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Stakeholder Perceptions of Gun Violence Perpetrated by Young Men

Birda Garrett
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Education

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Birda Garrett

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Review Committee

Dr. Edward Kim, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty

Dr. Debra Beebe, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Dr. Michael Brunn, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer

Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University

2018

Abstract

Stakeholder Perceptions of Gun Violence Perpetrated by Young Men

by

Birda Pleasant Garrett

MA, Texas State University, 1999

BA, Huston-Tillotson University, 1963

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

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Abstract

In three low socioeconomic urban communities of Greenwood (pseudonym), young men's lack of education provides dim prospects of employment, possibly causing the young men to turn to gun violence. The purpose of this study was to understand the perceptions of concerned clergy, law officials, and members of a Neighborhood Watch organization regarding the factors that contribute to gun violence in the southern communities in the United States. The conceptual framework for this study was Bandura's modeling theory. The central research question addressed how the community stakeholder groups described their perceptions regarding gun violence among young male adults. For this qualitative case study, a total of 9 stakeholders from the clergy, law officials, and Neighborhood Watch organization who had knowledge about the issues being investigated were selected through purposeful sampling and interviewed individually and in a focus group. The data were coded and categorized for themes. Thick descriptions of the stakeholder perspectives were combined with notes and interviews. The emerging themes were lack of education, inappropriate leadership, and an unhealthy community life; therefore, suggesting that professional development needs to be provided to the stakeholders on how to support the unemployed men in achieving skills through education, developing leadership skills through positive role modeling, and building a better community life through nonviolent social skills. The results indicated that applying skills to the service of young men exposed to gun violence would contribute to positive social change by understanding other potential causes of the gun violence problem. The implications for positive social change will become evident as young men become educated, find employment, and regain self-esteem and confidence in their ability to lead.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the memory of my parents who met every challenge head on like the champions they were. They nurtured my interest by supporting my dreams to make the dreams a reality. It is because of them that I have invested many hours in this project study. Knowing that they would be pleased with my effort to be steadfast and bounded in the work, I embraced their wisdom.

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Section 1: The Problem

The naturalistic setting of this study was urban communities. The problem was young men who lack education in three of the Greenwood (a pseudonym used to protect the participants' rights and privacy) urban communities turning to gun violence. These were low socioeconomic communities in an urban setting. The study focused on perceptions of members of the Neighborhood Watch organization, local clergy, and law officials regarding gun violence by young men ages 20 to 29 years. Evidence suggested that community leaders can help improve safety and protection by sending messages to young people that gun violence is not an acceptable way to resolve conflict (see Reich, Culross, & Behrman, 2002). These communities appeared to have little to no understanding of why the gun violence was occurring. This study addressed the low socioeconomic conditions prevalent in the environment and their association with a high rate of gun violence.

Two families in the communities had experienced one or more members who died as a result of gun violence even though they were not directly involved in the gun violence struggle; they became victims of circumstances by being in the wrong place at the wrong time. One study participant shared that her female neighbor answered the door early in the morning and was killed by gang members who expected the neighbor's son to be the one to open the door. Some residents in the three Greenwood communities became witnesses to individuals being threatened with a gun, shot at, or involved in other gun-related violence (see Lomax, 2002). Another study participant reported the following:

There was a shooting involving some of the children at our church, but they were not the victims, nor were they the perpetrators. They were just with someone who did this. Nobody was shot from the church, but some of our kids were involved in it.

Gun violence is not only a local problem; it is impacting many communities throughout the United States (see Sanghani, 2012). Guns and violence are part of many cultures across the United States (see Davies & Evans, 2011; Fast, 2003; Kalish & Kimmel, 2010; Volsky, 2013). Because death by firearms occurs in high numbers, it is important to investigate the causes of such violence (see Burgason, Thomas, & Berthelot, 2013). A shooting incident in the United States occurred in 2007 on the Virginia Tech University campus, where 27 people died. Another gun-related incident occurred in Tucson in 2011 that left 13 persons seriously injured. Both of these tragedies drew national attention. The gun is the second most common weapon used to murder victims (see Pretorius & Morgan, 2013).

Definition of the Problem

This research addressed the issue of limited education in three of the urban communities resulting in young adult men turning to gun violence. I conducted this study in a large city, which is referred to as Greenwood to protect the privacy of the participants. Greenwood is in the southern part of the United States and has a diverse racial composition (see World Population Statistics, 2013). High unemployment and low income were prevalent in Greenwood (see Areavibes, 2010-2017; Neighborhood Map,

2013-2014). The local educational setting in Greenwood was also experiencing problems (Participant 3). The young men had limited education.

In Greenwood, “about a quarter of all murders, aggravated assaults and disorderly conduct offenses from 2010 through 2012 involved a gun, which was the most common weapon used in nearly 4% of the homicides happening east of Interstate 35” (see Statesman, 2013, p. 1). Gun violence was part of the disorderly conduct that took place in the three Greenwood urban communities. The young men had easy access to guns and usually lived in single-parent households where the father was absent from the home (Participant 1). The young men looked for love and acceptance in gangs, which was often missing in the home (Participant 3). They joined gangs and carried guns. Three of the local urban communities in the Greenwood area had to contend with gangs that were aggressive. The young men used gun violence to gain status and recognition among their fellow gang members.

Gangs exhibit many common characteristics, and some were found among the young men of Greenwood. Bennett and Brookman (2009) reported that gang members have no respect for anyone, but they seek to earn respect for themselves through gun violence. They kill indiscriminately, and many times innocent people are caught in the gunfire (see Rojas-Flores et al., 2013). The young men in Greenwood who joined gangs were forced to earn respect from other gang members, and sometimes innocent people were killed in the process (Participant 3).

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

The community is a complex and difficult web of human relationships (see Fowler & Krush, 2008). A caring community's mission makes life easier for those who live there (see Kreisle, 2012). The residents in this type of community are secure. By contrast, three of the Greenwood urban communities were home to gun violence. The gun violence made these communities unsafe and insecure. In Cock's (1997) opinion, the gun symbolizes the failure by society to build a secure environment.

The lack of education and the absence of fathers in the home to model acceptable behavior gave the young men in the Greenwood urban communities a reason to attach themselves to guns and become the providers by taking what was needed for the family (Participant 1). The status quo is a man needs to provide for himself and his family. These young men substituted being a provider in place of getting an education. They lived in low socioeconomic urban communities where basic survival needs were barely met, if at all. Participant 1 perceived that the young men used guns to take what they needed for basic survival.

Cock (1997) found hope in weaning people off firearms when there was an understanding of why people were attached to them. The choice of intervention strategies depends on understanding the underlying reasons for gun violence. Although some successful efforts have been made to curtail gun violence in many communities, people who reside in gun-violent communities continue to remain vulnerable (see Gaylord-Harden, Cunningham, & Zelencik, 2011). With the lack of education in the Greenwood

communities, many people in the surrounding areas also remain vulnerable to gun violence.

Socioeconomic Components Contributing to Gun Violence

Three socioeconomic components contributing to gun violence are (a) unemployment, (b) poverty, and (c) crime (see Šileika & Bekeryté, 2012). Poverty is a factor in gun violence across all age groups (see Massetti et al., 2011). Table 1 shows poverty rates for the three Greenwood communities addressed in the study; data were obtained from the Neighborhood Map (2013-2014), which included data from the United States Census and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's crime database. The data include percentages of poverty for residents of Greenwood living below the federal poverty level, as well as the violent crime index and the total residents in each of the three communities.

Table 1

Living in Poverty in 2013-2014

Neighborhoods	Violent crime index	Percentage of population in poverty	Total residents in the neighborhoods
1	15%	27.4	4,915
2	17%	38.9	5,614
3	20%	17.9	6,530

Violence appeared to be a way of life for many of the young men in the Greenwood urban communities. Neighborhood 1 had fewer total residents than Neighborhood 3 and also less violent crime; however, more people were living in poverty in Neighborhood 1 than in Neighborhood 3 (27.4% vs. 17.9%). Neighborhood 3 had more businesses for entertainment, namely bars, night clubs, dance halls, and pool halls that were in this neighborhood and not in the others. Fewer businesses were in Neighborhood 1, and none were in Neighborhood 2. Communities that have businesses

often attract people (see Ryu & Swinney, 2012), and people create crowds (see Shearmur, 2015). Crowds often set the stage for violent acts and unsafe environments (see Beugré & Das, 2013; Lombard & Batianga-Kinzi, 2014). Neighborhood 3 had the lowest percentage of poverty because former residents moved out when their homes were taken away with the increase in property taxes beyond what the residents could pay.

The high percentage of gun violence called attention to the need to study the causes of gun violence in the Greenwood communities. Communities with many economic problems tend to have increased gun violence as a result of increased gang activity and gang-related crimes (see Reed et al., 2009). The gangs in the Greenwood communities increased the rate of gun violence because the gangs carried guns. Kelly (2010) found that living around community violence was a predictor of men's intent to perpetrate gun violence. Reed et al. (2009) and Kelly (2010) found that both the exposure to community violence and the neighborhood's economic environment could influence the intent to commit gun violence.

Some young men in the Greenwood urban communities had gone to jail for more than 6 months on drug-related charges (see U.S. Attorney's Office, 2012). It is illegal for individuals who have been to jail for more than 6 months to carry a gun. In the United States, there are gun ownership requirements for eligibility. Guns are not legally available to individuals who have had a jail sentence or who have violated the law in certain ways (see Price & Norris, 2010; Selek, Can, & Yabanoglu, 2012; Thompson, Price, Khubchandani, & Dowling, 2011). It is also against federal law to make guns available to those prohibited from possessing a firearm (see Ridgeway, Braga, Tita, & Pierce, 2011).

Unemployment and poverty. Two of the three main factors influencing the use of gun violence are poverty and unemployment. Mayfield and Borstorff (2012) theorized that high unemployment and low income are two reasons for gun violence. Poverty and unemployment were two factors seen in the Greenwood communities. Šileika and Bekeryté (2013) found that unemployment affected people's mind and health, producing low self-esteem and stress. Joslyn and Haider-Markel (2013) reported that individual characteristics of individuals who commit gun violence, such as mental illness, were also frequently associated with this behavior.

Crime. In an environment of unemployment and poverty, crime can increase. Crime was the third socioeconomic component contributing to gun violence. Income fell off as unemployment increased, which contributed to people committing crimes. However, Šileika and Bekeryté (2012) found that poverty was the strongest cause of crime because poverty meant that income was insufficient to provide enough food and other essential items. There are strong survival drives at work that cause individuals to react inappropriately.

Children who live in poverty are more likely to commit crimes than those who do not live in poverty (see Šileika & Bekeryté, 2012). Correlations between poverty and gun violence by young men in the Greenwood urban communities can be found (Participant 1). Because the young men in the Greenwood urban communities live below the poverty level, their economic situation may cause gun violence.

The purpose of this study was to understand the stakeholder groups' perceptions of (a) factors that contribute to young adult male gun violence in the Greenwood urban

communities, and (b) measures that could reduce the gun violence in these communities. An understanding of the contributing causes of gun violence, as perceived by stakeholder groups, could be used to alleviate this problem.

Definitions of Terms

Andragogy: Any intentional and professionally guided activity that aims at a change in adult persons (see Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2011).

Caring community: A community that makes life easier for those who live there. (Kreisle, 2012).

Community: A complex and difficult web of human relationships within varying environments (see Fowler, 2008).

Desensitization: A mechanism that researchers have frequently described as having long-term effects (see Fanti, Vanman, Henrich, & Avraamides, 2009). After repeated exposure to negative conditions throughout a person's lifetime, the psychological impact of the condition becomes emotionally and cognitively reversed from the norm. Human beings have an innate response to violence that typically produces fear, increased heart rate, perspiration, and discomfort, but desensitization diminishes emotional responsiveness to an aversive stimulus after repeated exposure to it [see Fanti et al. (as cited in Cantor, 1998; Wolpe, 1982)].

Emic: Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010) reported that the practitioner is able to draw on insider perspectives while taking an active part in the research.

Etic: Merriam (2009) claimed that the reader gets an outside perspective of the culture from the organized themes of the research.

Gang: Goldman, Giles, and Hogg (2014) defined gang as a group of individuals claiming control over territory in a community and engaging in illegal forms of behavior.

Integrative perpetrators: Individuals who have characteristics consistent with criminal convictions (see Abrahams, Jewkes, & Mathews, 2010). The perpetrators' motivation is the need to feel as if they are in positions of authority (see Hollows & Fritzon, 2012). Integration occurs when the perpetrators combine rational and cultural approaches (see Bennett & Brookman, 2009). Perpetrators rationalize when and how to use gun violence to suit themselves, and they want their power over the victim to be recognized (see Bennett & Brookman, 2009).

