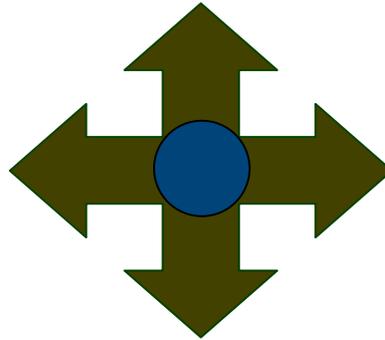

ACAV Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator Evaluation

FINAL REPORT



by

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ACAV Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator Evaluation

FINAL REPORT FALL 2000

Conducted by RESOLVE Alberta¹

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the spring of 1999, the Action Committee against Violence (ACAV) received funding from the Calgary Foundation and the Community Mobilization Program to hire a Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator position. The role of this person is to assist both schools and prevention programs to better co-ordinate their efforts to educate students about violence. Another goal for the new position was to provide leadership for children and youth agencies. The Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator Project began in July 1999.

Notably, however, the first Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator resigned her position in the fall of 1999 after only three months. A second individual stayed in the position for several months, until the current co-ordinator, Doris Toy-Pries, was hired and resumed her responsibilities in January of 2000. The change in personnel had a disruptive effect on the work that could be accomplished, since, in positions such as this that entail a great deal of community liaison and developing collegial relationships, individuals new to the job have considerable initial work to re-do. This lack of continuity in the first year should be kept in mind in considering the results of the evaluation.

Purpose/Objectives of Research

The main purpose of this research was to evaluate the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator project. The research began in September 1999 and data collection concluded in September 2000. As previously noted, this period was by no means a stable one for the position of Co-ordinator, with three changes in personnel, the last and current Co-ordinator, not taking her position until January 2000. This has made it difficult for the research to focus solely on the role of the Co-ordinator.

Furthermore, the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator does not work in isolation. She is supported by the Children and Youth Sub-committee of ACAV that has existed for approximately three

¹ Special thanks to Jennifer Francis, RESOLVE Alberta research assistant

years and a smaller Steering Committee drawn from the larger Subcommittee. As such, it seemed important to include the functioning of this broader network as a focus for the evaluation. In assessing the success of the project, we conducted interviews with key stakeholders who work in the area of youth and/or youth violence prevention. In this phase of the research we limited these individuals to those who have been members of the Children and Youth Subcommittee. The results of the analysis of these interviews follow in the section describing Study I: Qualitative Interviews with Children and Youth Subcommittee Members.

The research also comprised a second component. A number of agencies in Calgary offer school-based violence prevention programs to children and youth from kindergarten to Grade 12. The programs address a variety of issues from how to deal with bullies, conflict resolution, mentoring and strategies to prevent sexual abuse and dating violence. In addition, schools may incorporate their own curriculum on prevention, examples being Safe and Caring Schools, an initiative of the Alberta Teachers Association, and Second Step, a lengthy program developed in Seattle, that is offered by teachers. One of the goals in creating the position of Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator was to co-ordinate the array of prevention programs available in the Calgary community, to be a resource to services including schools to provide information on available programs and to identify gaps in the existing programs.

Schools are one of the main venues in providing children violence prevention information. However, not all schools are aware of these programs, nor do schools always have the resources to afford them. We know very little about how schools currently learn about various prevention programs and what elements they see as important in deciding which programs will be the most appropriate for their students. In order to assist the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator in her role of resource to schools, the Research Advisory Team decided that one component of the evaluation would be to develop a survey to discover more about the manner in which school personnel find out and make decisions about programs and what they see as gaps in the current availability of programs. This survey was sent to all Calgary schools to determine how school personnel learn about violence prevention programs, what elements are important in deciding which programs to access, and what violence prevention programs they have used or are currently using. This component is described more completely in the section labelled Study II: School Survey on Prevention Programs.

Study I: Qualitative Interviews with Children and Youth Sub-committee Members

We conducted individual telephone interviews with 17 members of the Children and Youth Subcommittee with respect to providing violence prevention programs to the youth of Calgary, since members of this group have been closely involved with the initial implementation of the Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator position.

This component used qualitative methodology to assess the experiences of the respondents and their ideas about how the youth violence coordinator position is working and what more could be done to maximize the provision of such prevention programs. The analysis followed accepted practices of content analysis involving identifying prominent themes and sub-themes.

Results

All seventeen interview respondents had participated in the ACAV Sub-committee on Children and Youth. They represented various sectors that work, either peripherally or directly, in the area of youth violence including representatives from seven agencies that provide services for children and youth who may be affected by violence, seven community-based violence prevention programs, one respondent from a Calgary school board, and two representatives from the Action Committee against Violence, one of whom is the current Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator.

Five respondents became involved in the Sub-committee by taking over the responsibility of attending the meetings from a previous staff member from their organization. Three respondents indicated that they had been asked by Sub-committee members to join to lend their expertise. Another three respondents became involved because they felt their particular organization needed to be represented at the meetings and should be involved in the work of the Sub-committee. Two respondents were ACAV staff members, including the current director and the current Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator. Therefore, facilitating the Sub-committee was her responsibility.

The majority of respondents (12 of 17) indicated that their primary objective for attending the Sub-committee meetings was to keep informed of what was happening in the city with respect to youth violence prevention programs. Interviewees were asked, “How well served with violence prevention programs are children attending Calgary schools?” Seven respondents answered by giving a definite answer about whether they thought that children were well served. Three respondents believed that school children are generally well served by violence prevention programs. Although one respondent believed that school children were well served, she was concerned that children not attending schools are being missed and are at increased risk of violence. Similarly, another respondent identified various gaps; concluding that not all school children are well served by violence prevention programs.

Some of the responses about whether children were being well served were in reference to the number of prevention programs available. Responses were inconsistent as to whether this was problematic. Two interviewees indicated that violence prevention programming was inconsistent and that some schools (i.e. high needs schools) have a lot of violence prevention programs while other schools do not.

The most common gap identified in the interviews was that violence prevention programs are not reaching all children and youth (8). Respondents expressed concern that not all schools have access to violence prevention programs. One respondent noted the long waiting lists for good quality programs, attributing this, in part, to that lack of long-term core funding. Because of limited resources, programs simply cannot reach all students. Another identified concern was with the way in which programs are currently being offered in the city. Five respondents claim that programs are being offered in an inconsistent, non-comprehensive and unplanned way. Three respondents were specifically concerned about duplication.

Several respondents were concerned that new programs are “popping up” similar to ones that are already being offered. One respondent claimed that these programs were adding to the confusion of schools choosing violence prevention programs (i.e. already too many programs for schools to choose from). Some respondents also questioned the quality and legitimacy of these new programs.

The most commonly identified strength was the perceived collaboration among violence prevention programs. Four respondents perceived that programs have been more collaborative than in the past and that this has had positive effects, especially in reducing duplication. One respondent claimed that the referral system seems to be flowing much more smoothly. Furthermore, collaboration is not only between violence programs, but also between programs and schools. The interviewees also view the schools as being interested in looking at violence issues. Five research participants commented on the quality of the currently available violence prevention programs.

The Position of Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator

With respect to their expectations about the role of the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator, most respondents had expected her to co-ordinate the various violence prevention programs in the city. The research participants viewed the position as “the link” between community agencies and someone who could assist in the establishment of community collaborations and partnerships. They also saw the person in this position as taking a leadership role and providing direction in the area of violence prevention.

Several respondents also viewed this person viewed as being a central resource for violence prevention program personnel, teachers, and parents. The person in this position would have a strong sense of the various violence prevention programs offered in the city and could act as clearinghouse to share this information with the broader community (i.e. resource inventory). Interviewees hoped that this position would alleviate the pressure on community agencies to know everything that is happening in the area of violence prevention. Respondents also saw this position as responsible for keeping violence prevention agencies abreast of what’s happening in the area of violence prevention (i.e. new programs, current research, and conferences).

Respondents expected the Co-ordinator to establish “best practices” in violence prevention programming. They also expected this position to help identify the major gaps in the system and assisting in the development of programs and initiatives to fill these gaps. With respect to the Subcommittee on Children and Youth, the position of Co-ordinator was viewed as giving the Subcommittee some direction and sustaining the momentum that has taken place so far.

Generally, respondents expressed satisfaction with the work of the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator, although most considered that the goals have not yet been met. Rather, most consider that the goals have been partially met but also are in the process of being met. A number of the interviewees attributed the partial completion of the goals to the problems in staffing the position at the beginning (i.e. three staff changes). The majority of respondents indicated that the current Co-ordinator has moved the Sub-Committee on Children and Youth forward and has started to make some real progress. The Co-ordinator has facilitated good discussions and has established strong relationships with fifty partner agencies. Respondents specifically noted the development of the Strategic Plan, Terms of Reference, and the new Sub-committee structure as being accomplishments of the past year.

In answer to the question, “if the Youth Violence Co-ordinator position were successful over the next several years, how would the provision of violence prevention programs be different?” the most common response was that there would be greater collaboration, co-ordination, and co-operation among violence prevention programs. Seven research participants believed that better co-ordination and

collaboration would improve the provision of violence prevention programs. They mentioned that program duplication would be reduced and existing programs strengthened. New programs would be linked with existing programs to fill identified gaps. Programs would be offered in a more planned and comprehensive way. For example, programs would be more evenly distributed across schools. One respondent hoped that greater collaboration would alleviate issues of competition and territorialism and that information would flow more freely among violence prevention agencies.

Study II: School Survey on Prevention Programs

The Research Advisory Team developed a survey to determine how school personnel learn about prevention programs, and what elements are important in deciding which programs to access. It also asked what violence prevention programs the schools are currently utilizing and what they have utilized in the past. Because several individuals could be involved in the decision-making process, we sent five surveys to each of the 300 public and separate schools in Calgary, as well as a selected number of charter or private schools (20). The surveys were directed to principals with the instructions that it be completed by any school personnel involved in making decisions about introducing prevention programs to the school. The survey data was primarily quantitative in nature and the information was entered into SPSS-PC for analysis. The data analysis consisted primarily of frequency counts and chi-square analyses.

In total, 605 surveys were returned. A similarly high proportion, 69%, from both the public schools (152 of 221) and separate schools (61 of 89) returned at least one survey. Six respondents from only four of the 20 private schools (20%) returned questionnaires. In interpreting the results, it is important to remember that some schools completed and returned multiple surveys. Two schools had 8 and 6 respondents each, the highest proportion; whereas 23 schools had five respondents complete the survey. Thirty-seven schools had 4 respondents, 63 schools had 3 respondents, 43 schools had two respondents, and 48 schools had only one respondent. As such, the majority of schools sent back surveys from two or more respondents.

