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Definitions of Violence: African-American and Iraqi Refugee Adolescents' Perceptions

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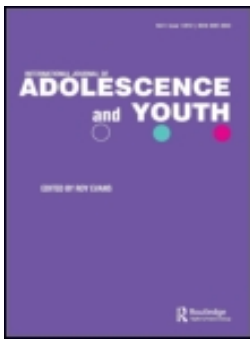
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Definitions of Violence: African-American and Iraqi Refugee Adolescents' Perceptions

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the perceptions of urban African-American and Iraqi refugee adolescents regarding community violence, school violence, family violence and dating/intimate partner violence. A subset of participants from a larger study on violence and trauma was selected to participate in the current study. Using a card-sort exercise, participants identified situations as violent or not violent. Iraqi youth identified noticeably more behaviors as violence than African-American youth. Few significant gender differences emerged. Findings of important cultural differences provide implications for violence prevention programming.

INTRODUCTION

This article examines the perceptions of violence of African-American and Iraqi refugee youth living in the United States. Although violence of all forms occurs across cultures, adolescents may form different perspectives about the violence based on the context of the incident and their cultural backgrounds. People

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perceive and interpret violence differently, due to cultural differences in value orientation, social standards, and norms (Lee, Takaku, Ottati and Yan, 2004). Culture can influence whether group members will support various types of violence and which perpetrators and recipients are considered “appropriate” for acts of violence (Araji and Carlson, 2001). Therefore, violence must be studied within the context of a society and its cultural norms and values.

This study explores urban, predominately low-income African-American and Iraqi refugee adolescents’ perceptions about violence in the community, school, family, and dating/intimate partner relationships. The sample was recruited from youth who participated in a previous larger study on violence and trauma. Both the Iraqi and the African-American groups of adolescents experienced significant amounts, although very different forms, of violence in their lives and yet little is known about how their perceptions of violence may differ. Due to the lack of research on Iraqi refugees to draw upon, we refer to studies on Arab populations outside of the United States which may reflect the experiences of recent Iraqi refugees. We recognize that there are *significant* differences between Iraqis (and especially Iraqis living in the United States) and those from other Arab countries.

Community Violence

There are several theories regarding the impact that exposure to community violence has on adolescents’ perceptions. Some theorists suggest that regular exposure to violence can lead to adolescents’ viewing all violence as “normative and adaptive” (Griffin, Scheier, Botvin, Diaz and Miller, 1999, p. 293) or developing a nonchalant attitude toward injury or loss of friends through violent activity (Guterman and Cameron, 1997). Exposure to severe community violence may also cause Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and lead youth to minimize events that many would consider violent (Bell and Jenkins, 1997).

African-American Community. More than European American youth, African-American youth are exposed to high levels of community violence, regardless of their socio-economic status (Crouch, Hanson, Saunders, Kilpatrick and Resnick, 2000). McIntyre’s (2000) qualitative research on inner-city, middle school youths of color suggested that they are keenly aware of the violence around them, anticipate violence and prepare themselves

for it by planning how they will respond to violent actions. She also found that most youth were both perpetrators and victims of violence. They did not consider incidents of pushing and shoving violent but rather regarded these behaviors “as a way of jostling for position” (p.69). The teens often discussed violence with similar vocal tones as they used for conversations about sports, music, television programs, and social events. McIntyre concluded that youth seamlessly connected violence to other activities in their lives, and that this connection contributed to “normalizing violence and desensitizing the participants” (p.74).

Howard, Kaljee, and Jackson (2002) used in-depth interviews to investigate the meaning of community violence for 37 African-American youth from Baltimore. They found that 78% of their respondents reported either carrying weapons, engaging in fighting or both. The majority of their respondents viewed fighting and violence as “normal neighborhood activities” (p.60). The interviewers asked the teens what their first thought was when they heard the word “violence”, and respondents mentioned “drugs, guns, shootings, and fighting” most frequently.

Arab-American Community. Violence is wide spread in the lives of Arab youth living in many parts of the world (Sherer and Karnieli-Miller, 2004). Although we have no research that reports levels of community violence experienced by Iraqi youth living in the United States, we do know that fear of detention and expulsion in Arab-American communities has greatly increased in recent years (Abu El-Haj, 2006). Refugee youth frequently experienced high levels of violence in their communities prior to immigrating to the U.S. In a study looking at children living in Beirut, Usta and Farver (2005) found that children living in chronic, low-intensity violent communities felt unsafe and perceived violent events as normal occurrences. Similarly, MacMullin and Odeh (1999) found children living in the violence-prone Gaza Strip viewed violence as normative and expressed few concerns regarding violence directed at themselves.

