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<div align="center">School Violence: Whose fault?</div>

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in the United States seventy-four percent of public schools recorded one or more incidents of violent crime in the 2009-10 school year, and over half of these schools reported at least one incident to the police (2013, p. iv-v). This increasingly prevalent problem of violence is in all levels of schooling and not just in the United States; it is widespread and exists globally. Many have begun to question how and why this phenomenon occurs, and studies have been done on every continent and countries from Malaysia to Slovakia to determine the source of the widespread violence (Ohsako 1997). Increased school violence can come in many forms and from a multitude of areas, including students, the school environment, society, and parents.

School violence comes in many different forms, each with a slew of causes and characteristics which create unique problems for school communities. From intimidation and sexual harassment to quarrelling and extortion, the world's schools suffer from a wide variety of maladies (Ohsako 1997, p. 11-2). According to Toshio Ohsako (1997, p. 12), the "most commonly classified types of violence/bullying" found in schools are "physical (kicking, hitting), verbal (name calling, insulting), [and] psychological (isolation, ignoring)." Most school violence can be classified into at least one of these three types. Ohsako (1997, p. 12-3) outlines over twenty-five different long- and short-term consequences which can stem from such violence in educational centers. For example, Ohsako (1997, p. 12-3) mentions the disruption of families, increases in gang membership and absenteeism, vandalism and destruction of school property, and the vast amount of wasted time and resources. The

chances of each impact vary by location and makeup of the community, as do the causes of the violence, but they are generally far-reaching and lead to significant complications.

Individual students and poor peer-to-peer relations could cause school violence. Bullying has recently come to the forefront in the United States (particularly in New Jersey) as a form of psychological and verbal school violence. Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler, and Wiener (2005, p.718) agree that bullying is prevalent and can lead to physical altercations as well as "psychosocial and psychiatric problems that may continue into adulthood." One main reason for this is because bullying can cause alienation of the victim, especially as it "unfolds in the social context of the peer group, the classroom, the school, the family and the larger community" (Mishna et al. 2005, p. 719). As the victim feels increasingly isolated from these groups, the likelihood of he or she telling an adult decreases dramatically. This is mainly due to fear of reprisal and rejection from peer groups (among other factors) and the child resorts to other coping strategies (Oliver and Candappa 2007, p. 72-3). Such feelings of social rejection and alienation are linked to aggressive behaviour which can lead to school violence, as determined in Yaacov Iram's 1997 study of Israeli school violence (p. 79). Student personalities can also bring about violence, whether through simple clashes of ideals, attitudes, and motives, or an overarching struggle for social capital (Ohsako 1997, p. 12). Gender clashes can also cause tensions and eventually violence between pupils, especially since most perpetrators of violence are boys and victims, girls (Iram 1997 p. 78; Terefe and Mengistu 1997, p. 37, 48). Iram (1997, p. 77) also points out that a "delinquent sub-culture" with violence in mind could be "a response of frustration" from largely alienated groups, like "students of lower socio-economic status." Alienation, through bullying or other means, along with personality and gender clashes can cause violence at schools.

The teachers and overall environment in a school can also affect violence. It is important to remember teachers, the administration, *and* students all establish the culture of a

school, including determining which individuals are alienated and which are accepted. Iram (1997, p. 78) warns "existing violence at school" is the primary factor which leads to further problems, and whether or not a school's culture accepts violence as the norm influences its severity (Ohsako 1997, p. 12). According to Iram (1997, p. 78), another factor which can increase a school's susceptibility to violence is the material it covers, as students at vocational schools are "more inclined to participate in violence" than their counterparts at comprehensive or academic schools. Teachers and administration can also cause violence, albeit inadvertently, particularly through how they handle bullying. Mishna et al. (2005) illuminates the fact that many teachers do not know how to identify the less physical aspects of bullying, never mind intervene appropriately. Yet how they handle the situation determines the reaction of their students as well as the culture and environment of both the school and his or her classroom. If handled poorly, it could make the bullying worse for the victim and turn other students away from coming forward, thus worsening the situation and possibly inciting more violence. Ohsako (1997, p. 14) warns that other "school factors" like large class sizes, poor overall academic performance, irrelevant curricula, and "poor pupil/teacher relationships" can lead to increased violence as well. A lack of "pupil/teacher relationships" can slowly destroy the bonds between community and school, and, combined with a culture of bullying and poor all-around academic performance, create the conditions for violence.