Significance of the Study

Studying gun violence may help three Greenwood urban communities lower the gun violence rate by effecting change in the residents' understanding and promoting a different reaction. Change in the residents' understanding comes from community discussions because the residents receive support from such discussions; change in understanding tends to lead to educational interventions, which must be supported by structural changes. Bekerman and Zembylas (2010) posited that educational interventions through discussions need structural changes to be effective. One example of structural change involves educating members of the community so that they can become leaders in delivering what is needed to persons who are responsive to change. Another example of structural change involves reducing local gun violence by changing the environmental conditions. A third structural change involves promoting social change of the environmental conditions through the influence of a movement. This study was

significant in promoting social change by addressing the need to refine and promote understanding of how factors and changing economic conditions can decrease gun violence.

Research Questions

A review of the literature indicated a gap in practice on gun violence perpetrated by young adult men ages 20 to 29 years. To determine the factors that contribute to urban gun violence and how to curtail or decrease it, three stakeholder groups were identified and interviewed regarding their perceptions of gun violence. Two research questions guided this study:

1. What are the community stakeholder groups' perceptions regarding gun violence among young adult men?
2. How do the community stakeholder groups perceive mitigating gun violence among young adult men?

The purpose of the study was to explore perceptions of gun violence at the grassroots level. Having the Neighborhood Watch organization give their perceptions of what they thought was the cause of the gun violence by young adult men in the Greenwood urban communities was the core of the study. Because members of the Neighborhood Watch organization are not trained in criminal behavior, the perceptions of law officials and the local clergy were included in the data collection. These stakeholder groups provided data that may be used to think differently about and develop alternative approaches to reducing gun violence.

Review of Literature

Conceptual Framework

This study was based on learning through Bandura's (1971) modeling. Two areas of research informed this project study regarding young men's gun violence: (a) examples of learning through modeling and (b) adult development. Subtopics provided greater detail to each area. In 1971, Bandura noted that modeling could be used to modify behavior toward an appropriate response. In 1994, Kegan supported Bandura's notions with the adult development theory and its attributes of responsibility and trustworthiness. Both authors reported factors that contributed to gun violence. These two areas of focus, modeling and adult development, provided the context for understanding gun violence in three Greenwood urban communities.

According to Bandura (as cited in Gordon & Cui, 2015), young adults are afforded the opportunity to observe and internalize values of others as it relates to education. Education is a way to have hope for the future. Participant 1 reported that if a young man does not have hope, he has nothing to live for, and he will take what he desires because he feels that he has nothing to lose. Education is the foundation for whatever is chosen in life. Career success later in life is mediated in part by educational attainment in young adulthood (see Gordon & Cui, 2015). Gordon and Cui (2015) argued that "establishing career success is a salient feature of adulthood" (p. 763). However, career success becomes less likely when young men are forced to drop out of school to provide for their families. Participant 2 claimed that "the higher the dropout rate in the community, the more gun violence there is in general."

Miller, Grabell, Thomas, Bermann, and Graham-Bermann (2012) argued that gun violence should not be examined based on one factor or another, but rather as thriving through interactions across many domains. I addressed factors such as television, movies, music, gangs, and socioeconomic characteristics as potentially associated with gun violence. Numerous researchers found that these factors were associated with gun violence, which supported the conceptual framework of this study. Other factors supporting the framework were modeling, moral values, and education for adult development (see Bennett & Brookman, 2009; Boxer, Huesmann, Bushman, O'Brien, & Mocerri, 2009; Hernandez-Ramdwar, 2009; Johnson, Cohen, Smailes, Kasen, & Brook, 2002; Krahe et al., 2011; Schiavone, 2009; Verdoodt, Rutten, Soetaert, & Mottart, 2010). The importance of public health (see Williamson, Guerra, & Tyson, 2014) and access to guns (see Mertens & Sorenson, 2012) also supported the framework.

Unemployment, poverty, and crime are factors associated with gun violence (see Šileika & Bekeryté, 2013). The increase in unemployment reduces income and can promote the use of guns (see Šileika & Bekeryté, 2013). Šileika and Bekeryté (2013) argued that the effect of unemployment slowed down the rate of wage increases and reduced government revenues. An economic situation is aggravated when there is not enough spending because people do not have enough spendable income. Low income is considered one of the causes for high homicide rates in a community (see Almgren, Guest, Immerwahr, & Spittel, 1998). The median earning for men in the three East Greenwood urban communities was low with an average monthly income of \$1,844.91 (see Areavibes, 2010-2013). This income was below the poverty level, set at \$2,184 for a

family of three (see Food and Nutrition Service, 2016). More than 4% of the households received food stamps in the past 12 months (see City-Data, 2011). According to data from the stakeholder groups, the young men in the community seemed to be struggling to make a living. Struggling to make a living does not equate with gun violence, but sometimes lengthy struggling may be cause for individuals to be attracted to faster ways to get what they need by stealing or joining gangs rather than continuing with their fruitless struggles (Participant 9).

Modeling defined. Evidence that people used modeling to learn from one another was provided in the literature (see Blumberg, Bierwirth, & Schwartz, 2008; Brooks, 2009; Parks, 2008), but defining *modeling* was somewhat challenging. Some researchers defined modeling by using the sense of sight. Humans were created with an innate ability to learn through one or all of their five senses: sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. Sight is one of the most prominent senses. Humans store images in the brain for later use (see Danker & Anderson, 2010). The brain then helps the person decide when to retrieve this information and the right or wrong way to use it (see Pastötter, Schicker, Niedernhuber, & Bäuml, 2010). As creatures of sight with abilities to receive, store, and retrieve images, humans exhibit the tendency to imitate what they observe (see Nielsen, 2011). Heyes (2011) reported that healthy adults are prone to copy the actions of others.

Justification of the framework. Bandura (1971) reported that observing someone successfully engaging in a task increased confidence to successfully complete the task before the observer starts it him- or herself. Other researchers demonstrated role models as representations of the possible (see DeNaeghel et al., 2014; Dunn & Lo, 2015).

Role models showed that they had been successful, so it was possible for others to succeed. According to Morgenroth, Ryan, and Peters (2015), Bandura's self-efficacy theory focused on how to do something, not whether something was possible. As the current study showed, it was important for the young men to know how to avoid connections with gangs and other antagonizing groups, not whether it was possible to do so. Morgenroth et al. posited that when individuals are considering attributes they possess for making choices about whose behaviors to follow, they are basing these choices on their values and goals rather than on the role model's attributes and behaviors. The individual creates his or her own role models and benefits from them. Bandura's (as cited in Elliott & Kim, 2013) self-efficacy theory provided an explanation of how a person benefits from observing success: Self-efficacy beliefs are formed through direct experience.

Search Terms

In the Walden University Library, I entered the words *young male adults* and *violence*. Looking at these results, I found only five sources. Other search terms included *modeling theories*, *movies*, *television viewing*, and *television* combined with *gun violence* and/or *young men* and combined with *violence* and/or *weapons*, *safety*, *access to firearms*, and/or *role models*. I also searched *role models* combined with *music*, *public health* and/or *guns*, *adult development*, and *moral values*. Most of the articles included results that were reported in children. I found a limited number of studies on television and movie gun violence by young adult men. Other useful key words I entered were *poverty*, *unemployment*, *limited education*, and *low-income*. I also attempted several

iterations with additional combinations of terms. Articles geared toward the adult population generally dealt with the emotional status of the adult individual. Based on the research reported with children, I concluded that if children were affected by the gun violence they were exposed to, a correlation could be assumed to exist between young men and the gun violence they were exposed to.

Review of the Broader Problem

As demonstrated in the Virginia Tech and Tucson shootings in the United States, gun violence in the larger population makes it important for stakeholders in the Greenwood communities to understand this issue, as contributing factors appear to be common in all incidents. As in Virginia and Tucson, gun-related crimes in the Greenwood communities involved young men living below the poverty level in less than adequate environmental conditions. Gun violence is higher in communities where there are high concentrations of poor and unemployed people (see Haegerich & Dahlberg, 2011; Stieve, 2012).

Current research literature review. Bandura's (1971) self-efficacy theory includes modeling as an important factor for students. Although all beliefs are important, self-efficacy seemed to help students especially in times of difficulty. Researchers also suggested that a coping model was motivational and increased student efficacy during class. Dunn and Lo (2015) defined a coping model as a student who was not at the top of the class but struggled to overcome challenges to success. Bernacki, Nokes-Malach, and Alevan (2015) reported that self-efficacy was associated with prior and future learning. Winans-Solis (2014) and Zack and Crow (2013) maintained that service-learning and

self-directed learning should be considered learning projects that are initiated by the learners themselves.

Bandura. Prior researchers developed structural approaches to how people learn. Two of those structural approaches were modeling and adult development. Bandura (1969) pointed out that adults who were around children expressing counter judgments were influential in modifying the children's behavior. If modeling can socially influence behavior for an appropriate response or cause, it can also socially modify behavior toward an inappropriate response or cause (see Özerk & Özerk, 2015). The young men in the three Greenwood urban communities who joined gangs modified their behavior based on the social influence of their chosen gang (Participant 3).

Bandura (1971) claimed that there were four components to modeling theory: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. The attention stage involves the attraction of what was seen. The retention stage involves creating a mental image of what was seen. The reproduction stage includes performing what was seen, and motivation stage pushes the person to continue doing what he or she was doing.

Celebrity standing. Bandura's (1971) social learning and self-efficacy theory includes the effectiveness of modeling and observational learning. Bandura argued that models with high celebrity standing are powerful role models, and celebrities are sometimes in roles involving gun violence. Bandura (as cited in Atkin, 1976) posited that models who possess high celebrity standing are imitated more than those who do not have high standing. Although Bandura (1971) viewed modeling behavior in a positive way to modify behavior in the direction of an appropriate response, modeling could also

be used to modify behavior in the direction of an inappropriate response when exhibited by role models who boasted about their exploits of violence. Singers, actors, and other performers with high celebrity standing in the music world serve as role models (see Hernandez-Ramdwar, 2009). Through popular culture, young men are strongly influenced, especially those who lack stable and positive role models in their daily lives. Many young men lack a male role model; some even lack the support of a single-mother household (see Hernandez-Ramdwar, 2009). The young men in the communities under study were vulnerable to modeling that influenced them to turn toward gun violence.

Social pressure. Young men are receiving a powerful message from role models who boast about their exploits of violence (see Hernandez-Ramdwar, 2009). Besides modeling by high celebrities, powerful messages from gang modeling are apparent in the literature as well, but responsibility for action is sometimes displaced. Bandura's (as cited in Boardley, Grix, & Dewar, 2014) view of displacement is that people refuse to accept responsibility for what they do and put the blame on someone else. They believe external agents are responsible for their behavior and its consequences (see Stanger, Kavussanu, Boardley, & Ring, 2013). For example, it is unlawful for an individual to use gun violence in a gang to obtain something desirable. However, gang leaders use their power to influence followers to act unethically to obtain acceptance by the gang. The young man can blame the gang leader for making him take something by force that belongs to somebody else, but the bottom line is that the individual is the one responsible (see Hinrichs, Wang, Hinrichs, & Romero, 2012).

Cognitive mechanisms. With respect to modeling in gangs, Bandura's (as cited in Hymel & Perren, 2015) social cognitive theory of moral agency provided an explanation of how adults think irrationally about their engagement in gun violence. Gangs model inhumane behavior against others. Bandura identified several different cognitive mechanisms through which individuals morally disengage: (a) viewing negative behavior as serving a moral function, (b) making negative behavior sound more acceptable, (c) viewing a behavior as less negative relative to far worse acts, (d) emphasizing positive outcomes that can occur, and (e) viewing the victim as somehow deserving of negative treatment. Moral disengagement detaches the process for preventing unethical behavior and justifies it by rationalizing the wrongdoing (see Welsh, Ordóñez, Snyder, & Christian, 2015). Moral disengagement provides the individual with justification for unethical behavior. The association between moral disengagement and aggression raised further questions for future research, some of which were examined in this study.

Resistance training. Modeling can be used to resist social influences that urge perpetrators to commit crimes. The need for training on resistance skills was based on the conception that young people are vulnerable due to their inability to resist social influences. Based on Bandura's self-efficacy theory, Giovazolias and Themeli (2014) emphasized that, just as inappropriate social influences can be modeled, appropriate social influences can be modeled as well. Giovazolias and Themeli (2014) found a clear indication that a strong ability to refrain is part of a person's self-efficacy. If a person possesses high self-efficacy, he or she is expected to resist peer pressure with proper

guidance. The young men in Greenwood were expected to benefit from resistance training and succeed in ignoring pressure from gangs.