School Violence

Studies suggest violence in the school setting affects large numbers of students around the world (Anderson *et al.*, 2001; Astor, Benbenishty, Zeira and Vinokur, 2002; DeVoe *et al.*, 2004). Pitner *et al.* (2003) contend that adolescents may be more likely to approve of violence as a form of retribution in response to

perceived moral transgressions between peers in schools, and are less likely to approve of violence in the home.

African-American Adolescents. Twenty-five percent of urban African-American adolescents report that they feel unsafe in their school; girls are less likely than boys to feel safe at school (Howard, Kaljee and Jackson, 2002). In urban settings such as Detroit, Michigan, a significantly higher percentage of youth (9.9%) compared to the national sample (6.0%) of the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance: U.S. 2005 (2006) reported that they did not attend school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school during the previous 30 days. Bullying experiences present a different picture. A representative sample on bullying found an overall rate of 29.9% participation in bullying as victim or perpetrator (National Institute of Health, 1998). African-American youth reported experiencing significantly less bullying than European American or Hispanic youths.

A study of African-American high school students suggested that their culture provides minimal guidelines for deciding the severity or danger level associated with violent acts (MEE, 1996). The study, based on focus groups with urban youths from three cities, demonstrated that adolescents' culture influences them to "place a high premium on being non-judgmental" about peers' behaviors, including violence (MEE, 1996, p.7). Some literature, including writings by teens themselves, suggests that among African-American youths, feeling disrespected may be a particularly potent justification for violence (Kay, Estepa and Desetta 1998; Yung and Hammond, 1998).

Arab-American Adolescents. Although no studies have specifically looked at school violence directed at Iraqi or Arab-American students, Abu El-Haj (2006) reports they are viewed as outsiders and face high levels of verbal assaults and threats of physical violence in schools. Outside of the United States, high rates of violence occur in Arab schools, and students also experience high levels of corporal punishment by teachers, which is viewed as normal (Dwairy, 2004; Sherer and Karnieli-Miller, 2004). Prevalence and perceptions of violence in the schools are strongly related to cultural background and context (Dietz, 2000; Khoury-Kassabri, Benbenishty, Astor and Zeira, 2004).

Family Violence

High rates of all forms of family violence occur across cultures. However, cultures vary in whether they consider violence between spouses, violence by parents directed at children, or violence between siblings as “abuse” or as justifiable under some circumstances (Rivera-Rivera *et al.*, 2005; Sherer and Karnieli-Miller, 2004).

African-American Families. Studies consistently document the relationship between low SES and child abuse (Barnett, Miller-Perrin and Perrin, 2005), intimate partner violence, and sibling abuse (Eriksen and Jensen (2006). Income disparities of African-American families are also well-documented.

Adolescents may observe that some African-American battered women may be hesitant to expose domestic abuse to outsiders, because they fear reinforcing negative stereotypes (Brice-Baker, 1994) or violating family values of privacy (Boyd-Franklin, 1989). Women may not want to seek legal help because they observe a less serious response from the legal system when the victim is African-American (Brice-Baker, 1994), or because they may have observed police brutality against their community (Campbell and Gary, 1998). Fredland *et al.* (2005) also found that urban middle schoolers view violence they see in adults’ lives as “matter of fact”. These researchers believe that immaturity might prevent middle schoolers from realizing the full consequences of adult violence. Additionally, sibling abuse among any group in the U.S., including African-Americans, may be underreported because many people do not define it as violence (Kiselica and Morrill-Richards, 2007).

Arab-American Families. In the Middle East, family violence of various forms is often treated as a private family issue (Kulwicki and Miller, 1999). Douki, Nacef, Belhadj, Bouasker, and Ghachem (2003) found that at least one third of women in Egypt, Palestine, Israel and Tunisia were beaten by their husbands. Youssef, Attia, and Kamel (1998) found that over one-third of Egyptian parents used physical punishment with their children that led to injuries. Haj-Yahia *et al.*’s (2002) study of sibling abuse found that approximately 33% of Arab adolescents living in Israel reported being physically maltreated by a sibling at least once during the previous 12 months. Despite widespread violence in homes, over 50% of Arab university students in Jordon reported that they viewed parents physically harming their children, harsh physical

discipline of children, husbands and wives physically harming each other, and crimes of honor “very much a problem” (Araji and Carlson (2001).

