Chapter 1
School-Related Violence and Prevention: Editorial Introduction

Thomas W. Miller

In 2004, I was invited to serve as guest editor for a special edition of the Journal of Primary Prevention (Miller, 2005). This edition would focus on the prevention of school violence. In September 2005, a special edition of this journal produced a well-received series of articles from a national group of prevention researchers, scholars, and clinicians (Edwards et al., 2005; Thompson & Kyle, 2005). An invitation to broaden the scope and direction of this journal publication has led to this volume. It follows an excellent publication in this series dealing with cross-national and cross-cultural perspectives (Denmark et al., 2006). Our purpose in this volume is to provide to you, the reader, a compendium of papers addressing school violence and the critical ingredients in prevention interventions that contribute to reducing and/or eliminating various forms of violence in the school setting.

There are two major sections to the volume. Initially, we examine the theory, assessment, and an overview of the definition and boundary issues involved in the term “school violence” as used in research and applied prevention programs. The second section presents strategies and interventions for the prevention of school violence. As editor, the first chapter deals with the definition, scope of the problem, and the goals for prevention we have come to know. My esteemed colleague and friend Robert F. Kraus, M.D., joins me in addressing this chapter and the pathway to better understanding the definition, scope, and goals in the prevention of school violence. Robert F. Kraus is Professor of Psychiatry and Anthropology, Associate Residency Director of Training, and former Chair of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Kentucky. His career has involved clinical and academic administration, teaching, clinical practice, and research. Recently, he was the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society for the Study of Psychiatry and Culture. He has served as a mentor and brings a rich understanding of the cultural issues to this definition and scope of the problem for violence in the schools.

In today’s world, it is necessary to have a good understanding of human behavior. For this I turned to a colleague and friend, William P. French, M.D., to address in the next chapter the theoretical issues we need to understand through the neurobiology of violence and victimization. Will is completing his fifth-year residency in the Department of Psychiatry, College of Medicine, University of Kentucky and the Chandler Medical Center, University of Kentucky. Will has brought science and practice together and has focused his professional life on...
developing integrative medical models investigating neurobiological substrates of psychiatric disorders and researching the role of mindfulness-based meditation practices in promoting health and healing in psychiatric practice.

Assessing risk factors is critical to targeting prevention efforts in the schools. **Connie Callahan, Ph.D.**, focuses on the essentials of “threat assessment” in the schools. She holds a doctorate specializing in counseling with a focus on the prevention of school-related violence. She has practiced as a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor and as a university professor with special emphasis on the developing of models of threat assessment in the schools. Dr. Callahan has been instrumental in developing threat assessment modules and presented nationally on the subject.

Communication and information processing is key to prevention efforts. A clinician, colleague, and researcher, **Amy Nigoff, M.S.**, examines communication and information processing as a critical factor in addressing the interrelationships of students, teachers, and school personnel. In her clinical practice, Amy currently works with youth in a state-funded wraparound services program. Her research and clinical interests have focused on the long-term effects of bullying on children and adolescents and how these aggressive styles continue into adulthood. A special focus of interest for her is in identifying effective prevention interventions for children who grow up in a subculture that is accepting of violence.

Understanding moral development is critical. Ken Kyle and Steve Thompson, who have published together previously on this topic, provide an examination of the roles of morality development and personal power within the context of school shootings. **Ken Kyle, Ph.D.**, is an Assistant Professor of Public Affairs and Administration at California State University, East Bay, and currently serves as editor of *Social Problems Forum: The SSSP Newsletter*. He holds an M.A. in Political Science and a Ph.D. in Justice Studies from Arizona State University. His scholarly interests revolve around the application of critical social theories to concrete public policies in the pursuit of social justice. He has published in a variety of academic journals including *Administrative Theory & Praxis, Educational Studies, Humanity & Society, Social Justice*, and *Sociological Practice*. **Stephen Thompson, Ph.D.**, is an applied sociology practitioner at Pennoni Associates, Inc., assisting with technology transfer and policy issues, as well as an Adjunct Instructor in the Department of Sociology, Social Work, and Criminal Justice at Messiah College in Grantham, Pennsylvania. He holds an M.A. in Community Psychology and Social Change from the Pennsylvania State University. A former missionary to the Republic of Haiti, his research interests revolve around the impacts of moral development processes on human behavior. Stephen has published in the *Journal of Primary Prevention* (Thompson & Kyle, 2005), as well as numerous research documents for governmental and private agencies.

Our next chapter addresses a review of the implications for prevention and intervention efforts. To address this area, three colleagues provide a team effort in examining this focus of study. **Noel A. Card, Ph.D.**, is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Family Studies and Human Development at the University of Arizona. He received his Ph.D. in clinical psychology from St. John’s University,