Learning development. In the social cognitive theory, the seminal psychologist Bandura (1971) theorized that a person can learn and develop through social interactions. Teaching and learning were considered part of social interaction (see Apostol, Soica, Manasia, & Stefan, 2013). To maximize the learning experience, educators need to promote vicarious learning through modeling (see Alessi, Dillon, & Kim, 2015). Self-efficacy was considered the most important mechanism in Bandura's social cognitive theory (see Gilson, Chow, & Feltz, 2012; Na & Na, 2013). The social cognitive theory asserts that the exhibited behavior is goal-directed, and educators can direct the goal through modeling. Having entrepreneurial role models can increase the degree to which a person feels efficacious about starting a business because the model can provide an example of mastery through exposure to his or her successes (see Austin & Nauta, 2016).

Motivation. Experiences and persuasive rhetoric were factors identified as affecting development by Bandura (1971) and shown to do so in some studies (see Fiala, Rhodes, Blanchard, & Anderson 2013; Wu & Wang, 2015). To target the key behaviors outlined in the social cognitive theory, participants needed to be educated (see Morgan, Scott, Young, Plotnikoff, Collins, & Callister, 2014). The purpose of education was to improve and maintain the participants' performances for the desired behaviors. Modeling can be used as a motivating tool in the hands of the educator. Many of the young adult men in the urban Greenwood communities were targets for educational deficiencies,

mainly because of nonacademic completion. Bandura's (2012) self-efficacy theory predicted that preparation was needed in the academic career.

Task completion. Leong, Ooi, Chong, and Lin (2013) commented on Bandura's self-efficacy theory, paraphrasing it as the ability of the individual to believe that his or her performance will be successful. Other researchers reported similar opinions (see Andersen, Andersen, Muurholm, & Roessler, 2014). Salanova and Rodríguez-Sánchez, (2014) pointed out that, when the individual attains his or her goal at one level, a higher goal is set continuously for each level that follows. Self-efficacy beliefs influence how people perceive the challenges and the skills they possess to complete the tasks successfully. With greater self-efficacy came more challenge demands to succeed nonviolently, and this led to more engagement (see Ventura, Salanova, & Llorens, 2015). By practicing more, people developed and improved their competence even further (see Desbiens, Gagnon & Fillion, 2011). Ordinarily, people seemed to engage in tasks that were not challenging and avoided those that were (see Chong & Kua, 2016). Within the social cognitive theory, more emphasis was placed on beliefs than on competence (see Lorente, Salanova, Martínez, & Vera, 2014). Efficacy beliefs could still be a deciding factor in the fulfillment of a job (see Vera, LeBlanc, Taris, & Salanova, 2014). The young men in the urban Greenwood communities lived in poverty and needed to work. They lacked employment and needed opportunities to put these theories to the test.

Many of the described factors contributed to the gun violence perpetrated by young men in the three Greenwood communities under study. Some researchers called for further studies regarding the social persuasion factor in curriculum planning. I

decided to examine the social persuasion aspect in the current study. The social cognitive theory helped to organize the study's framework to gain a better understanding of the young men in the urban Greenwood communities. From the framework, a consistent tendency developed, as described by Thorlton, McElmurry, Park, and Hughes (2012), indicating that personal as well as environmental factors could be the cause of gun violence.

Kegan. In addition to the structural approach to learning through modeling, Kegan (1994) theorized that being responsible and trustworthy were attributes learned through adult development. The author found that parents wanted their children to act appropriately, not just to avoid consequences, but because there was an internal satisfaction derived from doing so. Kegan reported that children developed into adults based on their understanding of what the world was all about. There may be adult underdevelopment on the part of the young men in the Greenwood urban communities for lack of adult modeling.

Kegan's (1994) theory interfaced with the study of gun violence in that it caused people to look at the maturity level of the perpetrators in the community, and to examine whether the knowledge of the young men encompassed trustworthiness and responsibility, which are signs of adult development. With respect to chronological age, the young men in the three Greenwood urban communities ought to be in the first stage of adult development; however, with regards to their behavior, they were at a stage of delayed adolescence. Neither the young men's chronological age nor their behavior was at a mature stage, as these young men were developing into manhood. Buxton (2012)

found that men focused on power and were egotistical, independent, wanted to be problem solvers, decision makers, and were not ones to ask for help. In comparison, the young men in three Greenwood urban communities took what they needed to solve problems, chose gangs in making decisions, and controlled territory to focus on power. Development is delayed when young adults fail to discover that rules and laws regulate lives and that all must conform to them (Kegan, 1994). “The word *adolescence* shares an intimate relationship with the word *adult*; it means to grow up” (see Kegan, 1994, pp. 19-20).

Responsibility. The expectation for adults was to conform to a metaphorical societal curriculum of assuming responsibility, looking out for the development of children, and confining to a set of values conveyed through the public voices of the culture’s experts and authorities (Kegan, 1994). The adults had a hidden curriculum that suggested that young men stop doing certain things they are used to doing and start doing something else at certain times. The curriculum addressed taking responsibility, being trustworthy, and becoming a part of the adult community. The curriculum also addressed what the world was all about. Kegan (1994) explained that the mind changed the thinking with the acquisition of new knowledge, and the new knowledge gave a better understanding about the world and allowed the developing person to become partners in the way others thought. As knowledge was received, the new knowledge deepened understanding, altered the way people used to think, and encouraged partnering with those who thought alike. The young men in the three Greenwood urban communities may have been doing exactly what Kegan described but with different values placed on their

actions than was done in other social communities. Young adults alter their consciousness and change their way of thinking through adult development (see Kegan, 1994), and Greenwood parents expected these young adults to mature naturally. What this study added to the natural course of maturation was the infusion of new knowledge to enhance the development with a sense of responsibility, an important moral virtue.

Review of Topic Literature

The literature review revealed eight key topics with relevance to this study, which are discussed in the following sections: (a) television, (b) movies, (c) gun access, (d) protection, (e) music, (f) moral values, (g) public health, and (h) education.

Television. Television is one vehicle often involved in behavior imitation. Modeling on television could be a factor contributing to gun violence by young men in three of the Greenwood urban communities. Some researchers provided evidence that humans imitated behavior they saw on television, even violent behavior (see Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963; Susca & Proffitt, 2011). Others argued that there is reasonable doubt to connect violence seen on television to actual murders (see Kafer, Hodkin, Furrow, & Landry, 1993).

Inappropriate messages could be transmitted by television and other media. A powerful message was delivered when the role model was engaged in negative conduct without consequences; this made it appear that it was all right to be violent. The hero who had accomplished his task in a violent manner, yet was verbally rewarded for his success, became a role model in the eyes of the beholder—a clearly misleading message. Furthermore, there is so much gun violence modeled on television that a viewer can

become emotionally desensitized to gun violence, and the desensitization could cause the person to become less and less emotionally involved or sympathetic toward real victims of gun violence.

Desensitization is a mechanism that researchers have frequently described as having long-term effects (see Fanti et al., 2009). Some researchers investigated desensitization to violence using latent growth modeling in participants' responses over time. Desensitization is a process that gradually reduces and changes the emotional response to stimuli. The key to its success proved to be repeated exposure to the behavior. The combination of increased frequency and repeated exposure rendered the stimulus familiar. With most stimuli, excitement is reduced with increasing familiarity. Repeated exposure to television violence caused viewers to become less sympathetic toward victims of violence (see Fanti et al., 2009). A similar view was held by other authors. Viewers became desensitized to violence; violence became "normal" (see Krahe et al., 2011). Likewise, the young men in the Greenwood urban communities could be desensitized to gun violence, and they could become less emotionally sympathetic toward real victims of violence because of too much exposure to television violence.

Correlations between children and young men could possibly be found, as well as correlations between television violence and real-life violence. The actual lived experiences of the children could also contribute to their desensitization to violence and the victims of the high rate of gun violence in the community. Too much exposure to television violence could cause similar problems for children. Steps should be taken early on to prevent excessive exposure to television's distorted image of what is normal

community life. This would require pediatricians to try to have a positive impact on gun violence by advising the parents of young children to curtail the latter's watching of too much violence on TV (see Webster & Wilson, 1994). Television and movies have a strong influence on how people think and act (see Boxer et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2002; Krahe et al., 2011).

Movies. Besides modeling from television, young people today are often exposed to violence in movies (see Verdoodt et al., 2010). The entertainment media often idolize violent people as heroes or heroines and present violence to their audiences in a way that makes it seem appropriate. When heroes and heroines are applauded after their successful accomplishment of violent acts, it makes the violence appear to be all right. The praise received for achieving success through violent behavior legitimizes and endorses gun violence as a solution to problems (see Stack, Bowman, & Lester, 2012). In movies, perpetrators suffer no negative consequences after using firearms (see Klein & Shiffman, 2011). This creates the impression that guns are important for self-protection. Many perpetrators do not see violence as a problem; they rather see it as a solution to the problem (see Hollows & Fritzon, 2012). The notion of learning violence from movies was believed to be a real issue for the young men in the Greenwood urban communities and needed to be addressed in this study.

Although some scholars thought that television and movies were factors that contributed to gun violence, others did not hold such beliefs. It is true that many individuals witness gun violence on television and in movies and never commit such acts in real life. Hollows and Fritzon (2012) found that the difference between individuals

who committed gun violence and those who did not after seeing it portrayed on television and in movies existed within these individuals themselves and was based on their skills, personality, actions, motives, and other characteristics that were either consistent with or adverse to criminal inclinations and convictions (e.g., given to brutality).

Misleading images. Movies should not indicate that violence is an appropriate way to solve problems because that is misleading, argued Foster (2002), but movie producers have the constitutional right to make, sell, and benefit from gun violence in their movies. However, a perpetrator's actions sparked by those same images could incur the wrath of authorities (see Foster, 2002). Foster found that it would make more sense to propose a media ban on depicting guns and violence on television and in movies than to ask children or perpetrators to take the fall for imitating what society permitted them to be exposed to.

Position of authority. This is an age of violence, and television and the movie industry have become agents of corruption (see Eastham, 2009). The literature review produced evidence that so-called integrative perpetrators were individuals who had background characteristics consistent with criminal convictions (see Abrahams et al., 2010). Perpetrators made others hurt because they, themselves, had been hurt (see Kalish & Kimmel, 2010). Perpetrators were motivated by a need to be in a position of authority. Such an attitude was expected to be found in the three Greenwood urban communities under study, particularly among young men who were carrying guns.

Gun access. Many authors pointed out that blame for gun violence could be spread around. Some blamed the media for portraying gun violence and making it seem

all right or without negative consequences. Others blamed the parents for letting their children watch such dubious content. Still others blamed easy access to guns. Mertens and Sorenson (2012) found that gun availability was made easy through newspaper advertisements, magazines, and the Internet. Some displayed a more comprehensive understanding of this problem and explained that it was the interaction of all of these variables that led even more individuals to believe that gun violence was the answer to their problems (see James, 2003). It is important to pay attention to all domains and work toward improvement were necessary, instead of picking one factor or another and stop after laying blame for its contribution to gun violence (see Miller et al., 2012).

Protection. While many researchers explored how and why the use of guns caused great harm to local communities and that media exposure of the problem alone did not spare the citizenry from the negative effects of the largely unlimited availability of fire arms (see Fanti et al., 2009; Kelly, 2010; Krahe et al., 2011; Reich et al., 2002; Wilson, Woods, Emerson, & Donenberg, 2012), others pointed out that the foremost concern of many law-abiding citizens was protection. Hauser and Kleck (2012) argued that firearms are owned for protection by over 50% of the people. Some argued that guns were used to protect people from harm and provide safety (see Mayfield & Borstorff, 2012). This concern for safety or protection may encourage carrying weapons (see Felson & Pare, 2010).

Music. Rap singers use lyrics that heavily emphasize crime and violence (see Hernandez-Ramdwar, 2009). Young adults seem to listen to music all the time. They learn the lyrics and sing along with the artists. They are active participants in the

message. It is easy to see how singers with snappy rhythms and themes centered on gun violence, using words such as “keeping hand on the gun,” can be quite influential with young men. As with television, “continual and sustained consumption of specific images and texts over time does have an impact on a person’s mood, behavior, action, thought, lifestyle, and life choices” (see Hernandez-Ramdwar, 2009, p. 301).

Kurzban (2012) noted that music can produce some strong emotions. The lyrics of songs can draw emotions from listeners as the words are being processed. Kurzban pointed out that his eyes still tear up from one song on his computer’s *Sad Country Songs* list as the song’s narrator prays to God to take his own life in place of his wife’s because the narrator’s wife was dying while in the process of giving birth to their first child. Lyrics to songs are powerful. The words to songs can be internalized and become a part of the individual’s thinking. Young men are attracted to music by similar lifestyles and thoughts (see Tiernan, 2010).