In the only study looking specifically at domestic violence in the Arab-American populations, Kulwicki and Miller’s (1999) reported high levels of approval of violence between spouses. About 35% of women and 33% of men reported approving of a man slapping his wife if she insulted him when they were home alone; 18% of women believed that a man could kill his wife if she had an extramarital affair.

Dating Violence and Sexual Assault

Increasingly, literature is documenting adolescents’ perceptions of the acceptability of violence in their dating relationships (Prospero, 2007). Additionally, youths’ perceptions of what constitutes dating violence varies greatly by the specific situation, with girls’ perceptions based on its impact and boys’ perceptions based on its intent (Sears *et al.*, 2007).

African-American Youth. High rates of African-American youth report experiencing dating violence. The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance–2005 (CDC, 2006) reported that a significantly higher percentage (14.1%) of youth in Detroit, (which is 82% African-American) (US Census Bureau, 2000), compared to the national sample (9.2%) were hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend during the past 12 months. Studies suggest that African-American youth may not define some of these experiences as violence. Kalof (2000) and Decker, Raj, and Silverman (2007) suggest that African-American young women may have a tendency to not define sexual assault experiences as rape. White (1997) found that African-American adolescent girls defined physical assault, but not sexual assault, as violent. She contends that sexuality and power in intimate relationships may be the only way that young African-American men can fulfill masculine role definitions, because of institutional barriers to “breadwinner status” (p.35) in the U.S.

Arab-American youth. Premarital dating is prohibited in traditional Muslim communities (Hetsroni, 2002). Even in modern times, courtship habits of Arabs in the Middle East and U.S. remain largely unchanged. In most cases, Arab-American youth will adhere to early, arranged marriage, sanctification of family

honor, and censoring of premarital sex (Hetsroni, 2002). For these reasons, we might predict that rates of dating violence would be extremely low. However, data on these topics are not available due to the taboo in discussing topics related to dating and sex with Arab-American youth.

How do perceptions of violence differ between urban, low-income African-American and Iraqi refugee adolescents? These two groups of youth have experienced very different, yet significant levels of violence in their lives. However, few studies have explored what behaviors they define as violent in their communities, schools, families, or in dating/intimate partner relationships.

BACKGROUND TO THE CURRENT STUDY

The current study is a follow-up to a study on the differential effects of cumulative violence and trauma exposures on Iraqi and African American adolescents. We selected these two sociodemographic groups due the significant, yet varied, forms of violence each had experienced. The original study explored the relationship between community violence and trauma exposure and mental health, physical health, interpersonal and behavioral functioning, and cognitive functioning. We recruited both Iraqi refugee ($n = 209$) and African-American ($n = 172$) adolescents from the Detroit metropolitan area through after school programs, community outreach centers, and community events using convenience sampling procedures. To participate in the study, youth had to be enrolled in school, able to speak English, and between 12 and 16 years old.

In the original study, we used five instruments to measure violence in the community, school, family, and relationships: (1) *Survey of Exposure to Community Violence (SECV)*: The SECV measures whether a child has been a victim of, or witness to, any of 20 violence-related events (Richters and Saltzman, 1990); (2) *Safe and Responsive Schools Survey (SRSS)*: The SRSS assesses perceptions of school climate and safety and measures feelings related to safety, frequency of inappropriate behavior, and about the school learning environment; (3) *Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scale (PCCT)*: The PCCT measures child treatment/maltreatment, and includes scales for nonviolent discipline, psychological aggression, physical assault, discipline, neglect, and sexual abuse (Straus *et al*, 1998); (4) *Bullying Questionnaire*: The Bullying Questionnaire is an 18-item self-report that measures both bullies'

and victims' experiences of three types of bullying: verbal, physical, and indirect; and (5) *Dating Violence (DV)*: a 26-item modified CTS (Straus, 1979) and 16 items from the *Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory* (Tolman, 1989, 1999). On each of these scales, half of the items referred to perpetration and half to victimization.

Findings from the original study provided preliminary data about participants' high levels of exposure to violence and other traumatic events. Nearly all of the youth witnessed (89%, $n = 333$) or heard about (89%, $n = 333$) violence in the community. Nearly three-quarters of the sample (73%, $n = 273$) had been victims of community violence. Generally, participants reported feeling moderately unsafe at school. Sixty-three percent ($n = 218$) reported feelings of a lack of personal safety, 24% ($n = 80$) reported major safety concerns at the school, and 20% ($n = 72$) reported being physically bullied. Seventy percent ($n = 267$) of the youth reported experiencing psychological parental aggression at least one time and 19% ($n = 88$) reported child abuse (physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect).