The survey was intended to be completed by all school personnel who make decisions concerning which violence prevention programs are used, including principals, teachers, counsellors, school resource officers, and parent council members. Within the public and separate school systems, teachers were the largest group who completed the survey (38.7%), followed by principals (27.8%), and assistant or vice-principals (14.5%), counsellors (19.6%), and 21 school resource teachers/officers. The category “other” included 18 individuals such as nurses, support staff and volunteers.

One of the key questions in the survey was the way in which school personnel receive information about prevention programs. This came mostly in the form of endorsements from other professionals (62.6% of respondents), directives from the school board or other administrative staff (50.9%), program personnel contacting the school (49.4%) and past experience with the program (47.2%).

Another key question was whether school personnel experienced problems or in receiving information about violence prevention programs. Forty-one percent of the survey respondents did not answer this question, which could be interpreted as not seeing any problems. Of the 354 individuals who did respond, about half (175) claimed that they did not perceive problems or gaps. However, the other

half (179 respondents) reported that the most common gap was the perceived lack of information available on violence prevention programs (58). Other problems included a lack of co-ordination (18 responses); too many programs to choose from (14 responses); a lack of information about what is effective and appropriate (13 responses) and lack of continuity and consistency (9 responses).

The survey respondents were asked to indicate which of a number of possible program components they see as important. The most commonly endorsed components were that *the program provides a classroom curricula or exercises* and that *the program adapts to children of different developmental levels*. The responses from the elementary schools revealed that the most preferred component was that *the program adapts to different levels of development*. Other preferred components included parent involvement, teachers and parents working together, teacher training, classroom exercises, and that the program has been evaluated. Respondents from high schools, on the other hand, reported no major preferences. The preferred components were: teachers and parents working together, parent information and involvement, and shorter programs. These preferences were not as strong as in the case of elementary schools.

The majority of respondents from all school systems reported having no special budget for violence prevention programs. We asked respondents what range of cost *per pupil* or *per program* do you consider acceptable for a violence prevention program? This question was answered three different ways: cost per pupil, cost per program and qualitatively. In total, 192 (31.7%) of the 605 survey respondents completed this section of the survey. Eighty-four of the 127 (66.1%) respondents from the public school system considered \$ 1-4 *per pupil* an appropriate cost for school violence prevention programs. Thirty-nine of the 62 (62.9%) of the respondents from the separate school system also believed that \$1 to \$4 was appropriate. Two-thirds of respondents considered between \$100 and \$599 an appropriate cost per program per school. Most respondents did not provide a dollar value for violence prevention programs; instead, commenting that they were not able to make such a decision (i.e. it was out of their area of expertise).

We asked how much time schools might allot for staff training. Two hundred thirty eight of the 605 (39.3%) survey respondents answered this questioned quantitatively. Of those 238 respondents, only a small proportion (7.1%) were of the opinion that their school would not be willing to allow any time for teacher training; 72.7% believed that their schools (across all three school systems) would be willing to spend at least one day or less on staff training.

School personnel were asked to identify which programs they have used in the past, which they have considered using and those they are currently using. The programs mentioned most often were Safe and Caring Schools, ACAV's Turn Off the Violence Campaign, Dare to Care: Bully-Proofing your School from Calgary Family Services, Who Do You Tell (Calgary Communities Against Sexual Assault), and Skills for Growing (Lion's Quest).

Finally, the majority of respondents (517 of 605 or 85.5%) answered an open-ended question about what violence –related issues they saw for their school. It should be noted that each could list as many issues as they considered of concern. The individuals tended to answer either by documenting a problem or proposing a solution, usually in the form of a specific program. Of those who identified issues, the overwhelmingly majority of respondents listed bullying as the key problem, either on its own (187 or 36.1%) or in combination (191 or 36.9%) with other forms of verbal harassment/name-calling (160 or

30.1%) or physical aggression (from minor pushing and shoving to fights) (66 individuals or 12.8%). In total, 73% of respondents to this question (378) specifically used the term “bullying”. Some of the other areas such as verbal harassment and intimidation are arguably forms of bullying as well.

Of those who suggested programs to address violence -related issues, 62 recommended conflict resolution, peer mediation or problem solving/decision making workshops; 55 mentioned anger management and 24 suggested social skills or friendship making workshops. A further 17 suggested programs to make schools safe and caring, 13 individuals mentioned the importance of respect and nine mentioned increasing self-esteem.

In summary, very few personnel from Calgary schools identified physical aggression as a serious issue currently. However, most identified the impact of bullying and other forms of harassment on their students as of concern.

Implications of the Results for the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator Position

The survey results confirm what members of the Children and Youth Subcommittee had suspected and commented upon in their interviews. About one-third of the school personnel found the information confusing with respect to both choosing appropriate violence prevention programs, and evaluating what constitutes an effective program. A number of school personnel commented on the fact that they lack the background to assess evaluation results when these are offered and need guidelines as to what to look for in a program that represents best practices. These comments support the need for a central coordinating body to assist school personnel in identifying good available programs from the perspective of the way in which programs address violence prevention issues. The ACAV Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator seems well placed to become a very useful resource for schools in deciding what prevention programs might best meet the needs of their students, and school staff.

The results of the survey with the school personnel were congruent with comments from the members of the Children and Youth Subcommittee. The interviews provided an in-depth view of the perceptions of members of the Children and Youth Subcommittee with respect to the current state of affairs in prevention programming in the city of Calgary. These individuals identified a number of concerns and gaps in terms of which children have access to violence prevention and the manner in which some programs address the issue of violence. Of particular concern was the lack of co-ordination in offering current programs and developing new ones. A number of the programs considered to be strong are hampered by a lack of resources so that few schools can utilize their program each year. Other programs lack long-term funding, having, in fact, to revise their materials in order to gain access to continued funding since such proposals consistently ask for innovation rather than proven efficacy. New programs often emerge without having consulted community agencies with expertise about the issue, or without having identified that the curriculum addresses a gap.

No matter how good the programs in the city, none are offered community-wide and there are some obvious gaps, including programs for youth not in schools, who may be in critical need of such programming. Violence prevention concepts are ideally offered, not only to children, but also to other school personnel, families and communities. Programs need to develop some form of follow-up procedures whether administered by program personnel, or teachers. Similarly, raising awareness of abuse issues without providing treatment for those affected verges on being unethical. Prevention

programs and community agencies need to work in concert so that children who disclose abuse after school-based prevention programs are offered resources immediately. One of the hopes of the Children and Youth Subcommittee respondents is that the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator takes the lead in helping to facilitate and address such problems. The interview respondents have fairly high expectations for what the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator can accomplish; yet most perceive that the goals of the sub-committee are well on the way to being met.

The idea of creating a Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator is novel and continuing its support and evaluation may ultimately result in a model that may be of value to communities across North America. Despite the difficulties that arose because of personnel changes in the pivotal Co-ordinator position, once that became stabilized members of the Children and Youth Sub-committee have noted many improvements in structure and format. There is also an increased excitement about what can be accomplished by working together and supporting the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator in her position.

EVALUATION OF THE ACAV YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION CO-ORDINATOR POSITION

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR RESEARCH

History of the Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator Position²

The Action Committee against Violence (ACAV) was established in December 1991 on the recommendation of the Mayor's Task Force on Community and Family Violence. ACAV's mandate was to implement the 66 recommendations contained in the Task Force Report, in collaboration with existing coalitions and organizations in the community. These projects, including the Calgary Domestic Violence Committee – Protocol Development Project, Alternatives to Violence Education Program and the Calgary Justice Working Project, have encouraged agencies and community groups to work more collaboratively.

In the last five years, a number of innovative programs have been developed to address youth violence in Calgary. While these programs were seen as an important first step, there was a growing concern in the community that a more broader and systematic approach was needed to raise awareness of the existence of these programs; to identify gaps in service and to develop a more coordinated response to youth violence.

In the spring of 1999, the Action Committee against Violence received funding from the Calgary Foundation and the Community Mobilization Program to hire a Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator position. The role of this person is to assist both schools and prevention programs to better co-ordinate their efforts to educate students about violence. Another goal for the new position was to provide leadership for children and youth agencies. The Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator Project began in July 1999.

The co-ordinator is assisted by a Steering committee that meets monthly and consists of representatives of the Children and Youth Subcommittee. The Steering Committee was originally composed of representatives from the Calgary Board of Education, The Calgary Catholic School Board, The Boys and Girls Club Community Services, Calgary Family Services, The Sheriff King Violence Prevention Centre and Sheriff King Home, RESOLVE Alberta and the Action Committee against Violence. The Steering Committee was enlarged in the spring of 2000 to include representatives from the United Way, the Children's Initiative, The Canadian Red Cross, Options – PEACE program and The Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter.

Notably, however, the first co-ordinator resigned her position in the fall of 1999 after only three months. A second individual stayed in the position for several months, until the current co-ordinator, Doris Toy-Pries, was hired and resumed her responsibilities in January of 2000. The change in personnel had a disruptive effect on the work that could be accomplished, since, in positions such as this that entail a great deal of community liaison and developing collegial relationships, individuals new to the job have considerable initial work to re-do. This lack of continuity in the first year should be kept in mind in considering the results of the evaluation.

² Portions of the first two sections were written by Doris Toy-Pries in the final report to the project funders, the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention, Community Mobilization Program

The Subcommittee on Children and Youth

The Children and Youth Violence Prevention Sub-Committee comprises a network of representatives from services intended to meet the needs of all young people in the Calgary community. It was established to create linkages and strengthen relationships between service providers. Another goal has been to raise awareness of the needs of children and youth amongst the different stakeholders and the community.

The Subcommittee on Children and Youth has been meeting since 1997, when it supported the proposal to fund the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator position. Since the position was funded and filled, the Subcommittee has continued as an advisory group to the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator.

In September 1999, with the leadership of the Violence Youth Prevention Coordinator, the Children and Youth Sub-Committee met to explore strategic directions, which resulted in the identification of a vision statement, values, belief and goal statements. The participants identified seven core areas as important work for the future.

In January 2000, the Steering Committee met to fine-tune the planning framework, building on the work previously completed by the larger Subcommittee on Children and Youth. The tasks included rewriting some of the foundational statements from the previous strategic planning session into results-focused statements in accordance with the “Accountability Planning Model” used by all ACAV sub-committees. In March 2000, the entire Children and Youth Sub-Committee met to ensure the steering committee’s planning framework was consistent with the direction provided in September 2000. In May 2000, the Terms of Reference draft document was brought to the Steering Committee for review. The Terms of Reference were finalized and approved by the community stakeholders in June 2000. This process helped identify existing services, priorities, current gaps and emerging trends in service in order to establish short and long-term goals for the Children and Youth Subcommittee. The priorities and areas of focus established by the committee are as follows:

- To build awareness and education on issues of violence to assist the prevention of violence.
- To challenge the community and media to take responsibility to provide the necessary supports to ensure that children and youth are healthy, caring and contributing citizens.
- To provide leadership in the community (i.e. stakeholders) in program planning, development and assistance in accessing appropriate resources for the prevention and intervention of youth violence.
- To facilitate participation and contribution of community members (i.e. stakeholders and leaders) who are committed to working collaboratively toward the prevention and intervention of youth violence.