The young men idolized artists such as 2Pac, Pumped Up Kicks, and 2 Live Crew, equating the artists’ lives with their own” (see Tiernan, 2010). In one of 2Pac’s rap songs, he talked about gangs and gangbanging in these words, “You see we live by the gun, so we die by the gun’s kids” (see Shakur, 2013, para. 2). Gun violence was highlighted in Pumped Up Kicks’s rap as well, “You better outrun my gun, and run faster than my bullet” (see Foster the People, 2011, para. 3). Gun violence was endorsed in both rap songs. The suggested solution in the songs was to get a gun and shoot another person. These messages are implants in the minds of young men who listen to this music over and over. The young men who faced similar situations in their lives as were related in the

songs connected easily to the messages from the songs. These young men saw themselves as the elite group that these artists were talking about.

When it comes to learning from role models, music is no exception. Bandura's (1971) learning theory addressed four components of learning by observation: (a) attention, (b) retention, (c) reproduction, and (d) motivation. Bandura found that (a) young adults were attracted by what they saw, especially, if an attractive singer or a well-dressed performer was involved. Bandura theorized that (a) the singer first got the attention of the young adults, and (b) second, the mental image was retained. The young adults then (c) remembered what they had seen and heard long after the event was over. That was the third stage, or reproduction. The fourth stage was (d) motivation. Because the young adults did not see the consequences of the negative acts lauded in the songs, they could be more easily motivated to act similarly, thinking that nothing bad would result or happen to them. The young men in the three Greenwood urban communities were attracted to music that presented ideologies that ran in opposition to the communities' ideologies.

Moral values. One other component of adult development is acquiring moral values. Traditional moral values used to define respect, fairness, caring, loyalty, integrity, humility, and service to all (see Sweeney & Fry, 2012). One way to acquire moral values is through education. These moral values can either be learned at home or at school. They can be taught by the family at home or by the teachers at school. However, many of the young men in the three Greenwood urban communities did not complete high school and may have missed out on opportunities of teaching and adult modeling by their teachers.

Establishing rules. Researchers found that people base the rules about how they should live their lives on moral values (see Sweeney & Fry, 2012). Responsibility can also be conceptualized as compliance with rules (see Passini, 2010). Once moral values have been instilled in the adolescent by careful teaching in the home, day after day, the young adult becomes asset to society (see Linsenbach, 2013). Kegan's (1994) adult development also entailed following rules and laws to regulate people's lives. When traditional moral values are instilled, the young men could become preservers of life.

Gangs. Some of the young men in the three Greenwood urban communities were gang members, and they did engage in gun violence, as gang members often do. Gangs do not comply with traditional rules. So, following societal rules and laws were missing from these young men's lives. A gang can be defined as a group that defends its territory through violent behavior (see Goldman et al., 2014). Gang membership establishes a sense of community, and the violent behavior exhibited by the members helps them to gain social status (see Weierstall et al., 2013). Young men are also motivated to join gangs hoping to gain power and money (see Wood, Alleyne, Mozova, & James, 2014). Pyrooz (2014) explained that the lives of young men changed when they joined a gang, and they did no longer exhibit a sense of traditional responsibility. However, Bennett and Brookman (2009) found that "there appear to be rules associated" (p. 2) with being in a gang. Gangs seemed to hold a countersense of moral values to the traditional ones. The gang leader followed the rules to be crowned leader. He pleased his group. It is important to be recognized as the group leader; gang leadership must be reliable. The leader was entrusted with responsibilities, and he needs to maintain his reputation for toughness.

Skelton (2012) found that men proved their “manliness” by exhibiting courage (p. 4). Gangs condoned and even encouraged violent behavior (see Bennett & Brookman, 2009). Some of the young men in the three Greenwood urban communities were thought to have embraced a gang’s moral values.

Disconnecting from gangs. Disconnecting from a gang seems to be difficult. Gang membership is considered a lifetime commitment, and the involvement is sanctioned. Abrams and Terry (2014) found that there was fear for safety and vulnerability to gun violence from others involved when young men chose to leave a gang. Using strategies such as concealing a person’s whereabouts by frequently changing locations and putting the telephone number under another name was the best way to run and hide. The young men’s fear of their own gang’s gun violence associated with anyone leaving could be another reason for the gun violence perpetrated by the young men in the study. Evidence-based public-health Cease Fire Programs are available that use violence interrupters to connect with outreach workers to help perpetrators work on leaving gangs (see Whitehill, Webster, Frattaroli, & Parker, 2013).

Public health. Gun violence is a public health problem. Whitehill et al. (2013) found a real health issue surfacing among the young men. Good health habits were major concerns for young men to show their masculinity (see DeVisser & McDonnell, 2013). Behavioral issues related to drinking alcohol were a public health problem when guns were close by. Dissing et al. (2013) found that good health diminished among men with increased consumption of alcohol. Alcohol consumption could or could not be a problem

of the young men in this study, but it had to be considered as a potential contributor to the gun violence in the Greenwood communities.

Education. Another component of adult development is the educational level attained. It was important to know that the acceptance of moral education increased the educational level (see Jarrar, 2013). Not having the basic qualifications achieved through a high school education or being ready for higher education was considered a low level of attainment in this study. The young men in the study had limited education; most had not completed high school. This low level of educational attainment could be an additional factor contributing to gun violence in the three Greenwood urban communities. Table 2 provides a detailed educational attainment profile of the people living in each of the three communities in seven different categories.

Table 2

Educational Attainment

Community	NHG	HG or GED	Some college	1 year of college or more	AD	BA	MA
#1	37%	10%	5%	12%	4%	17%	7%
#2	34%	11%	3%	15%	4%	14%	11%
#3	29%	5%	5%	13%	4%	25%	13%

Note. NHG = No High School Graduation. HG, GED = High School graduation or equivalent. AD = Associate degree. BA = Bachelor of Arts degree. MA = Master of Arts degree. Adapted with permission from “Neighborhood Map,” 2013, p. 6.

As can be seen in the educational attainment research in Table 2, many of the young men in three of the Greenwood urban communities remained on the low educational level. Some reasons for this condition could be poor academic performance, economic reasons, or a decision to drop out of school to support the family (see Inoue,

Fukunaga, Fujita, & Okazaki, 2011). Circumstances of this nature could prevent the young men in these communities from being in the right place to learn standard moral values.

Educational attainment was part of the socioeconomic milieu that provided job opportunities and satisfactory salaries (see Ummuhan, 2012). Having no high school education prevents qualification for higher education and lowers employment qualifications (see Kyndt, Dochy, Onghena, & Baert, 2012). The limited level of educational attainment was stressful on the lives of the young men living in these Greenwood urban communities. Most residents of the three communities had limited educational attainment, with a large percentage of the population not having completed high school (see Neighborhood Map, 2013). Table 2 featured two communities in which almost half the population had less than a high school education. Compromised education can put young adults at high risk for engaging in violence (see Schiavone, 2009).

Limited education. Limited education could be described from two points of view: (a) as a need to relearn or retrain or (b) as a lack of skills. It is critical to attain the education required in this highly competitive world marketplace with its demand for continuous improvement of product quality and services (see Maruatona, 2011). Employers who keep their employees abreast of the changes through professional development classes and workshops help meeting the need for relearning and retraining to provide workers with new ideologies and technologies for the workplace. The same concept seemed to prevail in gangs with respect to their gang leadership training. The gang member must continuously show that he has the knowledge to be a leader. Approval

is met through “job assignments.” The traditional result of a limited education was insufficient knowledge, and the lack of skills, abilities, and knowledge placed the individual low on the pay scale. By analogy, low knowledge and skills places a gang member on the lower echelons of the gang. It was easy to conceive that poverty, first, caused the young men to fall below the poverty level on any pay scale and, second, to be low on the gang’s approval scale. Both these low placements can be a strong inducement to use gun violence. In summary, limited education caused limited job opportunity options and a lack of salary satisfaction. There was high unemployment and poverty surrounding the young men in the community, and these conditions alone could be possible reasons for gun violence.

Implications

I anticipated that the study would increase understanding about the causes of young adult men gun violence in three of the Greenwood urban communities. The results of discussions with community members and the increased understanding of the problem could be beneficial. Sometimes, if enough people show support for a cause, people in positions of authority start to react to the proposed demands.

This research led to a project that created a way for the Neighborhood Watch organization to develop leadership skills that were specific to the immediate task of mentoring the urban families in the Greenwood area. The implications of this doctoral project were to educate families in the urban communities to know what, where, and how they had to act to bring the attention of persons in charge to their situational needs, and

positively impact the lives of both the urban families and the community stakeholder groups in the study.

Mentoring the 100 Way® is a program that seeks to meet the needs of children, aged 8 to 18 years, in a holistic way (see What They See is What They'll Be, 2014). The members forged relationships with youths across the United States and internationally, which positively impacted and changed the lives of tomorrow's leaders. Although this program was geared toward younger children, my anticipation was that it could help the young men in the Greenwood urban communities to build the skills they needed to turn themselves into productive citizens. Along those same lines, my anticipated project was to design a curriculum and develop a program that would surround the young adult men in the Greenwood communities with a supportive environment. The final decision for the project was determined after I received and interpreted the results obtained in the one-on-one interviews and focus-group discussion of this study.

Summary

Gun violence perpetrated by young adult men was a condition in the three communities under study that was deserving to require attention. Bandura's (1971) modeling theory could explain how the young men in the Greenwood urban communities interacted with their environment after inappropriate stigma awareness transferred lifestyle images of attention, memory, performance, and motivation from the things they had seen or heard. Therefore, I sought to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that seemed to promote gun violence by engaging the perceptions of community stakeholder groups in the Greenwood urban area with the goal of finding more effective ways to

address the gun violence problem. The information gained could help the citizens in these communities to bring down the rate of gun violence by promoting changes in their understanding of its roots and mechanisms. With the research questions, I sought to explore factors the stakeholder groups perceived as contributing to gun violence by young men in their communities, as well as their perceptions about what could be done to reduce the gun violence in these three urban communities. The methodological design of the study was intended to produce answers to the research questions through one-on-one interviews and a focus-group discussion that specifically targeted the Neighborhood Watch organization's perspectives about gun violence as it related to young men in the Greenwood urban communities. Gordon and Cui (2015) hypothesized that there was an association between early adolescence educational attainment and young adults' later career success. Having a good education was one key factor for reducing gun violence in the three Greenwood urban communities. In the next section, I outline how using a qualitative research design allowed for an in-depth exploration of the perspectives of three stakeholder groups—members of the Neighborhood Watch organization, clergymen, and law officials—and how using their words could convey their perceptions better than any numerical data could have done.

Section 2: Methodology

In this section, I describe the qualitative research method used in this study of gun violence perpetrated by young men and discuss the rationale for choosing it in this context. In addition, I present a description of the participants, selection of participants, and the reasons why they were selected. I describe my role as the researcher and the ethical issues pertaining to research. This section also includes an explanation of the data collection tools and why they were chosen, how data were collected and analyzed, and threats to data quality. The goal of the study was to understand the potential causes of gun violence in order to reduce it in three of the Greenwood urban communities.

In this study, I used a qualitative research design, which allowed me to identify the characteristics of the issues involved in the study (see Wilson, 2010). Four major characteristics and fundamental understandings are common to all types of qualitative research: (a) understanding the participants' perspectives, (b) using an inductive process, (c) relying on an interpretive approach, and (c) presenting a richly descriptive product (see Merriam, 2009). First, the challenge in all qualitative research is to understand the participants' perspectives. I tried to establish access to and rapport with the participants by getting an emic, or insider's, perspective regarding the uniqueness of the setting. In this case, the setting was the urban Greenwood communities beset by gun violence perpetrated by young men ages 21 to 29 years. Second, I used an inductive process to gather data and build a concept from three stakeholder groups. From the information collected in the one-on-one interviews and the focus-group discussion, I identified themes related to Bandura's (1971) modeling theory. Third, I used an interpretivist approach as

the instrument in the study. Being the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis, I had the responsibility to clarify and summarize the information, check with participants for accuracy, and probe for more information when needed. Fourth, I used richly descriptive words, tables, and figures to support the findings. In addition, quotes from documents and reflective field notes contributed to the descriptive qualitative research. The multiple interpretations were descriptive and not reduced to numbers because the variables would have been difficult to operationalize.

The two types of interviews—one-on-one and focus-group discussion—were the most effective ways to understand the community stakeholder groups' perspectives about young male adult gun violence (see Merriam, 2009). This methodological design addressed the research questions that targeted stakeholder groups' perspectives about young men. Even though there was limited generalizability, I explored in-depth perspectives from several stakeholder groups about the factors that contribute to gun violence.

I chose a qualitative design rather than a quantitative or a mixed-methods approach because words could describe the community stakeholder groups' perceptions better than the numerical data. Quantitative approaches were not appropriate because I did not plan to generalize the results. Neither did I examine cause-and-effect relationships. Qualitative research designs allow people to explore issues in-depth (Creswell, 2012).