Due to cultural norms against dating for Iraqi youth, only African American youth answered questions about dating violence. Of these youth, 70% ($n = 110$) reported at least one experience of dating violence with that partner. Everyone who reported dating violence had experienced emotional forms of abuse. Physical abuse was reported by 13% of the youth ($n = 21$); sexual violence was reported by 11% ($n = 19$). Iraqi youth answered questions regarding their perceptions about their Iraqi friends who may be secretly dating. Forty-six percent of Iraqi youth ($n = 96$) thought that a friend had experienced physical dating violence at least once.

Findings from the original study left many questions unanswered about teens' beliefs and perceptions of violence. The current study sought to understand how perceptions of violence differ between urban, low-income African American and Iraqi refugee adolescents. Few studies have explored what behaviors these youth define as violent in their communities, schools, families, and dating/intimate partner relationships.

METHOD

We conducted a card-sort exercise with youth as a follow-up to a study on the differential effects of cumulative violence and trauma exposures on Iraqi and African-American adolescents.

With the approval of Wayne State University's Human Investigative Committee (HIC), 60 African-American youth and 60 Iraqi youth from the original study were randomly selected and invited to take part in the card-sort session. Recruiters contacted youth by telephone and emphasized that the purpose of the follow-up experience was to learn more about youths' definitions and perspectives of violence. Prior to participation, researchers obtained parental consents and adolescents' assents.

We conducted four card-sort and discussion sessions (Iraqi-female, Iraqi-male, African-American-female, African-American-male); youth in all groups received the same cards and discussion questions. Each session lasted about one and one-half hours. After introducing members of the research team and group facilitators, we provided youth with refreshments and explained the format of the session. All sessions were conducted in English. For each group, two leaders facilitated the exercise; at least one leader was of the same gender and culture as the youth. Group facilitators had participated in the original research study and had experience working with the youth. The facilitators also attended an orientation on the proper procedure for conducting the card-sort to ensure consistency and accuracy in its presentation to youth.

Sample

Forty-three of the 120 youth contacted about the card-sort session actually participated (50% of Iraqi youth and 22% of African American youth). Of the participants, 9 (20.9%) were African-American females, 4 (9.3%) were African-American males, 15 (34.9%) were Iraqi females and 15 (34.9%) were Iraqi males. Because they were a subsample of the original sample, detailed demographic data about the youth participating in the card-sort were not collected. However, the distribution of participants in the card-sort sessions was similar to the distribution of 390 participants in the original study in terms of both gender and ethnicity. All African-American participants were high school students; 50% of the Iraqi youth were high school students and 50% were middle school students. As two years had passed since the original study, it was expected that the average age of the youth in the current study would be slightly higher than those in the original study (mean age of Iraqi youth was 14.8 (S.D. = 1.7); mean age for African-Americans was 15.6 (S.D. = 1.3).

More than 95% of Iraqi and 79% of African-American teens in the original study reported that their families received welfare checks or food stamps. A large majority of the sample received reduced cost school lunches. Only 6% of the Iraqi youth were born in the U.S. and over 50% had lived in the U.S. between 5-10 years.

Procedure

Each card-sort participant received two envelopes; one labeled "violent" and one labeled "not violent", and 16 situation statements written on index cards (see Table 1 for 16 statements). Members of the Violence and Trauma research group reached consensus about the items to include in the card-sort based on their questions about the quantitative data obtained in the original survey research. Participants read each statement; they sorted and placed cards in one of two envelopes (one labeled "violent" and one labeled "not violent"). The group leaders facilitated a discussion after the card-sort about how participants decided if something was violent. Teens received a \$25 gift certificate for their participation.

RESULTS

Of the 16 behaviors presented, youth identified between seven and sixteen of the behaviors as being violence, with an average of 11.93 ($SD = 2.10$). Use of a weapon was most commonly identified as violence (97.7% for each knife and gun use). Emotional behaviors (i.e., teen is frequently called names) were least likely to be identified as violence (See Table 1).

Participants were significantly more likely to identify being punched by a dating partner as violence if it was perpetrated by a boy instead of a girl ($t(42) = 2.20, p = .03$). The youth were also more likely to identify a slap by a dating partner as violence, rather than when the perpetrator was a parent ($t(42) = 3.52, p = .001$) or a sibling ($t(42) = 3.77, p < .001$). A slap by a parent or sibling were the least likely to be defined as violence (56% for each parent and sibling) of any of the physical behaviors.

