

Elementary School Counselors Perception of the Effectiveness of Play It Safe! a Preventative Child Physical and Sexual Abuse Course

WREN E. SEABOLT, VANESSA MIKAN PHD, & EDWARD MERRITT PHD

Human Performance Laboratory; Kinesiology Department; Southwestern University;
Georgetown, TX

Category: Undergraduate

Advisor / Mentor: Mikan, Vanessa (mikano@southwestern.edu)

ABSTRACT

Preventative education is important for students to receive at a young age due to the high prevalence of child abuse. Play It Safe! is a preventative physical and sexual abuse course that was created by the Women's Center of Tarrant County consisting of multiple presentations catered to each elementary school grade. These presentations cover three main points 1. What a safe, not safe, or confusing touch is 2. Establishing a trusted adult 3. Reassuring the audience it is never their fault. **PURPOSE:** To determine the effectiveness of Play It Safe! a preventive physical and sexual child abuse course through feedback provided by the counselors based on their perception and observations. **METHODS:** The Play It Safe! presentations were administered to elementary school students by the Williamson County Children's Advocacy Center community educators. Georgetown Independent School District counselors (n=9) completed a survey one week post presentation regarding their perception of the effectiveness of the Play It Safe! preventative physical and sexual child abuse presentation. Questions were answered using a likert scale, others were on a 'yes' or 'no' basis. **RESULTS:** Six out of nine counselors responded. Eighty-three percent (83.3%) of counselors strongly agreed that Play It Safe! is a beneficial course for students to receive. Counselors 'agreed-strongly agree' (4.5 ± 0.84) that school is a safe place for students to discuss the content of the presentation. Over half (n=5) of the counselors 'agreed-strongly agree' (3.83 ± 0.75) that more students would disclose abuse after receiving the presentation. Counselors reported that the main point most often referenced by students was the definition of who a trusted adult is (4.33 ± 0.52). Counselors reported (4 ± 0.63) to observe students reference the three kinds of touches discussed in the presentation. While self blame was observed as the least often reported aspect of the presentation (3.33 ± 0.82). Counselors perceived students retaining any of the three main points from the presentation, the point of trusted adults was also reported higher than others (4.5 ± 0.55). Counselors perceived students to retain the different kinds of touches (3.83 ± 0.75) more than the self blame aspect (3.33 ± 0.82). **CONCLUSION:** Overall this study found GISD counselors perceive Play It Safe! to be an effective course. Students being able to receive this presentation allows them to identify what physical and sexual abuse is in an age appropriate manner.