The process endorsed the Children and Youth Sub-Committee’s mission as playing a leadership role in the community by providing support and resources to communities and schools in preventing violence in the lives of children and youth. In the following year (2000-2001), the Children and Youth Sub-

Committee will be working on implementing these goals. The Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator will facilitate this process by structuring meetings and the formation of sub-committees to focus on more specific goals and will remain as a resource to the group.

RESOLVE Alberta

This research was conducted by RESOLVE Alberta, a family violence research institute based at the University of Calgary. RESOLVE Alberta is part of a tri-provincial research institute with additional offices in Manitoba (at the University of Manitoba) and Saskatoon (The University of Saskatchewan). Funding for the evaluation component was from the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention Community Mobilization Fund. The functioning of RESOLVE Alberta has been greatly assisted by receiving external funding from the Partnership Program of the National Crime Prevention Program of Justice Canada. Other resources include a yearly grant from the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Calgary.

Purpose/Objectives of Research

The main purpose of this research was to evaluate the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator project. The research began in September 1999 and data collection concluded in September 2000. As previously noted, this period was by no means a stable one for the position of Co-ordinator, with three changes in personnel, the last and current co-ordinator, not taking her position until January 2000. This has made it difficult for the research to focus solely on the role of the Co-ordinator.

Furthermore, since the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator does not work in isolation, but is supported by the Child and Youth Sub-committee that has existed for approximately three years, and a smaller Steering Committee drawn from the larger Subcommittee, it seemed important to include the functioning of this broader network as a focus for the evaluation. As such, in assessing the success of the project, we conducted interviews with key stakeholders who work in the area of youth and/or youth violence prevention. In this phase of the research we limited these individuals to those who have been members of the Children and Youth Subcommittee. The results of the analysis of these interviews follow in the section describing Study I: Qualitative Interviews with Children and Youth Subcommittee Members.

The research also comprised a second component. In the aftermath of the recent shooting deaths of students at school in Colorado and Alberta, youth violence prevention programs have been identified as one potential avenue to address and, hopefully, prevent future such tragedies. A number of agencies in Calgary offer school-based violence prevention programs to children and youth from kindergarten to Grade 12. The programs address a variety of issues from how to deal with bullies, conflict resolution, mentoring and strategies to prevent sexual abuse and dating violence. In addition, schools may incorporate their own curriculum on prevention, examples being Safe and Caring Schools, an initiative of the Alberta Teachers Association, and Second Step, a lengthy program developed in Seattle, that is offered by teachers. One of the goals in creating the position of Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator was to co-ordinate the array of prevention programs available in the Calgary community, to be a resource to services including schools to provide information on available programs and to identify gaps in the existing programs.

Schools are one of the main venues in providing children violence prevention information. However, not all schools are aware of these programs, nor do schools always have the resources to afford them. We know very little about how schools currently learn about various prevention programs and what elements they see as important in deciding which programs will be the most appropriate for their students. In order to assist the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator in her role of resource to schools, the Research Advisory Team decided that one component of the evaluation would be to develop a survey to discover more about the manner in which school personnel find out and make decisions about programs and what they see as gaps in the current availability of programs. This survey was sent to all Calgary schools to determine how school personnel learn about violence prevention programs, what elements are important in deciding which programs to access, and what violence prevention programs they have used or are currently using. This component is described more completely in the section labelled Study II: School Survey on Prevention Programs.

STUDY I: QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

Method

We conducted individual telephone interviews with members of the Children and Youth Subcommittee with respect to providing violence prevention programs to the youth of Calgary, since members of this group have been closely involved with the initial implementation of the Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator position. The choice to be involved in the research or not was entirely confidential. Those who chose not to participate were notified that this would not affect their involvement with the Children and Youth Subcommittee, the Youth Violence Coordinator position or ACAV in any way.

This component used qualitative methodology to assess the experiences of the respondents and their ideas about how the youth violence coordinator position is working and what more could be done to maximize the provision of such prevention programs. The analysis followed accepted practices of content analysis involving identifying prominent themes and sub-themes.

Results

Study Participants

All seventeen interview respondents had participated in the ACAV Sub-committee on Children and Youth. They represented various sectors that work, either peripherally or directly, in the area of youth violence including representatives from seven agencies that provide services for children and youth who may be affected by violence, seven community-based violence prevention programs, one respondent from a Calgary school board, and two representatives from the Action Committee against Violence, one of whom is the current Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator.

1. How did you become involved in the ACAV Sub-Committee on Children and Youth?

Five respondents became involved in the Sub-committee by taking over the responsibility of attending the meetings from a previous staff member from their organization. Three respondents indicated that they had been asked by Sub-committee members to join to lend their expertise. Another three respondents became involved because they felt their particular organization needed to be represented at the meetings and should be involved in the work of the Sub-committee. Two respondents were ACAV staff members, including the current director and the current Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator. Therefore, facilitating the Sub-committee was her responsibility.

2. (a) *What was/is the nature of your involvement in the Sub-committee?*

The respondents had been involved in the Sub-committee on Child and Youth for varying time periods. Eight had been involved for two years or more. Two joined the Sub-committee fairly recently; of these, one indicated that their agency had been involved previously. The majority of respondents (11 out of 17) indicated that they attend the meetings regularly. Three respondents claimed that their involvement has been irregular because of overwhelming work responsibilities. This was especially true for staff from smaller agencies.

(b) *What did you hope to accomplish by attending the Sub-committee meetings?*

The majority of respondents (12 of 17) indicated that their primary objective for attending the Sub-committee meetings was to keep informed of what was happening in the city with respect to youth violence prevention programs.

Four respondents mentioned that they saw their attendance as important because they wanted to become part of a collective movement where the stakeholders share a common vision for violence prevention programming:

“It’s really good for me to touch base with others and to find out what’s going on in the city and to kind of have a collective sense that we are all moving together towards the same thing.”

“It really gives you a sense that you are not working alone...that many programs are working collaboratively towards more peaceful environments for youth.”

“I would like to see us having an intentional network of violence prevention...so that programs are working together and towards common goals. Ideally, I would love to see us all contribute to common indicators.”

Three respondents’ objectives for attending were as a venue for their agency to inform other organizations about their particular program and to possibly gain referrals:

“To help people understand what our agency does so people will get to know us and possibly refer to us”

“By attending the meetings, people became more familiar with what [our agency] was doing – we were very isolated”

“To find out about other programs and find out about agencies in the city that could make referrals to our program”

Other expectations included reducing duplication, preventing programs from “reinventing the wheel”, reducing “turf” issues and territoriality, advocating for non-mainstream youth, and as a means to collectively address funding issues. One respondent indicated the hope that participating on the Sub-committee would repair previously strained relationships with other community organizations. Another respondent indicated that their main objective for attending the Sub-committee meetings was simple – *“to reduce the violence in the lives of kids.”*

The degree of involvement varied among the respondents. Many respondents indicated that their expectation for sitting on the Sub-committee was so they could be actively involved in the decision-making that was taking place. On the other hand, one respondent said that her intention was to primarily “sit and listen” and gather information to take back to her organization (one that does not specifically deal with youth violence).

Overall, the respondents seemed to be attending the meetings for very similar reasons – to be kept abreast of violence prevention within the city and to enhance the collaboration among programs.

2. (c) Were you able to accomplish those goals by attending the Sub-committee meetings?

Only seven respondents answered this particular question. Because the interviewer asked all three questions in this section at the same time, respondents may have been confused about the last question or may have forgotten it.

Five of the seven respondents articulated that their goals of learning about new programs and informing others about their own particular program were met. These individuals were able to network with other organizations and get a better sense of what was happening in violence prevention:

“Definitely, it [attending the Sub-committee meetings] gave me a better feel of what’s happening in the city and to touch base with people and to network.”

“I think that we gained that knowledge...we found out a lot about the agencies.”

“I felt like I have benefited from those [Sub-committee meetings] and [I am] getting a better sense of whom [is] out there.”

Several of the respondents noted goals that have not yet been achieved including getting the Sub-committee to look at non-mainstream youth populations and reducing turf issues. However, the interviewees believed that these goals were in the process of being met.

The remaining two respondents expressed concern that they saw was no real direction or purpose for the Sub-committee:

“It [Sub-committee meetings] tended to be a time when people came together and talked about what was going on in their agencies. I think there was a general discontent with that process.”

Nevertheless, even these respondents noted an improvement since the recent adoption of the Terms of Reference and the new Sub-committee structure.

3. How well served with violence prevention programs are children attending Calgary schools?

Seven respondents answered by giving a definite answer about whether they thought that children were well served. The remaining ten respondents, instead commented on the general gaps in the current system which will be discussed in Question # 4.

Three respondents believed that school children are generally well served by violence prevention programs:

“I think the kids involved in school programs are pretty well served.”

“I think they are well served in terms of numbers.”

Although one respondent believed that school children were well served, she was concerned that children not attending schools are being missed and are at increased risk of violence (this gap will be discussed in more detail in Question # 4). Similarly, another respondent identified various gaps (see Question # 4); concluding that not all school children are well served by violence prevention programs.

Several respondents commented that they see a mix of good and poor quality violence prevention programs currently operating within Calgary schools. Three respondents consider that children attending schools are moderately well served. Only one individual believed that the programs that are currently offered are consistently good.

Four respondents who do not work in the area of violence prevention were unsure about how well school children are being served by violence prevention programs.

Some of the responses about whether children were being well served were in reference to the number of prevention programs available. Responses were inconsistent as to whether this was problematic. Two interviewees indicated that violence prevention programming was inconsistent and that some schools (i.e. high needs schools) have a lot of violence prevention programs while other schools do not.

“I think there are a lot of programs, but I would have to say that I am not sure that the average kid has access to them.”

One interviewee noted a definite increase over the last two years in violence prevention programming. Three other respondents commented that there were many programs being offered.

“My sense from my experience with ACAV is that there are a lot of services in place, especially in the educational kind of pieces. My sense is there’s a lot of school-based programs.”

“I think there are a lot of violence prevention programs out there.”

However, two respondents were definite that we need more programs as not all students are currently being reached.

