"Solid Living in a Shattered World: The Psychopathological Dynamics and Impact of School Shootings On Safety and Self Esteem Among School Age Children"

Eric Rogers, Ph.D, Professor of Psychology, College of Lake County, Chicago, Il

29th International Conference on Public Mental Health and Neuroscience

July 16-18, 2018 Dubai, UAE

Theme: ''Amelioration on Public Mental Health & Delve into Neuroscience''

Bringing People Together at World Mental Health 2018

Abstract:

Exposure to violence at school remains a significant problem for children and adolescents. This study examined the relationship between exposure to violence at school and child reports of psychological trauma symptoms and violent behavior. Rates and degrees of violence vary among states in the U.S. and in countries around the world. Rates of witnessing and experiencing violence in the U.S. have ranged from 56% of elementary -school students witnessing someone else being beaten up to 87% of students witnessing someone else being hit,slapped, or punched at school in the past year. Nearly half (44 %) of middle -school youth were threatened at school. After accounting for demographic effects, witnessing violence at school accounted for more variance than being victimized by violence at school in predicting both psychological trauma symptoms and violent behavior. Research data consistently reflects that students who were exposed to high levels of violence at school also were significantly more likely to experience clinical levels of trauma symptoms than students who were exposed to low levels of violence at school. The association between exposure to violence at school and child well being in terms of self esteem and safety are being discussed nationally, locally, regionally and internationally around the world.

Equally important, The level of violence in schools has been increasing in recent years, as more violence perpetration and victimization occurs away from school than at school. In general, schools remain relatively safe places, with fewer homicides and nonfatal injuries than in homes or neighborhoods (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Although rates of victimization from violence at school are declining, witnessing violence at school remains a serious problem for young people because youth spend a large portion of their day among large, often loosely managed groups of peers in school. Recent research has examined the impact of violence exposure on mental health and behavior, but little research has focused on the impact of school -specific violence exposure, defined here as being either a witness to violence or being a direct victim of violence while at school. Studies that have examined violence exposure at school have focused almost exclusively on adolescents or on high -risk samples. This study specifically examines exposure to school violence and its relationship to psychological trauma symptoms and violent behavior among children and adolescents. School violence ranges from incidents of bullying and threats to weapon carrying, homicide and spree shootings and fatalities. Despite recent declines and a federal emphasis on creating safe schools, violence still exists at high rates in our schools, and we still know little about the specific impact of exposure to violence at school on child mental health and behavior. Schools have not been immune to the severest forms of violence. School -associated violent deaths occurred on school grounds have often resulted in homicides, suicides, homicide –suicides, legal intervention deaths, and unintentional

firearm deaths, with students accounting for the majority of these deaths. While the risk of being a homicide victim at school is extremely low, students are not isolated from other types of crime and violence inclusive of rape, sexual assault, aggravated assaults, etc.) Whether as a witness or a victim, exposure to violence is related to a number of emotional and behavioral problems, such as posttraumatic stress, anxiety, anger, depression, dissociation, and self-destructive and aggressive behavior. Research also has found that children who persistently are victimized from violence suffer from higher levels of depression, anxiety, and loneliness compared to nonvictimized children. .Exposure to violence in general also is associated positively with risk for per perpetrating aggression and violence. Despite this recognition, little research has focused on the impact of violence exposure and trauma resulting from such in school, a place where children spend a great deal of their time and where significant socialization and learning occurs. The earlier a child is exposed to violence, the greater the potential long-term consequences. Thus, it is critical to examine exposure to violence among young children and not wait until adolescence. In this study, the relationship is examined between school -specific violence exposure and two outcomes: 1)child self -reported psychological trauma symptoms; and 2)violent behavior that give rise to self esteem problems with the hope of traditional, creative and proactive interventions that deny, prevent and/or minimize trauma among school age children.

Bio:

Dr. Eric Rogers is a Professor of Psychology and Counseling in Chicago, Illinois.. He is also an Educator, Author, Consultant, Life Coach, Advocate, Teaching Artist, History Storyteller, World Traveler and Overachiever. As a national transformational motivational speaker, he lectures on Race, Cultural Diversity, Posttraumatic Stress, Multiculturalism, Ethics and Counseling on Everyday Personal and Life Issues, Careers and Relationships. A Harvard graduate and former "Teacher of the Year "recipient, Dr. Rogers lectures and speaks nationwide and internationally providing seminars and workshops around the world including (the U.S., Africa, Caribbean Islands and Europe)