Iraqi youth identified significantly more behaviors as violence than did African-Americans ($t(41) = 2.85, p = .007$). The Iraqi mean was 12.57 and the African-American mean was 10.46 behaviors. Iraqi youth were significantly more likely to consider emotional and verbal acts to be violence than were African-

American youth. These included insulting a teen's honor ($\chi^2(1, N = 43) = 9.41, p = .002$), frequently being called names at school ($\chi^2(1, N = 43) = 3.79, p = .05$) and having mean rumors spread at school ($\chi^2(1, N = 43) = 12.18, p < .001$). Iraqi youth were also significantly more likely to identify being forced to do something sexual to be violence ($\chi^2(1, N = 43) = 6.64, p < .010$).

We found few significant differences between males and females. There was no significant difference in the number of behaviors identified as violence by males and females ($t(41) = .93, p = .356$). Forced sexual contact was the only significant gender difference found ($\chi^2(1, N = 43) = 4.48, p = .03$). Surprisingly, males (100%) were more likely than females (79%) to define that behavior as violence. Because of the small sample size, we were unable to conduct analysis of gender differences for each of the ethnic groups individually.

DISCUSSION

Youth in the study experienced significant levels of violence in many aspects of their lives, including high levels of violence in the community, school, family, and relationships. Child abuse rates in our sample are substantially higher than those reported by the creators of the PC-CTS scale, who found 4.9% reporting some child abuse (Straus *et al.*, 1998). A greater percent of youth in this sample experienced bullying and unsafe feelings in their schools than has been found in other studies (Howard *et al.*, 2002; National Institute Health, 1998). African-American youth in our sample also reported higher levels of dating violence than has been reported by high school students (CDC, 2006). Interestingly, the high rates of emotional abuse in dating relationships reported by African-American youth is similar to the high rates Iraqi youth reported as having occurred in their friends' secret dating relationships.

Despite the fact that our participants came from a larger sample of youth who had been exposed to and experienced high levels of violence, those participating in our card-sort study, defined most of the items as violent. This indicates that greater exposure to violent actions does not impact the recognition of violent acts as violence. Youth viewed all forms of serious physical attack as violent. Although some researchers believe numbing can occur from frequent violence exposure (Bell and Jenkins, 1997; Gutterman and Cameron, 1997), these youth apparently are not numb or nonchalant as a result of their experiences with violence.

Consistent with the findings from other studies, youths in our study were more likely to view acts perpetrated with a weapon as violence, compared to those acts in which weapons were not involved (McIntyre, 2000). Only about half of the youths viewed siblings slapping each other as violence. While this may be due to their awareness that slaps do not always result in intense physical harm, the participants are also consistent with societal controversy about what constitutes sibling abuse. While some consider violent acts among siblings to be a major form of family violence, others view "sibling fighting" as normal and not a cause for concern (Barnett *et al.*, 2005). Similarly, Americans do not agree on whether parents' slapping children is abuse or a serious problem (Barnett *et al.*, 2005).

Findings from this study endorse the powerful role of culture in forming youths' thinking about and perceptions of violence (Araji and Carlson, 2001; Lee *et al.*, 2004). Iraqi youth viewed more acts as violence than African-American youth. They were more likely than African-Americans to view emotional and psychological harm as violence. Iraqi and African-American youth viewed insults to honor significantly differently. These culture differences can be best understood within the context of Arab society, where values include family solidarity, harmony among family members, family privacy and concern for family reputation and honor (Haj-Yahia, 2002). Cultural groups may process information and experiences differently when they form their cognitive judgments about school, community and interpersonal violence (Benbenishty, Astor, Zeira and Vinokur, 2002). However, word selection biases may also impact results. If we had used the word "respect" rather than "honor," we might have received a much different response from the African-American youth, for whom respect is an important concept (Boyd-Franklin, 2003).

Gender appears to also play an important role in youths' definitions of violence because the adolescents were more likely to view a male, rather than a female, punching a dating partner as violence. This difference may be due to their awareness of the typically greater size and strength of males or it may be due to common social views that violence by females is less serious.