“I think some schools have lots of services...higher needs schools have lots...but not all schools have violence prevention programs...some schools do not perceive problems with violence – that they don’t need it”

“I think there is always a need for more. So I definitely think there is room for a lot more but we have to be very conscience and aware of what’s going on before programs expand.”

Although these respondents were concerned about a lack of violence prevention programming, they believed that already-existing programs should be expanded rather than developing new ones.

4. Do you see any gaps or problems with the violence prevention programs currently offered in the city?

The most common gap identified in the interviews was that violence prevention programs are not reaching all children and youth (8). Respondents expressed concern that not all schools have access to violence prevention programs. One respondent noted the long waiting lists for good quality programs (i.e. CCASA’s “Who Do You Tell” program currently has a two year wait list), attributing this, in part, to that lack of long-term core funding. Because of limited resources, programs simply cannot reach all students.

“Programs don’t have enough funding to reach all of the youth.”

“There are limited resources, so I suspect that, like us, other programs don’t access all the schools in the city.”

Three respondents were concerned that violence prevention programs only target certain children and youth, thereby ignoring others. Two of the interviewees mentioned that students in junior high schools are less well served. Two other respondents believe that not only the perpetrators and victims of violence should be targeted but also observers or bystanders of violence.

“I think another problem is that we typically target just a few kids.”

“The value of teaching a whole class about violence prevention – it’s a community affair, not something that needs to be targeted to the bullies. Because it’s segregating those people out, you are ignoring the other half of the potential solution”

Two respondents expressed concern that specific populations of youth are being missed, namely youth that are not attending schools (i.e. street youth); and those youth that are not part of the mainstream or dominant culture (i.e. immigrant and gay/lesbian youth):

“My concern is with kids who aren’t attached to anything. There are lots. There is no way for them to get the programs. That’s sad, because they are most vulnerable to violence – not only

perpetrating themselves in terms of survival but also being victims of violence because they have no home to go to.”

“I think there’s a lot of school-based programs so I think there are a lot of kids who don’t fit that profile – that aren’t going to school. We work a lot with street kids – kids who are on the margin of having very minimal guardians around. They are as young as 15 and 16 so I think they get missed a lot.

Another identified concern was with the way in which programs are currently being offered in the city. Five respondents claim that programs are being offered in an inconsistent, non-comprehensive and unplanned way.

“programs seem disjointed...they are not well-thought out”

“we need consistency among programs...all schools should be getting the same programs”

“I think it’s just the comprehensiveness and the co-ordination.”

“The co-ordination... I think it needs to be looked at.”

Three respondents were specifically concerned about duplication.

“I think there is a lot of duplication in the agencies and we are all chasing the same dollar...the wheel has been reinvented many times and it’s been done with a different slant to it. It’s a little frustrating to see so much money spent when there are already programs out there.”

“duplication of programs will happen more and more...programs are jumping on the bandwagon because of funding”

Interestingly, one respondent held a contrary view on the duplication of services:

“I’m a big fan of duplication. If we have more going on in the schools then that’s okay. The whole advertising world is based on redundancy. You say the whole thing over and over again in as many different ways as possible. Eventually, the message gets through .If you have twenty people saying the same thing then that’s okay – so maybe there would be an increase in redundancy.”

Several respondents were concerned that new programs are “popping up” similar to ones that are already being offered. One respondent claimed that these programs were adding to the confusion of schools choosing violence prevention programs (i.e. already too many programs for schools to choose from). Respondents also questioned the quality and legitimacy of these new programs.

“there are a lot of new programs popping up in the schools...they are confusing the schools...they’re also confusing other agencies.”

“new programs haven’t researched what is already going on in the community”

“programs are marketing themselves as experts, but they are not experts within violence prevention.”

“[appropriate] organizations are not being accessed for their input and expertise [when developing new programs]

Several interviewees were concerned about the quality of available programs (this contradicts the views of some of the comments in the subsequent section.) One individual voiced a concern for prevention programs that discuss forms of abuse but do not deal with or deal poorly with disclosures from students.

“we need to be responsible for programs that go into the schools because some of them don’t deal with disclosures...so I think we as a community agencies need to be more responsible in that – in getting the right information and the adequate information and how it is implemented correctly to schools and to students.”

Respondents believed that funding priorities should be developed so that moneys can be directed at the gaps in service and to expand existing quality programs.

“programs don’t have enough funding to reach all of the youth. “

One respondent raised a question about people’s ability to choose quality violence prevention programs, noting that schools are often inundated with violence prevention programs and have neither the time nor expertise to make informed decisions:

“the end user doesn’t know enough about the programs to make a conscious decision about which one they want to use”

Several respondents expressed concern that the provision of violence prevention programs should be more holistic. In their view, violence prevention messages should be delivered to the family and the community, not just schools.

“We need to look at it from a cultural perspective – violence in the home, violence in the media. A violence prevention program which focuses on the school is limited in its ability to address that.”

“I think it needs to penetrate their families and their schools with everybody involved”.

Three respondents were concerned that many violence prevention programs are short-term and offer little or no follow-up to schools. These respondents expressed the need for longer-term services for youth:

“The real challenge is to develop a partnership with the school that has a long-term relationship. I question the value of somebody going in and delivering the one or two hour program and leaving and never coming back.”

“No long-term services for kids – most programs are like our in that they are time-limited: a certain number of weeks and then they are over. We really see that kids are looking for something that’s more maintenance focused so that they can continue working on the issues.”

Similarly, several individuals noted the need to offer services for children who are the victims of violence that they may disclose after participation in a school-based prevention programs:

“[we need] programs for victims of violence. We certainly identify that when kids are victimized they need support and help as well as help in working through their feelings so that they don’t become perpetrators in the future.”

Another respondent expressed concern about the lack of program evaluation.

“are programs measuring their outcomes?”

In summary, the respondents identified an number of important issues with respect to the manner in which some prevention programs are currently being offered, how some new ones are developed, and the lack of resources that results in a patchwork of programs that cannot be administered to the entire community.

5. What do you see as the major strengths of the violence prevention programs currently offered in the city of Calgary?

The most commonly identified strength was the perceived collaboration among violence prevention programs:

“I think that most of them [community agencies] are working together. It appears that way in Calgary anyway that most agencies have taken a very collaborative approach, which is great because it would be horrible to see a more competitive approach.”

“The women’s shelters working together, the domestic violence committee working together...children and youth programs that offer violence prevention are more collaborative...they seek each other’s expertise.”

“I think that we’re beginning to work much better together in terms of collaborative relationships.”

“It feels like people are communicating better than they ever did.”

Four respondents perceived that programs have been more collaborative than in the past and that this has had positive effects, especially in reducing duplication. One respondent claimed that the referral system seems to be flowing much more smoothly. Furthermore, collaboration is not only between violence programs, but also between programs and schools. The interviewees also view the schools as being interested in looking at violence issues.

“I think schools are very excited that there are these programs available to them and often quite eager to take advantage of them.”

“a strength is that a lot of them want to get into the schools...that they want to work with the teachers inside the schools.”

Five research participants commented on the quality of the currently available violence prevention programs:

“I think the ones out there are great.”

“there are some excellent programs that address different types of violence”

“I think, by and large, they provide kids with good information.”

The respondents also commented on seeing a strong commitment among violence prevention programs and schools to address youth violence, especially those members of the Sub-committee on Children and Youth:

“They really want this to go somewhere – they really want Calgary to be a safe place. I think they’ve been really creative in the programs they’ve developed and the partnerships that have come out of that committee.”

Another commonly identified strength was that the message of violence prevention is getting out in the community. Representatives from community organizations are beginning to recognize that youth violence is a serious social problem that must be addressed.

“They [violence prevention programs] talk about violence. They break the silence.”

A final strength noted by the respondents is the ability of violence prevention programs to take a broader look at violence issues. For example, many programs have begun to address school climate. The audience or target of violence prevention programs has broadened; parents and teachers are becoming more actively involved in the delivery of programs and programs are beginning to provide information about bystanders or observers of youth violence and how they can help victims.

In summary the respondents mentioned a number of positive features about both the quality of some of the currently available programs and the way in which they are being offered more comprehensively in the city.

6. (a) When the position of the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator was funded, what did you see as its role? What did you hope the position could accomplish?

Most of the respondents had expected the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator to coordinate the various violence prevention programs in the city. The research participants viewed the position as “the link” between community agencies and someone who could assist in the establishment

of community collaborations and partnerships. They also saw the person in this position as taking a leadership role and providing direction in the area of violence prevention.

“I saw this person as co-ordinating this effort to bring more resources to the problem, to bring funders into the discussion, to help us work together, which is not an easy thing to do.”

“Someone who could co-ordinate all these programs”

Several respondents also viewed this person viewed as being a central resource for violence prevention program personnel, teachers, and parents. The person in this position would have a strong sense of the various violence prevention programs offered in the city and could act as clearinghouse to share this information with the broader community (i.e. resource inventory). Interviewees hoped that this position would alleviate the pressure on community agencies to know everything that is happening in the area of violence prevention. Respondents also saw this position as responsible for keeping violence prevention agencies abreast of what’s happening in the area of violence prevention (i.e. new programs, current research, and conferences). As the interviewees stated:

“somewhat of a central resource...I feel that Doris really has a handle on what’s happening in the city. And that really alleviates a lot of the pressure on the specific programs to know all of that information.”

“primarily to have a strong community map of what the violence prevention programs are”

“someone that a parent could phone...could direct parents with their questions”

Respondents saw the Co-ordinator as establishing “best practices” in violence prevention programming. They also expected this position to help identify the major gaps in the system and assisting in the development of programs and initiatives to fill these gaps.

With respect to the Sub-committee on Children and Youth, the position of Co-ordinator was viewed as giving the Sub-committee some direction and sustaining the momentum that has taken place so far.

“Someone to give direction to the Sub-committee meetings because it was going nowhere”

“someone who is in a paid position to help facilitate the [Sub-committee] meetings...to ensure that minutes are being taken and things are getting done.”

Further, the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator was seen as someone who could assist in establishing funding priorities and reducing duplication among programs. One respondent hoped that the Co-ordinator would bring additional funders to the table. Another respondent hoped that this person could alleviate the turf or territoriality issues that currently exist between some violence prevention programs:

“I saw its role as facilitating the coalition and to help do the community development work that needs to be done around the turf issues.”

(b) Have these goals been met?

Generally, respondents expressed satisfaction with the work of the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator, although most considered that the goals have not yet been met.

“I think Doris is doing a wonderful job. I think she has one of the most difficult jobs imaginable...she already reaches out and she really is very conscious that there are many people involved and she’s very much a process-oriented person and very focused on inclusion. I don’t have any criticism at all.”

