to teachers, administrators, psychologists, and other child care workers (Hyman, Lally, Lennox, Marchon, Pokalo, & Klein, 1994), helps teachers apply a theory driven approach to practical problems. We don't require them to change their belief systems.

The five orientations of Teacher variance are Behavioral/Cognitive-Behavioral, Psychodynamic/Interpersonal, Humanistic, Ecological/Systems, and Biophysical. Each of these approaches is grounded in a separate body of assumptions about how children's personalities and behaviors develop. Therefore, within a particular system, one derives an understanding of how personality disorders and misbehavior develop and how to treat problems.

Trough the Teacher Variance Inventory-R educators identify their own theoretical orientation to discipline. They learn how to consistently apply the theory to solve discipline problems. When a particular technique, rooted in theory, does not work, they will return to the theory to understand why it didn't work, rather than willy-nilly trying something else.

Teacher Variance does not suggest that educators should know only one theory. The eventual goal for any professional who wants to be the "complete disciplinarian" is to understand all of the approaches, and to be able to use those which are most effective in specific situations. For those teachers who hate theory, we have developed the Process Model.

The Process Approach

In 1982, staff at the NCSCPA published a comprehensive review of the research on the efficacy of discipline training programs used in schools based on a process analysis of 27 programs (Hyman & Lally, 1982). We recently completed an update of that study in which we analyzed 83 popular discipline training programs (Hyman & Dahbany, 1994). In addition, we investigated the nature, extent and depth of discipline training offered by teacher training institutions (Blum, 1994). We briefly summarize some of the results of that study.

Of 467 colleges/universities surveyed, 268 (57%) responded. Of these, 51% offer undergraduate and 35% offer specific graduate courses in school discipline. The most frequently taught models, in descending order are: Applied Behavior Analysis (93%), Assertive Discipline (90%), Reality Therapy (87%), Dreikurs Adlerian Model (76%), Teacher Effectiveness Training (64%), Developmental Discipline (49%), Values clarification (34%), Transactional Analysis (32%), and Systematic Training for Effective Teaching (23%). Theoretical orientations include behaviorism, cognitive behaviorism, psychodynamics, developmentally based discipline, moral development and humanism. Literature on conflict management, effective schools, effective instruction, corporal punishment and ecological management are also taught.

The current process analysis yielded nine clusters of disciplinary techniques used to train teachers. These include: (1) 7 techniques for teachers to give feedback to students, (2) 7 diagnostic strategies for gathering classroom information, (3) 13 school and classroom ecological procedures, (4) 5 approaches to

classroom democracy, (5) techniques to help teachers express various feelings appropriately, (6) 7 therapeutic techniques, and (7) a variety of approaches for involving parents. Teachers are taught these from an ecological perspective.

In our research on school discipline we have found two important but neglected areas which require future research.

Emotional Maltreatment

Emotional maltreatment by educators includes verbal assault, put downs, ridicule, isolation and rejection, punitive sanctions, peer humiliation, and sexual corruption (Brassard, Hart & Germane, 1987; Hyman, 1990a; Leffler, 1988). It consists of (1) discipline and control techniques which are based on fear and intimidation, (2) low quantity of human interaction in which teachers communicate a lack of interest, caring and affection for students, (3) limited opportunities for students to develop competencies and feelings of self-worth, (4) encouragement to be dependent and subservient, especially in areas where students are capable of making independent judgments, and (5) denial of opportunities for healthy risk taking such as exploring ideas that are not conventional and approved by the teacher ((Brassard, Hart & Germane, 1987; Hyman, 1987). All of these deter the development of student self-discipline and may cause disruption and violence.

Many explosive behaviors by students can be traced to histories of emotional maltreatment by educators and/or peers. Based on research with the My Worst School Experience Scale, we believe up to 50% of students have at least one incident of educator induced emotional maltreatment which results in student stress symptoms which may cause of student failure, alienation,

aggression and/or depression (Hyman, 1990, in press). Teacher verbal behavior in confrontive situations may increase, rather than de-escalate a potentially explosive situation, as is demonstrated in our workshop on this topic.

Despite the prevalence of emotional maltreatment in schools, and its potential for creating serious discipline problems, except for our own research (Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers, 1992; Hyman, 1990; Hyman & Weiler, 1994), little has been done. This should be a major priority in research and policy concerning school discipline. We suggest the development of an Emotional Health Audit, followed by in-service training and outcome based data collection through the use of instruments such as our computerized Uniform Discipline Reporting system (Berkowitz, Hyman & Lally, 1984)

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes leering, pinching, grabbing, suggestive verbal comments, pressure for sexual activity, spreading sexual rumors, making sexual or sexist jokes, pulling at another student's clothing, cornering or brushing up against a student in a sexual way, ~~epitaphs~~ epithets referring to students' sexual orientation, date rape, and/or sexual graffiti about a student. In 1993, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) conducted a study of sexual harassment in public schools. Eighty-one percent of student respondents said that they had been sexually harassed. Student-to-student harassment was the most common, accounting for 80% of the harassment, while teachers, custodians and coaches were responsible for 20%.

Sexual harassment is a disciplinary problem because it

creates a hostile learning environment in which victims may become fearful, anxious, withdrawn, angry and or suffer severe loss of self-esteem. Their lack of faith in school authorities' ability to protect them may result in lower academic performance, retaliation, withdrawal from school or acceptance of their role as sexual victims. Considering the extent of the problem, it is poorly addressed. As one fifteen year old girl reported, "Teachers and other students can do it and students don't want to say anything. If I complain to my classmates they will think that I'm full of myself. There's no point."

Prevention of these problems should include clear guidelines and educational programs which sensitize students and faculty to causes and consequences.

Conclusion

It is impossible, in a one hour presentation, to cover over thirty years of research on discipline and school violence. We encourage those interested to contact us at the National Center for the Study of Corporal Punishment and Alternatives, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA 18966 (215-204-6091) for our list of publications, workshops and services. We also offer a Discipline Helpline (same number) if you wish free consultation (you pay for long distance phone charges). Consultants are experienced, advanced clinicians in school psychology who work directly under supervision.

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Figure 1

Problem-solving matrix for School Discipline

Diagnosis category *Levels of intervention*

Home	*Primary Prevention*	*Secondary Prevention*	*Tertiary Prevention*	*Punishment*	*Restitution*
Family structure					
Family power					
Family values					
Other					
Schools					
Organization					
Students and peer groups					
Teachers and teaching					
Other					
Community					
Values					
Control					
Opportunities					
Other					