Violence can also be caused by issues in society at large and in the school's immediate community. Iram (1997, p. 77) maintains that students who witness "antagonistic and violent behaviour" in society cannot help but perpetuate those values in their school careers. Ohsako (1997, p. 14) also mentions "societal and political factors," some of which are bigger for developing countries than the already developed. For example, "political violence associated with wars and armed conflicts," such as coups, civil wars, and other untidy transfers of power, and "overcrowded and irregular transportation systems" are

generally fewer and far between in developed countries (Ohsako 1997, p. 14). However, "street gangs who disturb schools, and steal and damage school property," the "media's indiscriminate violent and anti-social programmes," and "alcohol and drug abuse" can apply to almost every nation, regardless of its socio-economic development (Ohsako 1997, p. 14). The media and popular culture's effect on school violence seems to be vastly understated, as "the depiction of violence in the media and popular music" are fed to children through songs, movies, television programmes, video games, and news broadcasts (Terefe and Mengitsu 1997, p. 37). When music with inappropriate language that purports murder and rape becomes standard, violence is demystified and it is no wonder students begin to accept these tendencies. While societal issues may not necessarily directly affect violence in schools, there is a definite correlation between big-picture political and social problems and increased violence.

Parental and familial problems can also cause violence in schools. Ohsako (1997, p. 14) lists several "family related factors" like poor "parental supervision and child-rearing practices," "break-up of the family," and a "lack of family values with good moral and religious guidelines." Familial disputes can also cause problems, but a large factor that impacts school violence is how parents punish their children. Rohner et al. (1996) highlight several factors involved in corporal punishment which can lead to a child's psychological maladjustment. Parental acceptance-rejection is the main factor, particularly because if children believe a punishment is unjust or harsh and see it as a form of parental rejection, it could lead to negative psychological adjustment (Rohner 1996, p. 849). If students do not feel loved or supported at home, they are at a higher risk to commit violence at school. Rohner et al. (1996, p. 843) also found inconsistent parental demands lead to "higher rates of delinquency" and Ohsako (1997, p. 15) listed "inconsistent discipline" from parents among factors which spark more school violence. An unclear, inconsistent, and unjust parental

discipline system can create conditions at school which are conducive to violence. According to Rohner et al. (1996, p. 846), children's overall perception of punishment was relatively unchanged by "age, sex, race, or social class," so it is likely that their results could hold up in other cultures and societies. Poor parenting, an inconsistent discipline system, and an environment without caretaker acceptance can all create conditions which could lead to violent behaviours or tendencies at school.

The amount of violence in schools worldwide has sparked a great deal of discussion regarding its causes. Many different studies have been done in countries on every continent, but since different societies have different characteristics, it is difficult to pinpoint exact sources of the violence. However, several have been found to be prevalent in most societies. Students can cause violence in schools by bullying and alienating an individual or group from the dominant culture simply because of differing personality, characteristics, or gender. If teachers and administrators cannot form solid relationships with their pupils, do not have the training to identify and stop bullying, and cannot improve academic performance, they can create the conditions for violence. Of course, the community in which a school resides has the potential, if unstable politically, to incite violence, as does the society at large. Poor transportation, a media and popular culture that increasingly glorifies violence, a strong gang presence, and significant alcohol and drug abuse can all lead to increased violence in schools. Bad parenting when children feel rejected from inconsistent or unjust discipline systems can also create violent behaviours at schools. Overall many factors can cause increased school violence, particularly students, parents, teachers and administrators, and society at large.

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