Rather, most consider that the goals have been partially met but also are in the process of being met. A number of the interviewees attributed the partial completion of the goals to the problems the position experienced at the beginning (i.e. three staff changes):

“the position struggled in the beginning but we have the right person in the position now and we are seeing some momentum building”

“I think because of the problem with the changing of the co-ordinators, neither one of the other two were there long enough to really get things happening, but now I think the present co-ordinator is really working hard to do this and I think things are really starting to happen.”

The majority of respondents indicated that the current Co-ordinator has moved the Sub-Committee on Children and Youth forward and has started to make some real progress. The Co-ordinator has facilitated good discussions and has established strong relationships with fifty partner agencies. Respondents specifically noted the development of the Strategic Plan, Terms of Reference, and the new Sub-committee structure as being accomplishments of the past year.

“Doris has done a very good job with working with the Strategic Plan and moving the committee itself beyond what it was doing”

“I have really been happy with the change over the last couple of months. It seems like it’s more on track.”

Two respondents indicated that the goals of the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator position have not yet been met. Again, these respondents attributed this to the problems that the position struggled with at the beginning.

“They haven’t been met yet, but I think they have come a long way since last year.”

“No, not even close. Because of the three staff within about six months, really we have a six month project instead of a one year project to evaluate.”

A final respondent, whose hope was that that the Co-ordinator would work with some programs that are competitive and where relationships are strained, does not see this as having yet been accomplished:

“From my perception the community development piece hasn’t been met as much.”

However, one respondent’s comments summarize the majority of those expressed in the interview:

“I think it has accomplished what I hoped it would. It has brought people together, brought agencies and programs together and has given us an opportunity to share and start some dialogue and start moving in a direction together.”

(c) Do you think these goals were realistic?

Three respondents were unsure if the goals were realistic. As one individual commented:

“I’m not sure, but we need to try and make a difference – one step at a time. I think it’s building awareness and then with more awareness the objectives will be achieved.”

Although, the respondents acknowledged the large task confronting this position, most considered the goals realistic especially over the initially specified period of time of three years.

“...it depends on the time frame. Within a three year frame, these goals are quite realistic.”

“In three years...I think in three years if we can’t bring the funders to the table, if we don’t have a plan to work together, if we don’t have people doing that broad-based prevention as well as crisis intervention, the I don’t think we’ve done anything.”

(d) Is there anything about the process you would have changed?

The most common response had to do with the initial changes in the Co-ordinator position (i.e. three staff changes). This had a serious impact on the work of both the Co-ordinator and the Children and Youth Sub-committee.

“I think the change of the co-ordinators set back the program so that I would have changed.”

“I wished we could have avoided the problems at the beginning regarding the position because I was concerned it would impact the credibility of that position. It was a huge challenge for Doris – to be the third co-ordinator and handle the scepticism in the community.”

“We have had three co-ordinators since the very beginning and that inconsistency has really posed some challenges for all of us.”

Some respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the original Sub-committee process, indicating that there was little direction or clarity in the role or purpose of the Sub-committee. Other members who had joined the Sub-committee fairly recently expressed frustration because they did not know the history:

“...provide a history to newcomers of the Steering Committee – without it was confusing and we had to keep going over old material because of the newer people...this was frustrating for on-going members”

One respondent, who had joined after the Strategic Planning was completed, commented that members did not like being assigned a list of tasks about which they were not given any say. Although this caused some initial discomfort, the respondent found that the Sub-committee worked through it. Another interviewee found the strategic planning process confusing and overwhelming:

“If you missed one chunk it was really hard to catch up and understand what was happening and the evolution of things. So that was somewhat overwhelming, I guess. We all have a lot on our plates to begin with and then to be involved in that process was quite demanding.”

In general, respondents thought that the spring 2000 restructuring of the Sub-committee was a positive and much-needed step.

“I think that was a terrific move because it really alleviates some of the pressure to attend meetings all the time.”

“The group was divided into a Steering Committee as well as the larger groups who would meet quarterly throughout the year. I think that was a necessary and very productive move, so I’m feeling much more confident that our initial goals are starting to be met with this new set-up.”

“I would have implemented the Steering Committee right from the very beginning. It feels much more focused and productive. I think people were getting really lost.”

“It seemed like we [original Sub-committee] were spinning our wheels. There was nothing really accomplished other than this little get-together of people with common interests. The Sub-committee, itself, didn’t seem to have any meaning...we were a bit rudderless. Since then they have struck a Steering Committee and since it has been meeting, we are going to have some objectives that we will work toward.”

The development of the Terms of Reference was also viewed as positive step as it provided the Sub-committee with a clearer direction.

Three respondents commented on the Sub-committee membership. One suggested that additional agencies serving “non-mainstream” youth should be represented (i.e. EXIT, Hera). Another respondent thought that the “larger” players, such as the CRHA and Calgary Rocky View Child and Family Services should be involved. A third interviewee was concerned that:

“...anybody can walk in the door and become a member of the Steering Committee. I would like a structure where people sit on [the] Steering Committee for a year and [those] people who have been there for a long time step away and somebody else should [become] involved.”

7. If the Youth Violence Co-ordinator position were successful over the next several years, how would the provision of violence prevention programs be different?

The most common response was that if successful, there would be greater collaboration, co-ordination, and co-operation among violence prevention programs. Seven research participants believed that better co-ordination and collaboration would improve the provision of violence prevention programs. They mentioned that program duplication would be reduced and existing programs strengthened. New programs would be linked with existing programs to fill identified gaps. Programs would be offered in a more planned and comprehensive way. For example, programs would be more evenly distributed across schools. One respondent hoped that greater collaboration would alleviate issues of competition and territorialism and that information would flow more freely among violence prevention agencies.

“...Anti-violence programs would work much more together than they do now. There wouldn’t be [the] repetition of overlapping services. If we were better co-ordinated as a group, we could tap into that money better and not be “reinventing the wheel” all the time.”

Six respondents believed that a successful Youth Violence Co-ordinator position would mean that community, agencies, and the general public would have a greater sense of what programs are available and would know how to access these programs. Specifically, schools would no longer be inundated with programs or confused about which programs to use. In addition, respondents spoke about having a central resource for information pertaining to violence prevention:

“[The Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator position] would be the first person that people would turn to if they wanted to know what was going on.”

“...[there] would be one place where a person who was wanting information [or] resources could go to seek that...as agencies and services, we could also get information and if we had projects then we would be able to find out whether we were reinventing the wheel and find out what others are doing and benefit from each other’s knowledge and skills.”

In addition to the Youth Violence Co-ordinator being a central resource, one respondent suggested developing a catalogue of the available violence prevention programs that could be broadly disseminated:

“...some kind of catalogue after studying all of the programs and this catalogue would be available to the end user, like the participants of the school, the counsellors, and the community leaders who were looking for something – they could look at that catalogue and say, ‘Now this is a program that appears to suit the problem we have.’ I think that would be the difference.”

Four respondents suggested bringing funders on board so that stable funding and funding priorities could be established. Further, funding priorities need to be established so that good quality programs can continue to operate and programs filling gap areas could be funded.

“Priority programs [would be] funded. Easy or high profile [programs] would not get funded... but there is actually a plan and there are priorities that are need to address gaps in service and that [the] community of stakeholders needs to actively participate in that plan.”

“I think we would have funders saying to people who ask for dollars for violence prevention that they would first go through our committee so that we would be saying yes this is needed or no, this doesn't really fit in with our strategy for the city.”

Interviewees also hoped that violence prevention programs would reach a greater audience: all programs would be available to all students and schools; a greater diversity of children and youth would be reached; and wait lists would be eliminated. Others suggested that the Youth Violence Co-ordinator position would provide leadership in providing research and information in the community, as well as developing a “best practice” model. Two respondents imagined that there would be more program evaluations conducted by violence prevention agencies.

Summary of Study I

The interviews with seventeen members of the Child and Youth Subcommittee provided in-depth and varied perspectives of the current availability and functioning of school-based violence prevention programs in the city of Calgary, the role of the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator, and what might be expected from this position in the next two years of the project. Although the fact that Doris Toy –Pried, the Co-ordinator came late to the process, by the time the interviews were conducted in the summer of 2000, there was general agreement from members of the Children and Youth Subcommittee, that their hopes for change were slowly being realized and that the Steering Committee and Child and Youth Subcommittee seemed to be working together much better than previously.

STUDY II: SCHOOL SURVEY ON PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Method

The Research Advisory Team developed a survey to determine how school personnel learn about prevention programs, and what elements are important in deciding which programs to access (see Appendix I). It also asked what violence prevention programs the schools are currently utilizing and what they have utilized in the past. Because several individuals could be involved in the decision-making process, we sent five surveys to each of the 300 public and separate schools in Calgary, as well as a selected number of charter or private schools (20). The surveys were directed to principals with the instructions that it be completed by any school personnel involved in making decisions about introducing prevention programs to the school. The survey data was primarily quantitative in nature and the information was entered into SPSS-PC for analysis. The data analysis consisted primarily of frequency counts and chi-square analyses.

Results

In total, 605 surveys were returned. A similarly high proportion, 69%, from both the public schools (152 of 221) and separate schools (61 of 89) returned at least one survey. Six respondents from only four of the 20 private schools (20%) returned questionnaires. In interpreting the results, it is important to remember that some schools completed and returned multiple surveys. Two schools had 8 and 6 respondents each, the highest proportion; whereas 23 schools had five respondents complete the survey. Thirty-seven schools had 4 respondents, 63 schools had 3 respondents, 43 schools had two

respondents, and 48 schools had only one respondent. As such, the majority of schools sent back surveys from two or more respondents.

The following is the breakdown of returned surveys by school system:

	Number of Schools Sent Surveys	Number of Schools that Returned Surveys	Total Surveys Returned
Public System	221	152 (69%)	415
Separate System	89	61 (69%)	185
Private System	20	4 (20%)	5

Respondent’s Position in Schools

The survey was intended to be completed by all school personnel who make decisions concerning which violence prevention programs are used, including principals, teachers, counsellors, school resource officers, and parent council members. Within the public and separate school systems, teachers were the largest group who completed the survey (38.7%), followed by principals (27.8%), and assistant or vice-principals (14.5%), counsellors (19.6%), and 21 school resource teachers/officers. The category “other” included 18 individuals such as nurses, support staff and volunteers.

Because of the number of respondents from the private school system was so low, these were excluded from further analyses that examined school system. In examining the relative proportions of the positions of those who responded to the survey, there was a statistically significant difference between the public and separate system (chi-square = 22.6; p. = .000). As can be seen in Table 1, teachers from the public school board were significantly more likely to respond to the survey than in the separate system. Counsellors were more prevalent respondents from the separate school system. Nevertheless the proportion of principals and vice principals was relatively equal.