Participants

Three stakeholder groups concerned about the gun violence problem in the community were clergy, law officials, and members of the Neighborhood Watch organization. The stakeholder groups were key informants who had knowledge about the gun violence issues being investigated. The primary stakeholder group was the Neighborhood Watch organization with assistance from local law officials and community clergy because they had daily interactions with young adult men and understood the neighborhood's gun violence. Success of the Neighborhood Watch organization was dependent on the type of training it received from police officers.

The Neighborhood Watch organization is a collaborative group containing the residents of the community. Updates on the neighborhood environment are shared through monthly meetings, letters, flyers, e-mails, or a phone tree. Tips on how to watch out for one another are given as a preventive and safety method because the Neighborhood Watch is not an individual but a community effort. The attendees are advised not to confront the person if anything or anyone looks suspicious, but to get vital information such as how tall the person was or the license plate number of the car and forward that information to the proper authorities and let them decide what must be done. Although this group is not trained in criminal behavior, the Neighborhood Watch members have connections to law officials and clergy in the community to give them advice.

Each stakeholder group varied in its connection to gun violence, and each provided a different view on young male adult gun violence in the communities because

each had access to different aspects of the young men's lives. The different perspectives that each group offered were as follows: Clergy reported their attitudes about gun violence and served as a protective factor to young adult men through religion-based coping and social support seeking (see Epstein-Ngo, Maurizi, Bregman, & Ceballo, 2013). The clergy's experience included efforts to reduce gun violence in the communities. Law officials gave their views and provided interventions or recommendations to improve interventions already in place. The members of the Neighborhood Watch organization gave their perspectives about young male adult gun violence in the Greenwood urban communities and reported activities noticed in the communities that could be related to gun violence. The collaborative experiences of these stakeholders working together provided relevant data to answer the research questions.

Clergy, law officials, and the Neighborhood Watch organization design or implement policies. Policies address local problems (see Thomas, Selvadural, Er, Lyndon, & Moorthy, 2011). The Neighborhood Watch organization is instrumental in addressing community needs and presenting them to law officials in meetings (see National Sheriffs' Association, 2013). Law officials enforce the policies.

The target population consisted of members of the three stakeholder groups. The study participants were selected from this population. Rather than gathering a random sample of the accessible population, I purposively chose men and women who were self-identified helpers in reducing gun violence through their participation in one of the stakeholder groups dedicated to reducing gun violence. I chose knowledgeable participants who were working in the community. By seeking the professional

perspectives of stakeholder groups who worked daily with the same issues, I could identify common themes regarding gun violence. Concerned stakeholders who had leadership experience in the community and stakeholders who were committed to building a better life for community members were key informants for understanding how to reduce young male adult gun violence in the Greenwood urban communities.

Criteria for participation included having command of the English language and being identified as a member of one of the selected stakeholder groups. It was important for the participants to know that, although a request was made for their participation, their involvement in this research project was entirely voluntary. All participants volunteered for the study and had the freedom to terminate participation whenever they chose. I did not impose any penalties or repercussions for termination. My interest was in trying to help families in these communities and improve their lives.

As a practitioner, I had been teaching students whose families lived in the Greenwood church communities and who had been affected by gun violence. Because of prior school contact with them, I had the benefit of an established rapport with the families. Working on the project study with individuals in the communities was an extension of my earlier contact through the school. I assured the participants that there were minimal risks involved in the study. Participants benefited by contributing their knowledge to reduce young adult male gun violence in the Greenwood urban communities.

The sample included members from three different stakeholder groups: clergy, law officials, and members of the Neighborhood Watch organization. Three

representatives from each group participated in this study. Each of the three groups provided different perspectives on gun violence by young men in the community. Nine key informants participated in the study. The fewer the participants, the deeper the inquiry per individual (see Creswell, 2012). More participants would have decreased my ability as the researcher to provide an in-depth understanding of the participant's perspectives. I used a strategy for qualitative research called purposeful sampling. Lodico et al. (2010) defined purposeful sampling as "a procedure where the researcher identifies key informants who have some specific knowledge about the topic being investigated" (p. 140). I used a purposeful sampling technique because I wanted the informants to have knowledge about gun violence. I distributed notices by mail to the three stakeholder groups and to the community-based church organizations. Potential participants who wanted to take part in the study but were intent on protecting their privacy had a chance to contact me directly. Information included in my contact notice was twofold: (a) I requested some demographic information from potential participants, and (b) I provided a statement explaining why participation in the study was important. I further explained the purpose of the study, gave assurance of confidentiality, and noted that participation was voluntary with minimal risk involved (see Appendix B). Because I communicated the purpose of the study, participants knew how important their knowledge was to this research. If more than nine participants volunteered, the decision to include more would have been made on a first-come-first-served basis. If fewer than nine participants volunteered, the sample size would still have been adequate because the purpose of the

study was to use the results to make decisions at a community level rather than a national level; no plans to generalize were made.

Being mindful of the ethical issues involved with conducting qualitative research started with the informed consent form (see Appendix B). I obtained informed consent from each participant before the study began to respect the participants' rights. To establish a working researcher-participant relationship, I conveyed to all participants a detailed description of the planned study. Confidentiality of the responses was maintained because I did not use any names in publications; a number was substituted for the identity of the participant, which was known only to me so I could match the research data to the informant number.

To mitigate researcher bias, I used member checking (see Hancock & Algozzine, 2011) for credibility and to verify the accuracy of the transcribed interviews. To provide alternative ways to look at the data, I used a peer reviewer to examine the data; it was important to be thorough and accurate when presenting the findings. In addition, the peer reviewer's debriefing guarded against subjective, biased thinking on my part and to call my attention to it when it was suspected. I did not concern myself with trying to prove what I considered to be right and wrong; instead, I presented whatever information arose with a fair evaluation of the stakeholders' perspectives regarding gun violence in the Greenwood urban communities.

Data Collection

The choice of a qualitative research paradigm was based on the following rationale: (a) to use research questions beginning with *how* or *what*, (b) to explore the

phenomenon under study, by (c) to identify the most knowledgeable participants for the study, and (d) to choose the natural setting where the phenomenon under study took place (see Creswell, 2012). Based on the central research question, the qualitative research design was appropriate for finding out what the different stakeholder groups perceived as factors that contributed to young adult male gun violence in three of the Greenwood urban communities. By using *how* or *what* questions, I avoided suggesting cause-and-effect relationships.

To carry out this study of young adult male gun violence in three of the Greenwood urban communities, I compiled data from one-on-one interviews and focus-group discussions because interviews and discussions are narrative in nature. The descriptive qualitative research design calls for reporting data in narrative form (see Lodico et al., 2010). I informed the participants that the one-on-one and the focus-group sessions were required of each volunteer participant to complete the study. The focus group was as valuable as the one-on-one interviews because it allowed each participant to learn about the others' responses and to use the opportunity to inform them of their own remarks (see Merriam, 2009). It was not necessary for participants to agree or disagree or to reach a consensus.

The objective was to obtain quality data and consider the participants' views in the context of other perspectives. The interviews were conducted one-on-one and face-to-face rather than via telephone or online. The interviews started with predetermined questions and allowed for follow-up questions to encourage reporting of perceptions in-depth. I scheduled each interview to last 1 to 1½ hours. The interview questions were

designed to elicit information about what factors stakeholder groups perceived as contributing to gun violence perpetrated by young men in the Greenwood urban communities, what they thought could be done to reduce this gun violence, and what they knew about interventions already in place that may need improvement. The probing questions helped to elicit information and encourage in-depth discussions about the interviewees' perspectives (see Creswell, 2012). I refrained from using leading questions (see Merriam, 2009) and abstained from inserting my own opinions and comments such as showing agreement or disagreement in what was said to allow more time for the interviewees to offer their perspectives and offer them without undue influence on my part. Participants were reminded each time data were collected not to use people's names when relating personal experiences. My role as the researcher was to take an emic perspective. I used an interview protocol (researcher produced) as the guide for asking questions during the interviews (see Appendices B & C). I also kept reflective field notes to describe my feelings and thoughts about what I observed during an interview. An approximate planned time line for the interviews was 6 weeks.

As a convenient and common location for the interviews, I chose a meeting room in a community-based library located in one of the Greenwood urban communities. I obtained permission from the librarian to use one of the meeting rooms. A schedule with the days of the week, the time of day, and length of the meeting was given to the person in charge. I then arranged to have someone provide for room entrance on the days scheduled. A detailed description of the project was developed for the Institutional Review Board (IRB; see Appendix A) of Walden University.

The anticipated time frame of 6 weeks for data collection extended to 5 times that interval (or 34 weeks) due to scheduling issues with the focus group. This length of time contained a positive aspect in that I could go with the most convenient times for everyone's face-to-face interview without having to rush through any sessions trying to complete them prior to the focus-group discussion as intended. The 34-week time frame also proved beneficial for conducting follow-up interviews as needed. The follow-up sessions were conceived as unstructured, open-ended interviews to which I was going to resort only if I did not receive enough information during the original data collection sessions, or if the original responses called for further clarification. I recorded the interviews with the participants' written permission and transcribed them after each session. I, then, sent the transcript to the participant for member checking so that he or she could verify the accuracy of the transcribed responses. At a later time, I provided each participant with a summary of the results. The responses from eight of the informants were positive with no corrections required. I had to ask the ninth participant to fill in a blank space in the transcript because the audio-tape was unintelligible. He did so and returned the transcript to me. I inserted the missing word in the final version and had him verify the correctness of the whole transcribed interview one more time.

I used security provisions for data transfer such as password-protected documents. A hard copy of the transcribed tapes, signed informed consent forms, reflective field notes, and data analysis notes were stored at my home in a locked file cabinet. I also stored a copy of the transcripts on my computer for later referencing when needed. All unneeded raw data were shredded, and data stored on the computer will be

erased 5 years after the completion of the study. Figure 1 shows the steps I took to ensure validity of the results.

Data Analysis

Data analysis helped to consolidate what people had related. I grouped the information according to emerging themes, which could be explained via the theoretical framework. Before using the Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), my data preparation involved typing notes, transcribing interviews, applying some initial formatting to the verbal exchanges, and making sure that none of the data escaped my attention while I worked with the findings. Using CAQDAS meant that I did not have to retype the same information in different fields more than once because it automatically flowed to the appropriate places through links. I used a qualitative computer software program called CAT (Coding Analysis Toolkit) because it conducted a constant comparison analysis. I entered the audiofile and then coded the results after I determined which units of data went with which code. Constant comparison was evident when data from the three sets of stakeholder perspectives were entered. Lodico et al. (2010) reported that constant comparison means comparing one component of the data with other components of the same data source to determine similarities and differences. The consistency and accuracy of the interviews provided evidence of reliability and validity. It should be noted that, if any participant had become uncomfortable or had disagreed with the transcription, corrections would have been made immediately. Additionally, a social worker or a counselor was available to handle discrepant cases

and/or adverse events, in case a research participant should require immediate referral as case-sensitive information rose to the surface.