Interestingly, the only gender difference in respondents' definitions related to the issue of sexual violence. Girls were significantly less likely than boys to view forced sexual contact as violence. This difference was particularly salient among African-American youth. Nearly half of girls did not define forced or coerced sex as violence. This finding is contrary to other studies, which have found that males are less likely to

see sexual aggression (not including rape) perpetrated against them as being violent (Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson, 1996). However, that study examined only sexual coercion of males by females. In the present study, the scenario may have been interpreted as either a male or female victim, possibly explaining the difference in findings as there may be more likelihood to identify coercion of a female as violence. Our findings may also be partially explained by the possibility that some African-American girls may assert their view of themselves as strong and independent by not choosing to define sexual coercion as violent in order to prevent perceiving themselves as victims (White, 1997).

The usefulness of the study was somewhat limited by the use of the small convenience samples from the larger quantitative study and our inability to compare the card-sort responses to the measures of violence exposure used in the original sample. There were also limitations related to asking adolescents to categorize items as violence or non-violence. For example, Howard *et al.*'s (2002) study asking about "extent of threat" goes beyond categorizing items as violence or non-violence. Adolescents might be more likely to define an act as violent if they are victims rather than perpetrators of that act. In addition, White (1997) found that girls were more likely to define an act as violent if it was done to a peer, as opposed to themselves. Additionally, the sorting exercise does not address whether or not adolescents view violence as negative. The tape recorders malfunctioned with two groups which prevented us from using youths' full discussions to further understand their perceptions of violent acts. Teens who experience or observe repeated victimization and discrimination may perceive violent fantasies as a viable opportunity to escape from feelings of powerlessness (Kay *et al.*, 1998). Our small sample can be considered a limitation because of the lack of statistical power. Important differences between the male and females and the two cultural groups may not be apparent because our small sample prevented findings of statistical significant differences.

Strengths of the sorting exercise include privacy and confidentiality. Youths completed the card-sort by themselves, forcing them to make decisions about what constitutes violence without the influence of peers. Also, the first wave of the research showed that many of the participants had experienced quite a few of the 16 acts of violence listed on the cards.

Findings from the study have implications for prevention programming and interventions with youth. Research suggests that perceptions influence behavior (Prospero, 2007). It is critical

TABLE 1
Percent Defining Behavior as Violence (N = 43)

	Total Sample		Male (n = 19)		Female (n = 24)		Iraqi (n = 30)		African-American (n = 13)	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
A teen is frequently called names at school	28%	12	26%	5	29%	7	57%*	17	8%	1
People spread mean rumors about a teen at school	40%	17	32%	6	46%	11	57%*	17	0%	0
A teen gets slapped by a sibling	56%	21	47%	9	63%	15	57%	17	54%	7
A teen gets slapped by a parent	56%	21	47%	9	63%	15	57%	17	54%	7
Someone threatens to hurt a teen	56%	24	63%	12	50%	12	57%	17	54%	7
Someone insults a teen's honor	58%	25	74%	14	46%	11	73%*	22	23%	3
A teen sees a boy and a girl who have been going together arguing and the girl punches the boy	79%	34	79%	15	79%	19	87%	26	62%	8
A teen's parent frequently threatens to hurt him or her	81%	35	90%	17	75%	18	90%	27	62%	8
A teen's home gets attacked	86%	37	90%	17	83%	20	87%	26	85%	11
A teen gets slapped by a someone he or she likes/is attracted to	88%	38	90%	17	88%	21	83%	25	100%*	13

Someone forces a teen to do something sexual that he or she does not want to do	88%	38	100%*	19	79%	19	97%	29	69%	9
Two teens argue and one pushes the other to the ground and kicks him or her	91%	39	95%	18	88%	21	90%	27	92%	12
A teen gets beaten up	95%	41	100%	19	92%	22	97%	29	92%	12
A teen sees a boy and a girl who have been going together arguing and the boy punches the girl	95%	41	100%	19	92%	22	93%	28	100%	13
A teen gets shot with a gun	98%	42	100%	19	96%	23	97%	29	100%	13
Two groups of teens shout insults at each other, one teen pulls a knife and stabs the other	98%	42	100%	19	96%	23	100%	30	92%	12

*p < .05

to take a holistic approach to understand and work with youth. Programs need to consider the violence youth face in their families, schools, and communities. Effective prevention programs must address teen definitions of "violence"; otherwise teens may ignore prevention programs and may view prevention messages as irrelevant. The use of card-sorts and focus groups can assist prevention workers in developing effective relationships with youth by demonstrating an understanding of and appreciation for their perceptions (Reese, Vera, Thompson and Reyes 2001).

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