Table 1: School System by Position of Respondent

	Principals and Vice-Principals	Teachers and Resource teachers	Counsellors	Parent Council	Others	Total
Public System	168 (41.3%)	190 (46.7%)	34 (8.4%)	3 (0.7%)	12 (2.9%)	407
Separate System	80 (44.2%)	58 (32.5%)	29 (16%)	8 (4.4%)	6 (3.3%)	181
TOTAL	248 (42.2%)	248 (42.2%)	63 (10.7%)	11 (1.9%)	18 (3.1%)	588

Level of School Response

By far, the greatest number of respondents was from elementary schools, almost two-thirds or 65.7%). The next highest number of respondents were from junior high schools (14.1%), high schools (9.9%), mixed elementary and junior high (7.4%), mixed junior and senior high and schools with all grades from kindergarten to 12 (0.7%). It was also of interest to determine if there was a different pattern of responses from personnel from schools that teach different developmental ages of children. The chi-square analysis showed a statistically significant difference between levels (chi-square = 124.6; $p = .000$), such that teachers from elementary schools and school counsellors responded to a much greater degree in junior and high school.

Table 2: Level of School by Position of Respondent

	Principals and Vice-Principals	Teachers and Resource Teachers	Counsellors	Parent Council	Others	Total
Elementary (K-6)	172 (44.1%)	191 (49%)	9 (2.3%)	8 (2.1%)	10 (2.6%)	390
Junior High (7-9)	34 (40.5%)	27 (32.1%)	20 (23.8%)	0	3 (3.6%)	84
High School (10-12)	20 (33.9%)	15 (25.4%)	23 (39%)	0	1 (1.75)	59
Elementary and Junior high	21 (45.7%)	10 (21.7%)	10 (21.7%)	2 (4.5%)	3 (6.8%)	44
Jr. high and High school	1 (14.3%)	3 (42.9%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	7
K-12	3 (37.5%)	5 (62.5%)	0	0	0	4
TOTALS	251 (42.3%)	251 (42.3%)	63 (10.7%)	11 (1.9%)	18 (3.1%)	594

How Schools usually receive information about violence prevention programs³

One of the key questions in the survey was the way in which school personnel received information about prevention programs. The most commonly noted mechanisms are listed in Table 3. Receiving information about violence prevention programs came mostly from endorsements from other professionals (62.6% of respondents). The second most common method was by directives from the school board or other administrative staff (50.9%), followed by program personnel contacting the school (49.4%) and past experience with the program (47.2%). Just over one-quarter (26.8%) of the respondents also received information by “other” means including information (i.e. mail-outs, pamphlets, brochures) sent directly to the school from violence prevention serving agencies; through the ATA; professional development workshops and conference information; school/teacher researching programs; professional journals; and school council newsletter.

There were no significant differences in the way schools from the various boards received information. Elementary schools (including public, separate, and private school systems) mirrored the overall trend mentioned above, receiving information about violence prevention programs mostly as

³ It is important to note that survey respondents could check one or more answers.

Table 3: Sources of Information about Prevention Programs

	Endorsements from Other Professionals	Past Experience with Program	Program Personnel Contact the School	Program Directive by Board/Admin /Staff	Other	Total
Public System	268 (27.3%)	204 (20.8%)	201 (20.5%)	192 (19.6%)	117 (11.9%)	982
Separate System	109 (24.8%)	78 (17.7%)	94 (21.4%)	115 (26.1%)	44 (10.0%)	440
Private System	2 (18.2%)	3 (27.3%)	4 (36.4%)	1 (9.1%)	1 (9.1%)	11

endorsements from other professionals (25.8%), followed by program directive by school board/other administrative staff (22.4%), program personnel contact the school (21.3%), and past experience with programs (20.3%). However, an examination of the junior high schools and how they received information was different. Junior high schools received information mostly from endorsements (27.5%), followed by program personnel contacting the school (23.0%), past experience with the program (18.6%), and through directives from the school board and other admin. staff (17.6%).

Table 4: Level of School by How Information Received

	Endorsements from Other Professionals	Past Experience with Program	Program Personnel Contact the School	Program Directive by Board/Admin Staff	Other	Total
Elementary (K-6)	253 (26.1%)	196 (20.3%)	200 (20.7%)	215 (22.2%)	103(4.0%)	967
Jr. High (7-9)	56 (27.5%)	38 (18.6%)	47 (23.0%)	36 (17.6%)	27 (13.2%)	204
High School (9-12)	38 (29.7%)	23 (17.9%)	25 (19.5%)	29 (22.7%)	13 (10.2)	128
Elem. & Jr. High	26 (24.3%)	25 (23.4%)	22 (20.5%)	22 (20.5%)	12 (11.2%)	107
K-12	4 (28.6%)	2 (14.3%)	2 (14.3%)	3 (21.4%)	3 (21.4%)	14
Jr & Senior High	2 (15.3%)	1 (6.9%)	3 (23.1%)	3 (23.1%)	4 (38.8%)	13
TOTALS	379 (26.4%)	285 (19.9%)	299 (20.9%)	308 (21.5%)	162 (11.3%)	1433

Problems or Gaps in Receiving Information about Violence Prevention Programs

Forty-one percent of the survey respondents did not answer this question. Such non-responses could be interpreted as not seeing any problems. Of the 354 individuals who did respond, about half (175) claimed that they did not perceive any problems or gaps. However, the other half (179 respondents) reported that the most common gap was the perceived lack of information available on violence prevention programs (58). The other problems were mentioned less frequently. These included a lack of co-ordination (18 responses); too many programs to choose from (14 responses); a lack of information about what is effective and appropriate (13 responses) and lack of continuity and consistency (9 responses). Several respondents (6) would like their school board to endorse programs, five others complained that information on programs was not necessarily received in a timely manner.

Finally, three responses complained about the prevalence of poor quality programs and another three were concerned about a lack of time to offer programs, and poor financial support and resources. Interestingly, another commonly identified problem was receiving too much information. Respondents claimed that they are often inundated with information about various programs and it is difficult to interpret the information. Several respondents indicated that a compendium of violence prevention resources and services would be helpful, including an annotation of program goals, duration, costs, and target audience.

Individual respondents expressed concerns that information was often not passed on to the teachers by school administration. Further, schools that are not considered to be high needs may not be given the opportunity to offer prevention programs to their students.

Examples of the written responses may clarify some of these points:

“There may be an effective program which would benefit my school, but as a teacher, I may never know about it to recommend it unless I ‘happen’ to hear about it.”

“So much information/wading through and choosing program best for school.”

“A lot of information coming across my desk...most sounding good but to be wise in selecting one that best serves my individual school’s needs is very difficult and time-consuming.”

“No evaluations by external or by school board as to the appropriateness and effectiveness.”

“A lot of information may reach the school but it does not necessarily reach the teachers who most directly use the program.”

Preferred Components in Violence Prevention Programs

The survey respondents were asked to indicate which of a number of possible program components they see as important. The most commonly endorsed components were that *the program provides a classroom curricula or exercises* and that *the program adapts to children of different*

developmental levels. There appears to be no differences between school systems – in other words, both the public and separate systems preferred the same components.

The responses from the elementary schools revealed that the most preferred component was that the *program adapts to different levels of development.* Other preferred components included parent involvement, teachers and parents working together, teacher training, classroom exercises, and that the program has been evaluated. Having a follow-up component offered by prevention staff received a mixed response (i.e. 184 responses indicated that component was important and 184 responses indicated that it was not).

Table 5: Preferred Prevention Program Components

	Elementary (K-6)	Junior High	High School	Elem. and Jr. High	Total
Provides Classroom Curriculum/Exercises	286	58	19	28	391
Different developmental levels	290	50	23	25	388
Teachers, parents, students work together	249	55	35	20	359
Parent Involvement	262	41	31	24	358
Teacher –Training component	243	50	22	23	338
Evaluated	229	43	30	21	323
Follow-up Provided	184	43	26	24	277
Program is short	141	50	29	14	234
Comprehensive Coverage	172	27	18	16	233
Taught by Teachers	180	30	8	14	232
Taught by Prevention Staff	103	26	26	7	162
Offered to Entire Student Body	83	16	8	8	115

Respondents from high schools, on the other hand, reported no major preferences. The preferred components were: teachers and parents working together, parent information and involvement, and shorter programs. These preferences were not as strong as in the case of elementary schools. Having the components taught by program staff and the program offering a follow-up component were equally endorsed.

Several respondents indicated that they would like to see violence prevention programs taught by *both* teachers and program staff (listed in “other” category). Other responses to the open-ended questions included that the suggestion that the program address issues specific to the needs of the school (6), perhaps by conducting a pre-assessment of the school (1) or ensuring that the program fit the school context and philosophy (1). Six respondents spoke of the need for integration. Three of these noted that the programming should be year-round, not just a “one-shot deal”. Another two mentioned that the

entire student body should have access to the program (though not in a large group format), and that the program should extend through all grades. Another commented that the ideas should be integrated into all aspects of school. A final respondent suggested that the programs be consistent throughout the district.

Four respondents commented on curriculum features: two suggested that the program provide specific materials for teachers, another suggesting that teachers be given some choice over specific classroom activities. A final respondent mentioned that the curriculum should have a multi-faceted approach.

One responded that the curricula needed to be adaptable for children from different cultures, another that they needed French speaking material. A final topic was the suggestion that prevention programs extend beyond school boundaries, for example by inviting parents and families to become involved or to take a school/community approach.

School Budgets for Violence Prevention Programs

The majority of respondents from all school systems reported having no special budget for violence prevention programs. This was also true when comparing the levels of schools. In other words, all levels of schools reported that they had no budget for violence prevention programs. However, while some schools may not have a budget item specifically allocated for prevention programs, they may have the flexibility to find funding for programs within their budget.

	No Budget	Has Budget
Elementary (K-6)	219 (66.6%)	110 (33.4%)
Junior High (7-9)	50 (64.1%)	28 (35.9%)
High School (9-12)	31 (75.6%)	10 (24.4%)
Elem. and Jr. High	21 (58%)	15 (41.2%)
Total	321	163

We asked respondents what range of cost *per pupil* or *per program* do you consider acceptable for a violence prevention program? This question was answered three different ways: cost per pupil, cost per program and qualitatively.