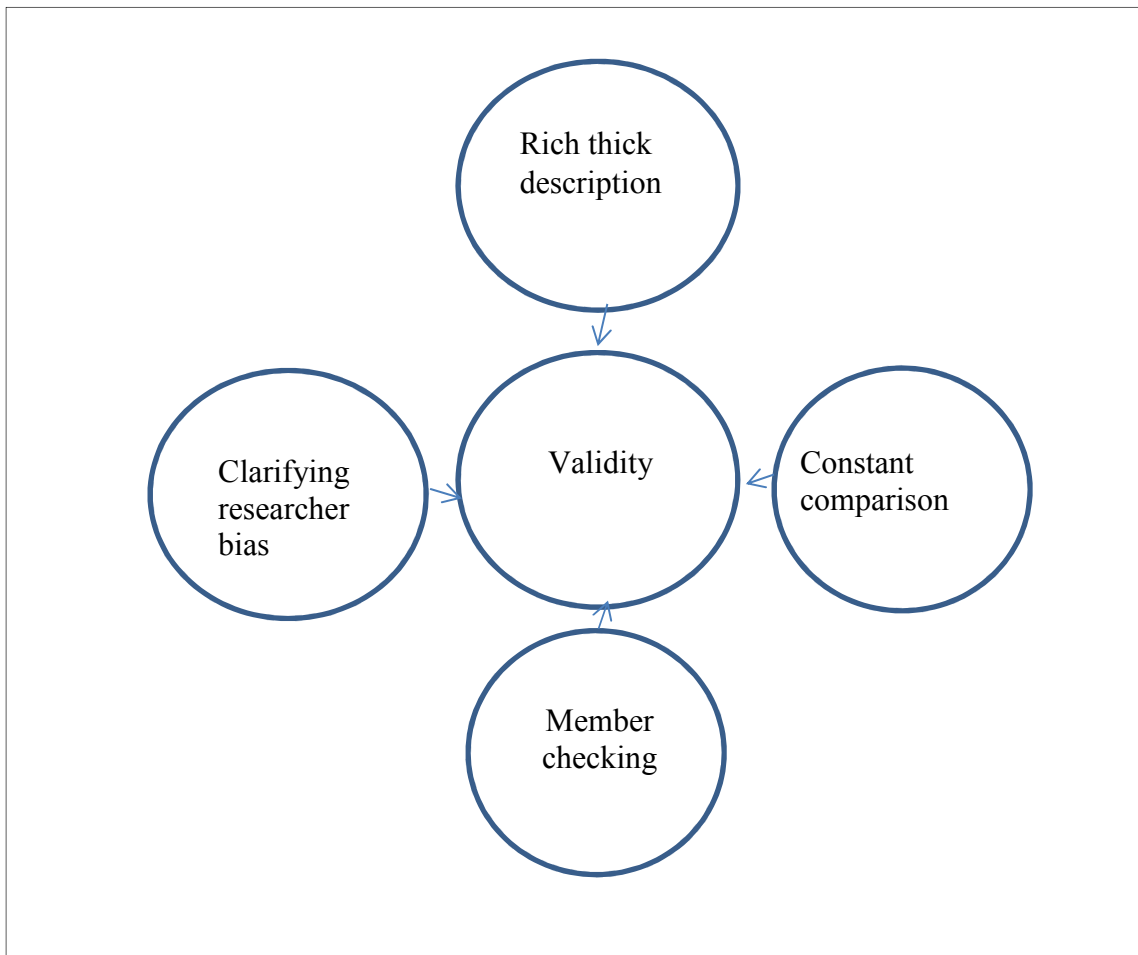


Figure 1. A pictorial rendition of the steps taken to ensure validity of the study.

Data Analysis Results

Recalling the process by which the data were generated, gathered, and recorded, I used a purposeful sampling strategy to identify and choose key informants. Notices were distributed by mail to the three stakeholder groups and community-based church organizations. I screened for participants using inclusion and exclusion criteria. Then I obtained an informed consent form from each participant to safeguard their rights in the

study (see Appendix B). I received a signed document from the public library giving permission to use it as the official meeting site for the interviews. Prior to every interview, I reviewed a reminder list of common pitfalls in interviewing (Recruiting & Hiring, 2014). A Participant Log Sheet (self-developed) was prepared to be used as a sign-in sheet for the attendance of each participant. I interviewed three different stakeholder groups for triangulation and credibility. I conducted two types of interviews: one-on-one interviews and a focus-group discussion. The sessions were audiotaped. I used member checking to ensure correctness and credibility of the interview transcriptions. I also used the redacting technique and pseudonyms to address confidentiality. Last, I sent summaries of the transcripts of the sessions to the participants.

Four steps were used to analyze the data: (a) engaging in the process of coding; (b) developing a more general picture through themes; (c) representing the findings through visuals; and (d) making an interpretation of the meaning of the results by reflecting on how the findings related to the conceptual framework. The face-to-face interviews revealed three main categories: (a) lack of education, incorporating easy access to guns, background checks, protection, economic deprivation, and solutions, (b) inappropriate leadership, embodying gangs, and negative role modeling, and (c) an unhealthy community life, including depression, and immoral values. The focus-group discussion could be grouped around six themes: (a) active in gun violence and safe world, (b) innovations, (c) improvement of gun violence program, (d) knowledge gained from

gun violence, (e) future trends, and (f) permit requirements. The broad category names were derived from the segments of data in the interviews.

Personal Interviews

Category 1: Lack of education. Education, or rather the lack thereof, was one category that surfaced in every interview. Having an education and having a job could help sustain the young men. If the young men did not get the kind of education that made them a viable part of the workforce, they were going to find themselves in a situation where violence was likely to occur. Having all the outward appearances of success was what the larger society constantly glamorized. Participant 2 stated that the young men had no means to reach their goals, except through robbery or drug trafficking.

The police chief added his comment to the discussion on what factor contributed to gun violence in the communities. He exclaimed, “The higher the dropout rate in the community, the more dangerous that community is. The higher the dropout rate, the more gun violence there is. The higher the dropout rate, the more violence there is in general.”

The breakdown in education came about when a student had so many absences that the absences equated to dropping out, all because his help was needed for survival at home. Many young men were frustrated because of their lack of education and their lack of economic means. Being denied access economically and educationally could cause depression. Many of them had given up hope. Participant 1 said:

When hope is gone, hopeless people are dangerous people. A lot of these young men have nothing to live for, and the prison for them is a step up. The young men have a place to stay, three nutritional meals every day along with mental and

health benefits in the prison. In many of the cases, some of the young men can think that being in prison can be better than trying to survive in society.

These young men may have wanted access to the economy and an education to have a normal and happy pursuit of life, but they were denied this opportunity, primarily, by a breakdown in the educational system and the breakdown of the family. The breakdown of the family came about when there was no father in the home or when there was an unstable family unit. If young men did not have a good job that produced a good income, then the young men were probably just going to try to get what they wanted any way they could.

There is some sense to gun violence if a young man was already angry, broke, and depressed, believing that he did not belong anywhere, and no one cared about him. His thinking, then, was that only the strong survive. Gun violence could make sense when that was the mindset. Participant 1 believed that “professionals need to keep trying to educate, keep trying to motivate and strengthen the family unit and be a mentor to those young men who do not have a father.”

It was the young men’s thinking capacity that was affected by not having a good education. These young men were not taught critical thinking, and they could not rise above their inadequate capabilities. They could not conceive of alternate ways of doing things or of better options. They were going to do what their minds (or their gang members) told them to do. Participant 3 stated:

I understand why some of the young men are involved in gun violence because they do not have the education to raise themselves up. If the young men do not

have the proper education and skills, then their thinking is too low. The young men may want what the other person has but not have the capability to get it. The only thing the young men know is to get a gun or break into somebody's house and steal what the people have when the people are gone. It is an act of desperation. People who are not desperate do not use guns.

Easy access. Participant 1 had this to say about education as it relates to easy access to guns. "So many young men are frustrated because of the lack of education and the lack of access economically. Many of them have given up hope. They have no hope. When the hope is gone, hopeless people are dangerous people." Participant 2 remarked that "guns are too easy to get especially with these young men under a lot of stress."

There is such a proliferation of firearms in this country that it is very easy to buy a weapon, a handgun, a semiautomatic pistol, or a semiautomatic assault rifle. All but one of the participants in the stakeholder groups believed that, when these young men ended up getting involved in criminal activities, it was too easy for them to get possession of firearms. Participant 5 stated the following:

Young men do what they do because the gun is available. Nobody can be shot if there is no gun. There are people at gun shows who will sell a gun to anybody if the purchaser has the money. They do not worry about IDs. To sell a firearm, people should go through a registered firearms dealer, and that registered firearms dealer should pass a background check to buy a gun.

Another participant who was a law officer, also witnessed people going to gun shows and buying assault rifles. Participants 5 and 6 agreed and reported the following information:

The purchasers from the gun show will go into a parking lot and sell the guns to the drug cartel in Mexico or the gang associate for a markup. That is called *straw purchasing*. The people are getting the guns from individuals who care more about the mighty dollar than they do about their fellow human beings.

However, there was a point of contention. One law officer exclaimed that before the Gun Control Act of 1968 was passed, every hardware store and every store like K-Mart sold guns. Participant 4 argued:

There was no talk about easy access to firearms before 1968; the only exception was that the Gun Control Act required a person to be licensed before he could sell firearms. That action allowed gun shows to get started. Then there were complaints about easy access to guns.

In speaking about the easy access to guns, the other big number was accidental deaths involving toddlers. There seemed to be data available that showed that almost every day someone was killed by a toddler who got his hands on a gun. Also, it seemed that it was much easier for some people to pull the trigger than to try and find other solutions to a problem. Access to guns was a real issue.

Following are a few other comments regarding easy access to guns: Eight out of $N = 9$ participants believed that easy access to guns was a problem. They were eager to

substantiate their beliefs by discussing situations involving past cases. Participant 5 exclaimed:

Most of the deaths that are caused by gun violence are the result of people having easy access to firearms, getting involved in emotional propositions, getting angry or agitated, and the ease with which they can access the firearm they have with them, they pull the trigger—and then regretting that action for the rest of their lives.

Another participant spoke about road rage. She was in awe to learn that a person got mad at another driver and pulled out a weapon. The person acted before he thought because a weapon was available. That would be a quick reaction to an intense situation. Participant 8 said:

I think it is their emotions. Every time gun violence happens, it is usually because some emotion has gotten out of control. If people had control of their emotions, they might not need gun control. But there are always people who act first and think later. Some of them do not even think later. There is a complete disregard for someone else's life.

All the stakeholder groups stressed that most gun violence was a quick reaction to an intense situation. If gangsters were excluded from the picture and just ordinary citizens were considered, then more crimes of passion would surface. This is different from the perpetrators who make plans to attack somebody. Participant 1 made this remark:

I do not believe that anyone will ever be able to stop the sale of guns. If somebody wants something in this country, there is somebody who is going to sell it to them.

If drugs cannot be kept out of a prison where men are locked up; if weapons cannot be kept out of a prison, it is inevitable for guns to be kept off the street where young men can get them.

It is just a matter of what a person's intent is. The judicial system does a good job in separating the perpetrators who plan attacks from people who do not. Either way, people could get guns on any corner for little or nothing. It is difficult to stop these kinds of transactions.

A discussion in the form of a debate had been taking place on school campuses in the area about carrying guns. Now, it is a person's legal right to carry a gun. A student can sign for a gun and carry it. Participant 2 worked on one of the school campuses and was concerned about guns being so easy to get, especially by young men who are under a great deal of stress from classes and tests. His comment was:

A young man coming out of a stressful test is already on edge. Now, there is a gun added to the mix. On the campuses, there is a lot of drinking. People, in general, do not make good decisions when they are drinking, especially young men. It has gotten out of hand to allow easy access to guns, and not only that but to allow the students to carry the guns.

These comments showed a consensus on the part of the stakeholders regarding easy access to guns. They all perceived that there was easy access. They believed that the easy access to guns took away the idea of using critical thinking to resolve situations in a positive manner. The easy access to guns seemed to capitalize on a subliminal notion of "act first, think later," which was not a good practice to adopt.

Background checks. All the participants, except one, consistently spoke in favor of background checks. Doing background checks reduced the possibility of guns getting into the wrong hands. Most gun owners supported background checks to make sure that the purchaser was not prohibited to own or possess firearms. However, mandatory reporting was suggested when mental health was an issue. Even the strongest person could go through an emotional crisis or a mental health crisis in his lifetime. Participant 5 said:

When somebody in a mental health profession discovers somebody is a risk to himself or others, a robust database in mandatory reporting can require mandatory notification and enter the name of that person into the database so that a mental health person cannot just go and get a gun. There needs to be a process by which, once a notification is made, there is due process for that person to make sure that his Second Amendment rights are not taken away from him. Then, there needs to be a restoration process.

Some mentally ill persons can readily abstain from going out and harming other people; they may not have any kind of violent history. It only takes that one time for an individual to snap or forget to take his medication to commit a violent act. Participant 6 believed that mental health patients were not fully vetted because there was no universal background check going on for everybody. He said:

It is the responsibility of the government to come in and put certain guidelines in to prevent possession of weapons by individuals that have some type of mental illness or a propensity to commit some type of violent act. Even with a

background check, there can still be people that are going to slip through the cracks.

There was one exception; one participant held a different opinion. The analogy was made between guns and cars. At times, cars are driven into crowds of people, but regulation is not the chosen outcome. That same mindset should apply to guns. Participant 4 exclaimed that things cannot be regulated all the time. That mindset was the reason why he was indifferent about gun control. He did not believe that guns were the problem. If that was the case, Participant 4 believed the problem would have prevailed before the Gun Control Act of 1968.

Protection. What the stakeholder groups all believed was that the gun was a valid means for protection. There were different ways to view protection, namely, physical versus abstract, or individual protection versus group protection. In speaking about physical protection, Participant 1 considered himself to be an innovator who tried to stay ahead of problems.

Three years ago, the members of the church approved having armed policemen at the services. On Sunday mornings, there are two armed policemen. On Wednesday nights, there is one. There are armed policemen also on any of the other big nights at the church. Paid officers who are not members of the church are on duty and there are members of the church who are undercover officers sitting inside the church. Therefore, there are two levels of protection.

Abstract protection, or the notion of protection, arose from within a person's being because of survival needs. This was protection of a different kind. It was a drive to

protect the self. It was called self-preservation. Participant 2 contributed to the discussion in this manner:

At one time, a person could make a good living without a lot of education.