(a) Cost Per Pupil

Table 6: Cost per pupil for violence prevention programs

	Public System	Separate System	Private System	Total
\$0	12 (9.4%)			12 (6.3%)
\$1-4 per pupil	84 (66.1%)	39 (62.9%)	1 (33.3%)	124 (64.6%)

\$5-9 per pupil	16 (12.6%)	11 (17.7%)	1 (33.3%)	28 (14.6%)
\$10-19 per pupil	11 (8.7%)	9 (14.5%)		20 (10.4)
\$20+ per pupil	4 (3.1%)	3 (4.8%)	1 (33.3%)	8 (4.2)
Total	127	62	3	192

In total, 192 (31.7%) of the 605 survey respondents completed this section of the survey. Eighty-four of the 127 (66.1%) respondents from the public school system considered \$ 1-4 *per pupil* an appropriate cost for school violence prevention programs. Thirty-nine of the 62 (62.9%) of the respondents from the separate school system also believed that \$1 to \$4 was appropriate. The responses of the three respondents from the private system that completed this question varied considerably.

Excluding the private school respondents, there was a statistically significant difference between the public and separate schools (chi-square = 12.72; p = .026) such that respondents from the separate schools saw the acceptable cost per pupil as somewhat higher than respondents from the public schools.

(b) Cost Per Program

Only 54 of the 605 (9%) the survey respondents answered this question by giving a cost *per program*. Excluding the one private school respondent, there was no significant difference between the public and separate responses to this question.

Table 7: Cost per Violence Prevention Program

	Public System	Separate System	Private System	Total
No cost	2 (5.4%)	0	0	2 (3.7%)
\$1 to \$99 per program	2 (5.4%)	1 (6.3%)	0	3 (5.6%)
\$100 to \$299 per program	13 (35.1%)	4 (25.1%)	0	6 (11.1%)
\$300 to \$599 per program	11 (29.7%)	7 (43.89%)	0	18 (33.3%)
\$600+ per program	9 (24.3%)	4 (25.1%)	1 (100%)	14 (26%)
Total	37	16	1	54

(c) Qualitative Responses with respect to cost of program

Most of the respondents did not provide a dollar value for violence prevention programs; instead, commenting that they were not able to make such a decision (i.e. it was out of their area of expertise). Following are several qualitative comments in response to this question:

- believed a minimal fee was appropriate but did not elaborate further
- cost depends on the program
- depends on where the money is coming from

Amount of Time Allotted for Staff Training

We asked how much time schools might allot for staff training. Two hundred thirty eight of the 605 (39.3%) survey respondents answered this questioned quantitatively. Of those 238 respondents, only a small proportion (7.1%) were of the opinion that their school would not be willing to allow any time for teacher training; 72.7% believed that their schools (across all three school systems) would be willing to spend at least one day or less on staff training. Excluding the small number of private school respondents, there was a statistically significant difference between the public and separate schools with respondents from the latter claiming that their schools were less willing to allot time for teacher training or allotted less time than the public system.

Table Eight: Time Allotted for Teacher Training by School System

	Public System	Separate System	Private System	Total
No time	5 (3.0%)	12 (17.6%)	0	17 (7.1%)
1 day or less	123 (74.5%)	47 (69.1%)	3 (60%)	173 (72.7%)
2 or 3 days	37 (21.4%)	9 (13.2%)	2 (40%)	9 (3.8%)
	165	68	5	238

Many of the survey respondents provided qualitative responses to this question. These responses did not vary by school system. Some responses include:

- training should be on PD days (70), although PD days are busy or curriculum related
- whatever is necessary (29)
- after school or during lunch hours (8)

As one assistant principal noted, “If the program is worthwhile, we will make the time”.

A number of respondents also indicated that they were unsure of the appropriate time allotment for staff training. They indicted several other problems with scheduling time for teacher training including:

- Teachers are already overworked (18)
- depends on whether funding available for substitute teachers (10)
- depends on time of year

School personnel were asked to identify which programs they have used in the past, which they have considered using and those they are currently using. The programs mentioned most often were Safe and Caring Schools, ACAV's Turn Off the Violence Campaign, Dare to Care: Bully-Proofing your School from Calgary Family Services, Who Do You Tell (Calgary Communities Against Sexual Assault), and Skills for Growing (Lion's Quest). The table in Appendix II lists these and other programs that the survey respondents have either used, are currently using or have considered using. The numbers do not necessarily reflect an accurate count of the extent to which each particular program is utilized, because not all schools responded and because respondents may not have remembered programs being offered.

What Violence-related Issues do Personnel see as important for their School?

The majority of respondents (517 of 605 or 85.5%) answered this open-ended question. It should be noted that each could list as many issues as they considered of concern. The individuals tended to answer either by documenting a problem or proposing a solution, usually in the form of a specific program. Of those who identified issues, the overwhelmingly majority of respondents listed bullying as the key problem, either on its own (187 or 36.1%) or in combination (191 or 36.9%) with other forms of verbal harassment/name-calling (160 or 30.1%) or physical aggression (from minor pushing and shoving to fights) (66 individuals or 12.8%). In total, 73% of respondents to this question (378) specifically used the term "bullying". Some of the other areas such as verbal harassment and intimidation are arguably forms of bullying as well.

Other concerns that respondents linked to violence included teasing (42 or 8.1%), using threats or intimidation (35 or 6.8%), and isolating or ostracising individuals (19 or 3.7%). Twenty-one respondents also linked racism or prejudice, peer pressure (14) and twelve listed sexual harassment (primarily in junior high schools) and gender discrimination (4). Abuse in the family was seen by 35 respondents as a key issue, vandalism and theft were problematic for 18 respondents across all level of schools, dating violence was of concern to 13, drugs and alcohol abuse to 8 (all from high schools) and 9 noted problems with weapons.

Of those who suggested programs to address violence -related issues, 62 recommended conflict resolution, peer mediation or problem solving/decision making workshops; 55 mentioned anger management and 24 suggested social skills or friendship making workshops. A further 17 suggested programs to make schools safe and caring, 13 individuals mentioned the importance of respect and nine mentioned increasing self-esteem.

A small number of respondents indicated that violence was not a significant issue at their particular school. The first two comments are from respondents from the same elementary school:

"We have very little violence fortunately. It's usually the result of thoughtlessness/frustration"

"We have very little violence in this particular school. Some bullying and violence seems to emulate martial arts, t.v. movies, and software"

"Our school does not have a lot of violence-related problems, however, relationship violence, treating others with respect, family-related violence are concerns" (Gr. 7-12)

“This has been of limited concern to us. We have had some violence-related issues which arose from community or private situations and then were carried over to school. (Gr. 10-12)

Other respondents noted an increase in violence:

“Bullying and harassment are issues. We have no set consequences for this type of behaviour so it is increasing.” (Jr. High)

“Young children are becoming very aggressive on playground, e.g. WWF moves, bullying-verbally, non-inclusion of students who are different/don’t fit in/loner, special ed. few weapons (knives at school) (K-9)

“We have seen an increase in the amount and severity of violence; media plays a huge role; what adolescents see at home is also a factor.” (Jr. High)

Finally, several respondents also commented on having introduced prevention programs into their schools:

“Name calling, rudeness to each other [are problems]. We have used a bullying program and see little fighting. (Elementary school)

“We focus on prevention; have set up anti-harassment program at school. (Jr high)

“Bullying, intimidation by older, stronger students; not treating others with respect remain problems. This has improved in the last few years as we have implemented programs. (Elementary school)

In summary, very few personnel from Calgary schools identified physical aggression as a serious issue currently. However, most identified the impact of bullying and other forms of harassment on their students as of concern.

Implications of the Research for the ACAV Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator Position

The survey results confirm what members of the Children and Youth Subcommittee had suspected and commented upon in their interviews. About one-third of the school personnel found the information confusing with respect to both choosing appropriate violence prevention programs, and evaluating what constitutes an effective program. A number of school personnel commented on the fact that they lack the background to assess evaluation results when these are offered and need guidelines as to what to look for in a program that represents best practices. These comments suggest the need for a central coordinating body to assist school personnel in identifying good available programs from the perspective of the way in which programs address violence prevention issues. The ACAV Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator seems well placed to become a very useful resource for schools in deciding what prevention programs might best meet the needs of their students, and school staff.

The results of the survey with the school personnel were congruent with comments from the members of the Children and Youth Subcommittee. The interviews provided an in-depth view of the perceptions of members of the Children and Youth Subcommittee with respect to the current state of affairs in prevention programming in the city of Calgary. These individuals identified a number of concerns and gaps in terms of which children have access to violence prevention and the manner in which some programs address the issue of violence. Of particular concern was the lack of coordination in offering current programs and developing new ones. A number of the programs considered to be strong are hampered by a lack of resources so that few schools can utilize their program each year. Other programs lack long-term funding, having, in fact, to revise their materials in order to gain access to continued funding since such proposals consistently ask for innovation rather than proven efficacy. New programs often emerge without having consulted community agencies with expertise about the issue, or without having identified that the curriculum addresses a gap.

No matter how good the programs in the city, none are offered community-wide and there are some obvious gaps, including programs for youth not in schools, who may be in critical need of such programming. Violence prevention concepts are ideally offered, not only to children, but also to other school personnel, families and communities. Programs need to develop some form of follow-up procedures whether administered by program personnel, or teachers. Similarly, raising awareness of abuse issues without providing treatment for those affected verges on being unethical. Prevention programs and community agencies need to work in concert so that children who disclose abuse after school-based prevention programs are offered resources immediately. One of the hopes of the Children and Youth Subcommittee respondents is that the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator takes the lead in helping to facilitate and address such problems. The interview respondents have fairly high expectations for what the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator can accomplish; yet most perceive that the goals of the sub-committee are well on the way to being met.

The idea of creating a Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator is novel and continuing its support and evaluation may ultimately result in a model that may be of value to communities across North America. Despite the difficulties that arose because of personnel changes in the pivotal Co-ordinator position, once that became stabilized members of the Children and Youth Sub-committee have noted many improvements in structure and format. There is also an increased excitement about what can be accomplished by working together and supporting the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator in her position.

Appendix I: Letter to School Principals and Survey

March 2000

Dear Principal:

In the aftermath of the recent shooting deaths of students at school in Colorado and Taber, youth violence prevention programs have been identified as one potential avenue to address and, hopefully, prevent future such tragedies. A number of agencies in Calgary offer school-based violence prevention programs for children and youth from kindergarten to Grade 12. The programs address a variety of issues from dealing with bullies, conflict resolution, mentoring troubled teens, and strategies to prevent sexual abuse and dating violence. However, not all school personnel are aware of these programs, nor do schools always have the resources to allow them access. We know little about how schools currently learn about various prevention programs and what elements are important in deciding which programs will be the most appropriate for their students.