However, that seems not to be the case anymore. So many of these jobs just do not pay much. Not being able to make a decent living encourages gun-violent acts. When a person adds the low income to his frustration, the situation escalates into an additional problem. Therefore, some young men use guns for protection of self-preservation.

First and foremost, individual protection is the primary concern for everybody. The policemen are responsible for the safety of the community. As police chief, he said that he was to maintain a safe environment for all the people who live within the confines of the city. His duty also entailed providing safety for the visitors that work in the city, and ultimately his police officers and personnel.

In addition, there was the consideration of group protection. Gang members protect one another. It appears that gangs protect in a different way. They protect their turf, and gangs protect their possessions. The young men in the community and the gangs were working together and protecting each other.

Television was not helpful in this context because gangs were glamorized, and robbing banks was glamorized on television. The young men were watching, and some of the shows seemed to be very influential. Previously, researchers had reported that humans imitated behavior they had seen on television, even violent behavior (Bandura, Ross, &

Ross, 1963). Participant 6 also believed that some of the gun violence was encouraged by watching television and the idolization of being a macho man.

Machismo is some people's lifestyle. Some of the young men are acquainted with that kind of lifestyle. Most everybody carries a gun in the family. The family members do not talk things out. They use some type of aggression to address a disagreement.

Much of the gun violence seen on television carried over into the games that people played. The games were violent. Even when the games were played at home, there still needed to be a parent around to teach the difference between right and wrong. Quite often, parents were telling their children to do the right thing, but the parents' actions spoke louder than words. Participant 6 said that a lot of parents may talk right, but they walk left, meaning the parents do the opposite thing. The parents' actions are so loud that the children cannot hear what the parents are saying, but the children see what the parents are doing. Young men should be cautious and avoid the glorification of the criminals on television. Gun violence can affect identity development (Schiavone, 2009).

Desensitization to violence was also explored in earlier studies (Fanti et al., 2009; Kelly, 2010; Krahe, et al., 2011; Reich et al., 2002). Becoming desensitized was a real issue for the respondents. Watching gun violence on television was such a common occurrence that it was just part of life. Participant 6 believed that people are becoming desensitized to violence.

In summary, to help reduce gun violence within these communities, it was suggested to rebuild the family unit, teach acceptable family/community morals, and

connect the young men with good male role models. On a larger scale, the media needed to quit glorifying the criminals who are using guns or making martyrs out of those young men who commit immoral acts. Sometimes, young men considered themselves more masculine by carrying guns and using them.

Economic deprivation. A consensus from all the stakeholder groups gave credence to economic deprivation as a main contributor to gun violence. Poverty had much to do with gun violence. When the young men did not have sufficient income to survive, they participated in finding help for themselves one way or another. When Participant 3 responded to the question about what contributed to gun violence in the communities, he commented:

A lot depends on the living conditions. If the young men could move away from poverty, then they would fare a whole lot better. They get a gun when things get so hard and take what does not belong to them.

In earlier research, Šileika and Bekeryté (2013) found that poverty was the strongest inducement to commit a crime. Poverty could also force young men into selling drugs. Participant 9 agreed that the major inducement to commit gun violence was poverty. She said:

When dealing with young men that have less and want more, this condition can contribute to gun violence. The crime starts when the young men steal and end up getting themselves in trouble because they may want a name brand pair of jeans or a shirt or shoes.

Without being conscientiously aware of it, young men are constantly trying to measure up to their peers. It is their way of being inclusive in the group. It is their way of being a part of the group. It is their way of not being left out. It is their way of not being different. It is their way of not standing out. Therefore, it is easy to see how important it is for these young men to do what it takes to become part of their group culture, even if it goes against society's mores.

Solutions. The stakeholder groups perceived several possible solutions. Although religion has been removed from the schools and from most of the public venues, the leaders of the community, being the pastors of the churches, needed to get involved with the young people directly. As Participant 4 remarked, "I have lectured from a law enforcement perspective on gun issues, and I believe the clergy needs to get involved." The young men need to understand that violence is not the solution, that violence itself is the problem. Reich, Culross, and Behrman (2002) theorized that strong and repeated messages needed to be sent to young people, teaching them that gun violence is not acceptable for conflict resolution.

The participants considered gun violence to be a problem that could not be solved overnight, but for which solutions were available. If young men get a good education, know that they are loved, and can make a decent living, their whole outlook can change. The Bible teaches that the wise King Solomon said, "Money answers all *things*" (Kingjamesbibleonline, Ecclesiastes 10:19). If the young men have money, their thinking will change in a positive direction.

The young men need to be able to make a living, and this is as good as any starting point to re-evaluate the vicious cycle of gun violence: The gun violence perpetrated by young men in the three Greenwood communities appeared to be the result of other unsuitable conditions in their environment, starting with the breakdown of the family through the absence of a father in the home, which made it hard for the single mothers to raise boys to become men. Next, the educational system needed repairing. All too numerous absences from school, due to the young men having to help with the family's survival needs, added up to being considered dropping out, which raised the local drop-out rate, and explained why these young men were not getting a good education, both academically and on the social skills level. This rendered them unqualified for well-paid work, and the lack of a proper income led to their taking what they needed by unlawful means.

Participant 1 said that the young men were going to take a shortcut if they could not get a good education to help economically. Being caught up in this vicious cycle made the young men angry. They were at greater risk of using violence to settle any kind of disturbance. They had no money, and they had no hope of ever being able to build a better life. They had nothing to lose. Therefore, shooting another person, or even getting killed themselves, was a risk they were willing to take. That was the hopeless mindset, described by the stakeholder participants in this study.

In summary, this study shed light on the unsuitable conditions in the urban Greenwood communities and deepened the understanding of how such conditions can

result in gun violence. The gun violence, in turn, causes homes to break up and families and friends to be divided either by death or imprisonment. Participant 2 commented:

My best friend was killed by a young man. My friend was just a playful kind of guy, a joker. Sometimes he did not know with whom to play. At the time of his death, he was joking with a person and they misunderstood him. Even then, the other young man did not have the right to blow his brains out. That was most dramatic for me. The friendship had grown from childhood.

Avoiding this kind of misunderstanding requires a level of trust between people. Participant 6 believed that one need to constantly be in the community with the people before a relationship of trust can be built. One way to get the community's trust was to be out there at every event. If this was a problem, two or three officers needed to put together a cadre. The problem was going to get worse if something was not done about it. If boots were put on the ground to find out what was going on in the community, after proper trust was built, then the people would be more comfortable with working together to solve the problem. The officers knew it required a level of trust to get in there.

One of the suggestions made was to bring in programs. The purpose of these programs was to help young men in the sheriff's temporary holding facility, who had lost all hope of ever turning the wrong choices around they had made or for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. The goal was to show these young men that there was hope if they applied themselves. The young men were told that just because they were in the facility, it did not mean that they were bad people. Several programs were listed. There were parenting classes and a program called Rise, which was created for young

men with drug problems. It was intended to help them face what was making them continue to abuse alcohol and other drugs. The facility had a host of programs in place trying to let the young men know that there was hope and that they could make it, but that they had to apply themselves to bring about change.

The facility offered GED and computer courses. There was a tattoo removal program offered as well. Many of the young men who went to jail had tattoos that would make it very difficult for them to get a job upon their release. Often, when the young men were released from jail, they wished they had not gotten such tattoos because the tattoos prevented them from getting jobs. A laser and esthetics school came in and removed these tattoos.

Guest speakers, such as John Legend, came to the facility. Participant 6 said, “John Legend selected the facility to kick off the Free America Campaign program when he won the Grammy award. Afterward, not only did John Legend go to the cell blocks and talk to various young men, but he also put on a free concert for them. Ray Benso, also a Grammy award winner, came and talked about some of the things that he had seen over his lifetime, and he sang a song. Olympic gold medalist and professional football player Johnny Lang Jones visited the facility. Now Jones goes around speaking to individuals. Pastors have come in to speak. Young men looked forward to it and talked about getting into these programs. There was evidence that gun violence declined, and the program’s enforcement effort was heightened (see Koper, Woods, & Isom, 2015).

The goal was to change their mindset and get these young men to believe in themselves. Just as participation in these programs helped to change the mindset of the

young men, so will a steady education change their mindset and help them to make better choices affecting their lives. Many young men do not know how to handle confrontations. All their lives, confrontations had been handled physically or with the use of a weapon (Participant 6). Teaching them about alternate ways of resolving problems was to change their mindset in a positive direction.

Culture plays a large part in developing a mindset (Participant 2). Participant 2 also said, “I listened to rap music to know what the young men were hearing. Through rap music, the young men can get it in their minds that they are macho.” When the rap music was encouraging violence, it broke down a barrier for these young men, which had previously discouraged them in doing what was wrong. The rap music planted the seeds in a young man’s mind that this was the way to handle an altercation. This was the way the young man could prove that he was a man. Most people realize that words are powerful. If some words are constantly drummed into the minds of young men, it becomes easier for them to go wrong. The rap music took away some of their inhibitions. That was where some of the danger lay, in addition to a young man with an overload of stress. Participant 2 said, “It was incumbent to hear what was going on. Then some levity with the young men could be used.”

Previous researchers had also focused on rap music in this regard. Hernandez-Ramdwar (2009) believed that crime and violence were inspired by rap singer lyrics. Miller et al.’s (2012) findings led them to hold a similar belief. Many variables seemed to intertwine and tie together. No one entity stood alone. The belief of the stakeholder participants that a combination of many aspects within the culture contributed to gun

violence was supported by previous research studies on gun violence (see Mayfield & Borstorff, 2012; Wilson et al., 2012). All the stakeholder groups were in favor of obeying the law. Payton, Thompson, Price, Sheu, and Dake (2015) emphasized that more research was needed involving the enforcement of gun laws.

Category 2: Inappropriate leadership. Five of the stakeholder participants pointed to gangs as an inappropriate contribution to leadership. Participant 6 replied that “seeing these people wear these gold chains and driving a Bentley is for a show. The jewelry and car are rented for the video. These young men believe this lifestyle and look to these people as leaders.”

Gangs. Oftentimes, the act of joining a gang was about the culture. Some of the young men in the community believed that being a gangster was the popular thing to do. That was how life was lived. Participant 6 said, “Until somebody changes that culture, it is going to continue, and it is probably going to widen. It is not limited to one area. There are a lot of areas that are affected.”

Having guns and pitching drugs have been the way of life in many areas. These conditions go together like hand in glove. Firearms were used to settle turf, to settle disputes, or to settle all distributions. People talked about the Bloods and Crips. Participant 5 said, “The Bloods and Crips were not fighting over blue and red. They were fighting over green—the dollars that come from the drug trade.” Drugs seemed to be the Number 1 driver for gun violence.

Young men who had dropped out of school were being co-opted by the gang culture. The drug culture was next. Ultimately, it was the culture of violence. Participant

5 said, “When the dropout rate is high, the young men end up getting involved in drugs and then getting involved in gangs.”

From the results of Reza’s (2016) study, he found several reasons for young people to leave their families. Reza reported that many of the ones arrested for gun violence also had addiction issues. Others had mental health issues, and some had a combination of addiction and mental health issues. Thinking about guns and addiction was like thinking about drugs and guns—a dangerous mix. Just as drinking and driving are a dangerous mix, so are guns and addiction. Drugs and critical thinking also do not mix, and that is to the detriment of the drug user. Participant 5 reported:

There are corridors going north and a lot of the street gangs involved in the distribution of narcotics are also going north. Both human trafficking and drug trafficking are taking place. Then going south toward the border, the proceeds from the sales of these drugs and guns are going back into Mexico. The organized crime syndicates are where there are street gangs and drug trafficking organizations.

Negative role modeling. Modeling could be used as a motivating tool in the hands of the educator, but a young man with little education and no job skills is much more prone to try to get money the fast way or try to achieve status in the streets by being part of a gang and using gun violence to show his toughness. Participant 1 said, “Boys rarely finish high school or get a good education. But if there was a father around, these boys probably would be different as they grow up and become men.” The absence of fathers in these boys’ lives was critical. The little boys became young men looking for love, and

they were angry because they were missing something. Every human being needs acceptance and love. The young men had a mindset that kept reminding them that, what they did not get from their fathers, they could get from the gang. They chose inappropriate leadership from gangs. The leader was entrusted with responsibilities, and he needed to maintain his reputation for toughness. In summary, gang leaders are the epitome of negative role modeling.

Category 3: Unhealthy community life. It is the people who make up the community. The community can be no better than the people who live there. For this study, I focused on improving the community life by researching ways to strengthen the people. Participant 1 remarked that “one of the critical pieces of a community is trying to engage the people in a positive way.”

Depression. Depression can be a hurtful condition that comes from within. It is Participant 1’s perception that a depressive person feels useless and not needed. He develops a hopeless attitude because he has no way to make things better for himself. This condition destroys his self-esteem.