You may be aware that the Action Committee against Violence (ACAV) of Calgary recently received funding for a Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator. The role of the person in this position is to assist both schools and programs to better coordinate their efforts to educate students about violence. RESOLVE Alberta, a violence prevention research institute associated with the University of Calgary, has been commissioned to assist ACAV and the new coordinator in assessing the current practices and experiences of school personnel with respect to violence prevention programs.

This survey was sent to all school principals in Calgary. We ask that you complete it and return it in the enclosed envelope. Please also give the enclosed 4 additional copies of the survey to any other school personnel who may have been involved in making decisions or providing information about bringing prevention programs into your school. **This might include teachers who recommended certain programs, counsellors, staff in the resource office or parents.**

The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete. The information that you provide will be completely confidential. **Your name will not be associated with your comments in any research reports or publications resulting from this study. Your answers to the survey will greatly assist the Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator in co-ordinating programs and school efforts. Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey.** We will send you a summary of the results in the hope that this may be useful in your future planning.

Respectfully,

Leslie M. Tutty
RESOLVE Alberta (220-8634)

Kendra Nixon
RESOLVE Alberta

PREVENTION PROGRAM SURVEY FOR SCHOOLS

CALGARY ACTION COMMITTEE AGAINST VIOLENCE

Children and Youth Violence Prevention Subcommittee

Purpose of Survey: A number of agencies in Calgary offer school-based violence prevention programs to children and youth from kindergarten to Grade 12. The programs address a variety of issues from how to deal with bullies, conflict resolution, mentoring and strategies to prevent sexual abuse and dating violence. Not all schools are aware of these programs, nor do schools always have the resources to afford them.

In conjunction with the Children and Youth Subcommittee of ACAV, RESOLVE Alberta at the University of Calgary (220-8634) developed this survey to find out how school personnel learn about prevention programs, and what elements are important in deciding which programs to access. Finally, it asks what violence prevention programs schools are currently utilizing. The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete. Your participation is entirely voluntary and any information that you provide will be completely confidential. Your answers will greatly assist the new ACAV Youth Violence Prevention Co-ordinator in co-ordinating programs and school efforts. Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. Please complete all 3 pages.

School I.D. Code: _____

1. Position in school:
 - Principal
 - Teacher
 - Counsellor
 - School Resource Officer
 - Parent Council Member
 - Other (please specify)_____

2. How do you usually receive information about violence prevention programs for your school?
(please check all that apply)
 - Endorsements from other professionals
 - Past experience with the program
 - Program personnel contact the school
 - Program directive by school board/ other administrative staff
 - Other (please specify): _____

3. Do you see any problems/gaps in the way you receive information about violence prevention programs?

4. When choosing violence prevention programs to invite to your school, which of the following components do you prefer (please check all that apply)?

- The program is relatively short (one or two hours at most)
- The program covers the topic in a comprehensive manner (and so is longer)
- The program can be offered to the entire student body at one time.
- The curriculum is taught by teachers
- The curriculum is taught entirely by the prevention program staff
- The program includes a teacher-training component
- The program includes a parent information session/parent involvement
- The program provides a classroom curriculum or exercises
- The program includes follow-up involvement from prevention program staff
- The program offers the opportunity for teachers, parents and students to work together to identify the needs of our school with respect to violence.
- The program adapts to children of different developmental levels
- The program has been evaluated
- Other (please specify): _____

5. Does your school have a budget for violence prevention programs?

Yes No (If no, how do you finance them?)

6. What range of cost *per pupil* or *per program* do you consider acceptable for a violence prevention program?

7. How much time is your school willing to allow for staff training?

8. What violence-related issues do you see as important for your school? (use back page if necessary)

If you have any questions about these programs, phone the Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator at 231-6265 (extension 359). If you have questions about the research please phone Leslie M. Tutty at RESOLVE Alberta (220-8634)

This is a list of Calgary school-based violence prevention programs. Please check any that you have considered using, have used or are using in the 1999-2000 school year. There is a space to add the names of other programs not included in the list.

	Considered Using	Have used	Currently Using
Prevention Programs for All Grades			
Creating Safe Learning Environments (CRHA)			
Peace Heroes			
Second Step			
Skills for Growing Program (Lion's Quest)			
Turn off the Violence Awareness Campaign (ACAV)			
Prevention Programs for Elementary Schools			
Alliance for Children and Families (FAST) (Catholic Family Services)			
Anti-Bullying Drama Project (Project Ploughshares)			
Attending the School Yard Bully (Boys and Girls Club Community Services)			
Bullysmart			
Care to Care: Bully-proofing Your Schools (Calgary Family Services)			
Directing the Fire (Calgary Catholic Immigration Society)			
Families and Schools Stopping Abuse (FASSA) (YWCA)			
Keep it Cool – Taming the Monster (Boys and Girls Club)			
Safe and Caring Schools (Alberta Teacher's Association)			
School Watch			
Who Do You Tell (Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse; CCASA)			
Programs for Junior High or Senior High School			
Alternatives to Violence Education Program for Youth (AVEPY)			
Don't You Take a Joke: Sexual Harassment (CCASA)			
Creating Safety on the Streets: Juvenile Prostitution (CCASA)			
Ending Violence (CCASA)			
Family and Youth Conferencing (Calgary Police Services)			
It's Not Your Fault (Canadian Red Cross)			
Living and Hurting (Junior League)			
No Means No (CCASA)			
Non-Abusive Futures for Adolescents at Risk			
No One Wins (NOW) Calgary Catholic Immigration/Calgary Police			
TAGES			
Moving Towards a Safe and Caring Community (Alberta Teacher's Association)			
What's Love got to Do With It? (Canadian Red Cross)			
Other Violence Prevention Programs (please list)			

Appendix II
Violence Prevention Program Usage by Number of Calgary Schools

Prevention Program for All Grades	Considered Using	Have Used	Currently Using	Have Used/ Currently Using
Creating Safe Learning Environments (CRHA)				
Public	22	23	7	4
Separate	19	11	7	1
Private	-	-	-	-
Total	41	34	14	5
Peace Heroes				
Public	24	28	9	4
Separate	16	19	1	1
Private	-	-	-	-
Total	40	47	10	5
Second Step				
Public	22	28	6	8
Separate	10	5	4	1
Private	-	-	-	-
Total	32	33	10	9
Skills for Growing (Lion's Quest)				
Public	66	19	8	5
Separate	16	11	6	4
Private	1	-	-	-
Total	83	30	14	9
Turn Off the Violence (ACAV)				
Public	18	89	17	19
Separate	14	31	13	7
Private	1	1	-	1
Total	33	121	30	27
Prevention Program for Elementary Schools				
Alliance for Children and Families (FAST)				
Public	11	13	1	1
Separate	6	11	8	1
Private	1	-	-	-
Total	18	24	9	2
Anti-Bullying Drama Project (Project Ploughshares)				
Public	21	21	1	1
Separate	15	13	6	-
Private	1	1	1	-
Total	37	35	8	1
Battling the School Yard Bully (Boys and Girls Club)				
Public	15	8	2	1
Separate	10	4	-	1
Private	1	-	-	-
Total	26	12	2	2

Prevention Programs for Elementary Schools cont.	Considered Using	Have Used	Currently Using	Have Used and Currently Using
Bullysmart				
Public	22	8	4	1
Separate	10	6	1	2
Private	1	-	-	-
Total	33	14	5	3
Dare to Care: Bully-proofing Your Schools				
Public	41	33	22	14
Separate	19	16	11	2
Private	1	-	1	-
Total	61	49	34	16
Directing the Fire				
Public	1	1	-	-
Separate	5	-	1	2
Private	-	-	-	-
Total	6	1	1	2
Families and Schools Stopping Abuse (FASSA)				
Public	5	5	2	1
Separate	8	4	2	2
Private	-	-	-	-
Total	13	9	4	3
Keep it Cool – Taming the Monster				
Public	11	16	1	3
Separate	10	4	2	-
Private	1	-	-	-
Total	22	20	3	3
Safe and Caring Schools (ATA)				
Public	64	39	26	22
Separate	22	17	26	3
Private	2	-	1	1
Total	88	56	53	26
School Watch				
Public	14	16	5	3
Separate	4	12	2	-
Private	-	-	-	-
Total	18	28	7	3
Who Do You Tell (CCASA)				
Public	18	73	10	10
Separate	10	24	5	-
Private	1	1	-	-
Total	29	98	15	10

Prevention Programs for Junior High or Senior High School	Considered Using	Have Used	Currently Using	Have Used/Currently Using
Alternatives to Violence Education Program for Youth (AVEPY)				
Public	10	11	2	3
Separate	11	7	2	1
Private	1	-	1	-
Total	22	18	5	4
Can't You Take a Joke: Sexual Harassment (CCASA)				
Public	10	11	3	3
Separate	11	7	1	3
Private	-	-	-	-
Total	21	18	4	6
Creating Safety on the Streets: Juvenile Prostitution (CCASA)				
Public	7	8	1	5
Separate	7	5	1	1
Private	-	-	-	-
Total	14	13	2	6
Dating Violence (CCASA)				
Public	11	21	4	4
Separate	10	9	3	3
Private	1	-	-	-
Total	22	30	7	7
Family and Youth Conferencing (Calgary Police Service)				
Public	4	17	6	12
Separate	6	5	3	3
Private	-	-	-	-
Total	10	22	9	15
It's Not Your Fault (Canadian Red Cross)				
Public	4	10	1	6
Separate	4	5	2	-
Private	-	-	-	-
Total	8	15	3	6
Loving and Hurting (Junior League)				
Public	3	2	-	1
Separate	4	1	1	-
Private	-	-	-	-
Total	7	3	1	1
No Means No (CCASA)				
Public	6	8	3	1
Separate	10	1	2	2
Private	-	-	-	-
Total	16	9	5	3

Prevention Programs for Junior or Senior High School	Considered Using	Have Used	Currently Using	Have Used/Currently Using
Non-Abusive Futures for Adolescents at Risk				
Public	8	10	2	2
Separate	5	5	4	2
Private	1	-	-	-
Total	14	15	6	4
No One Wins (Calgary Catholic Immigrant/Calgary Police)				
Public	9	1	2	1
Separate	6	3	1	1
Private	-	-	-	-
Total	15	4	3	2
STAGES				
Public	7	18	2	3
Separate	7	8	2	1
Private	-	1	-	-
Total	14	27	4	4
Towards a Safe and Caring Community (ATA)				
Public	22	15	10	4
Separate	23	11	5	1
Private	-	-	1	-
Total	45	26	16	5
What's Love Got to Do With It (Canadian Red Cross)				
Public	5	12	4	3
Separate	5	1	2	1
Private	-	-	-	-
Total	10	13	6	4
Other				
Public	6	23	20	10
Separate	1	12	12	1
Private	-	-	-	-
Total	7	35	32	11