Moral values. There is a lack of communal morals. Education is one way to acquire moral values. These moral values can be learned at home from the family or at school from the teachers. Either way, we need to teach acceptable family/community morals. This emphasis or change will maybe help the community.

Focus Group Discussion

Theme 1: Active in gun violence and a safe world. The stakeholder groups discussed what it was like to be active in both the gun violence and the safe world.

Participant 2 stated, “I counsel and talk to young men who are having problems.” He had been asked to join a group at the university that was called 100 Black Men of America, the goal of which was to reach out to young men. This organization helped young men early in their lives by presenting different alternatives and letting the young men decide which tract they wanted to follow. Together, the workers in the organization and the young men discussed the things the young men loved to do and how these things could be accomplished without gun violence.

Help was needed for these high-risk children, who needed to be shown that alternative paths were available to them when they grew up; they needed a good foundation upon which to build their lives. Participant 2 exclaimed, “That good foundation can be done through the church ministry and biblically based teaching that leads to transformation.” The challenge became even more important at the leadership or pastoral position of the community, which had to make sure that part of the sermons and teachings involved a holistic point of view. In the pulpit, clergy should talk about the economic conditions and what these young people were about to face. Participant 2 said, “Young people cannot be made to listen, but the responsibility of the clergy is to teach the young people.”

As far as living in the safe world was concerned, Participant 9 discussed her involvement with a gun shop. The owner of the shop required that people show an ID, undergo a background check, and go through training on how to safely operate firearms, before they could purchase a gun. Participant 9 said, “That was a good policy that he had.”

Theme 2: Kinds of innovation. I asked the participants about interventions regarding gun violence that they had practiced so far. Participant 2 believed that it was important to listen to rap music because most of the youth in his church listen to rap music.

What I hear in the rap music lyrics is the glorification of gun violence. There is the glorification of murder among African Americans and especially among African American male teenagers. I also hear the glorification of murder of police officers as well.

While violence was glorified, rarely was anything said about the cause and the effect, or the result, of the violence. Oftentimes, young teenagers do not realize that there is going to be a price to pay for their actions. Even if no life is lost, there may still be a terrible price to pay such as being locked up in prison. Even if the perpetrator gets away with the crime, there is still a price to pay by living in perpetual fear for the rest of his life, observed the participant. The rap singers who are making millions are not out there shooting at people; they are just rapping about gun violence. While the rap singers are raking in the money, it is those other young men who listen to them who get killed or go to prison. For the rapper, it is all about the dollar.

Going to forums and speaking on panels about gun safety was another solution offered by the participants. There were many people walking around with guns who did not believe that anything was going to happen to them. They owned a gun just to scare somebody off. They did not plan on using the gun, but when a situation arose and with the gun on their hip, it was an easy step to use the weapon in trying to ward off harm to

themselves. A dangerous situation pervades these communities because of the many people who did not plan on doing anything, but unplanned circumstances led them to use the weapons they carried on their person. Participant 6 said, “The people need to be educated and held accountable for their actions. I try to bring them a reality check.”

One innovation made by the Neighborhood Watch organization was to start a gun control packet. Participant 9 said, “Reading the literature enlightens the citizens in the neighborhood about what could happen to people who have guns.” The city gave the organization the literature for the packet, and the city council helped to organize a program. The program featured cheer leaders to cheer up the audience and a skit proclaiming that justice for one is justice for all. During the program, emphasis was placed on consequences, or the time that was going to be spent in jail for committing crimes such as gun violence. It was important to let the young men know that, by the time they would get out of jail, much of their life would be over. They would have missed vital growth periods in their family’s life as well. The program was to keep the young men informed about what to expect with respect to gun violence and also to educate their parents.

Theme 3: Improvement of gun violence programs. All the stakeholder groups were asked about how to improve the gun violence program they were already employing. Most of the participants believed that improving gun violence intervention required stiffening the laws with respect to individuals who had a record of violence or who were suffering from a mental illness. They thought that there should be a means to

prevent such persons from acquiring weapons through legal purchases and that there should be stricter requirements in place for buying weapons in general. Participant 5 said:

What most Americans are interested in is passing laws in establishing procedures that will minimize or reduce gun violence. The way gun violence is reduced is to make sure that processes, systems, and laws are in place that keep guns in the right hands. When processes are in place, the processes limit the opportunities where people can get guns. Just passing those laws and establishing those procedures is not enough; there also must be consequences for those who do not comply.

In addition, when a gun or firearm is used in the commission of a crime, the participant believed there should be mandatory sentencing. If a robbery is committed or a firearm displayed, it is hypothetically a 5-year mandatory prison sentence. If that firearm is discharged in the commission of a felony, it is hypothetically a 10-year prison sentence. If someone is murdered, there is a higher penalty. Participant 5 said, “Mandatory sentencing does have a turning effect. Violent crime has been greatly reduced with mandatory sentencing.”

Proper training in handling guns was also discussed. Individuals who are getting a permit to carry guns, are going through a great deal of training to learn what is involved in owning or safely handling a weapon. Some of the individuals being trained are members of the police department who carry guns. They require quite a bit of special training. A great deal of mental training is necessary before a badge is issued, identifying an individual as a law enforcement officer, enabling him to deal with all kinds of people

and treat them as equals. Participant 3 remarked, “Training needs to be stiffened for police officers also.”

Theme 4: Learned from gun violence. The participants believed that there is still much to be learned about gun violence. Young men who carry guns want to be in control, and a gun makes them feel empowered. The issue is not so much the object in itself, as it is the willingness of the young men to use the gun to prove themselves or to exert their will and their ideas, asserting thereby that it is all right for them to do so.

Participant 1 explained:

Gun violence is a means of escape even if it is a bad choice. Deprivation of education and deprivation of suitable economic conditions decrease the ability to live comfortably in society. These are purposeful provisions for survival. When a young man’s purpose is taken away, he is put in a useless position and is not needed. The young man develops a hopeless attitude because he has no way to make things better for himself. This condition could destroy the young man’s self-esteem. The young man’s thoughts and dreams could start to deteriorate. The young man could then turn to gun violence and take what he needs to survive.

Although survival needs play an inevitable part in gun violence, the drug war was perceived as the Number 1 driver because it opened the pathway toward money. It was Participant 6 who said, “Normally, if there is a problem with drugs, gun violence goes hand-in-hand with that.” Meanwhile, while concentrating on the drug war, policies that could help the community are being ignored. Participant 1 said, “Once a young man gets arrested, he gets on paper.” Once arrested with his criminal activities on record, the

young man cannot stay in public housing, and he can hardly get a job. These young men need guidance for societal living. Participant 4 exclaimed, “The young men who engage in gun violence do not have any discipline.”

The discussion with the participants revealed no single factor but a combination of factors as the chief promoters of gun violence. Each factor can contribute by itself or in combinations with other factors. Violence is based on a multitude of issues or disciplines, emotional control, family unit breakdown, and church breakdown. The absence of the father in the home can be very detrimental to a young boy growing up. He has no male model in the home to aspire to be like, and no discipline to curtail wrongdoing or teach acceptable community morals. Participant 4 said, “In these families with no father, young men do not have structure and guidance from a male.” He explains that when there is no father, emotions can quickly escalate, and the young men try to find their masculinity outside the home. The young men do whatever they want whenever they want, and crimes are committed. Oftentimes, it is with a gang involving gun violence. Participant 1 stated, “To get approval, the young men will use their guns to show how tough they are.” This type of behavior is difficult to manage in a single parent household. Participant 1 observed, “It is hard on women to raise boys to become men. It is just tough on these single mothers.” As the single parent households try to hold the families together, they reach out to the church for help and try to bring back the village concept. Participant 6 exclaimed, “Until the village concept is brought back, there will continue to be division.”

In summary, any one or a combination of factors can contribute to gun violence in the three Greenwood communities. To help reduce gun violence in these communities will require addressing the education issue, that is, reducing the drop-out rate of young men; raising economic conditions; teaching morals in schools and at home; and rebuilding the family unit.

Theme 5: Future trends. The interviews indicated that the stakeholder groups believed that people often get a false sense of security just because they have a gun on their person. That made gun retention even more critical for the safety of those who carry weapons. The participants argued that anyone walking around with a gun on his hip is making himself a target for hard-core criminals who notice the gun from behind and try to take it. Participant 5 said, “I worry about how easy it is and legal for people walking around with their guns exposed to have them taken away by not requiring a retention holster.” He then demonstrated the safety of a Level 3 retention holster, showing the group the guard on the gun and how difficult it would be for another person to take it.

The participants discussed that, when a police officer shoots an unarmed suspect, people may well conclude that the suspect should not have been shot, but what they forget is that there was a gun in play—the gun that the officer carried. Police officers also have been killed with their own firearms because the suspect overpowered them and took their guns. Participant 5 further said, “These hard-core criminals have been filmed in San Quentin in the yard all day long taking guns out of cops’ hands.” With the open-carry law, if people want to walk with their guns out, they must know they are making themselves a target. The participants stressed that the government needs to pass a law

requiring gun retention holsters—both with open-carry and concealed weapons.

Continuous training is also appropriate and necessary. People can never have too much training when it comes to the use of firearms because proficiency may become sharper.

As long as maximum proficiency has not been reached, there is room for training to make the gun owner both better and safer.

As the participants brought the discussion on future trends to a close, they were all in agreement that keeping a positive outlook on life was highly recommended. People should not allow themselves to get depressed because so many things still need fixing; rather, they should focus on the improvements continuously being made, new trends being discovered, and new techniques being developed. Time is the greatest factor in employing these trends.

Theme 6: Permit requirements. Certain requirements must be met before a gun permit can be issued. Participant 5 stated that “the person [seeking a gun permit] cannot be a convicted felon. The person cannot have adjudication about having mental illness. The person must take a class, which is an 8-hour or a day class.” The Number 1 thing that the instructors teach in class is situational awareness because people with a gun need to be aware of their environment. The participants stated that a problem arises when people hear gun shots: They should run away from the gun shots, not toward the shots. In this case, being nosey is not a good thing. If it sounds like gunfire, people should assume that it is gunfire and run away.

Acquiring a permit requires training. The police get all kinds of sensitivity training as regarding race relations or community relations. Participant 4 said, “The

police get training in ethnicity and as a street negotiator to stabilize a situation on the street.” If a gun is taken out by an average gun owner, that person needs to be willing to use it and not just have it as a scare tactic. If that person hesitates, experience has taught, some people may end up getting killed with their own weapons.

It is just as important to know the permit requirements about what should *not* be done as it is about what should be done. Epidemic suicides in a college environment are also a concern. Law enforcement officers strongly believed, as did a number of authors, that rates of violence and associated injuries among young people remain unacceptably high (see Haegerich & Dahlberg, 2011; Massetti et al., 2011; Stieve, 2012). Participant 5 explained, “Introducing the availability of firearms to young people in that high-pressured environment is not needed because the statistics validate a much greater number of suicides.”

Table 3 depicts a comparison of the findings from interviews and the focus-group discussion. The information gained from these two types of interviews represented different aspects of thinking. The one-on-one interviews addressed such concerns as why a gun was used, whereas the focus group was concerned with knowledge intake about guns along with improvement of safety measures in using guns. Participants gave reasons for owning a gun, and they were careful to respect the rights of gun owners. Table 4 and Table 5 display how the themes were combined into categories from the data collected.

Table 3

Information Gained Through One-on-One Interviews and Focus-Group Discussion

Theme	Interviews	Focus groups
1	Easy access	Active in gun violence and a safe world
2	Background checks	Innovations
3	Protection	Improvement of intervention programs
4	Economic deprivation	Knowledge gained from gun violence
5	Lack of education	Future trends
6	Gangs	Permit requirements
7	Laws	--
8	Solutions	--

Table 4

Salient Points Emerging From Interviews

Easy access	Background checks	Protection	Economic deprivation
Gun shows & straw sales	Gun control based on socialist leanings; guns not needed	Armed policemen	Survival needs
Disapproval expressed	Mental state	Safety	Desperation
A reaction	Second-chance acts Terrorist acts Creates problems	No one fights back	Re-justification

Table 5

A Comparison Chart of Salient Points

Face-to-face interviews	Focus group
Background checks will make it more difficult to access guns through gun shows and straw sales.	Getting a permit will require screening to exclude felons and the mentally ill from gun ownership.
Being deprived economically involves survival needs and feelings of utter desperation. Lack of education prevents making a decent living. The situation is hopeless enough to promote getting involved with drugs for quick money.	It is important to get an education, to learn to control all emotions, to act responsibly and be held accountable, and to seek salvation.
Build trust, stay away from gangs, shun evil companions, and get involved in intervention programs for solutions to gun violence.	Develop and embrace innovations for protection and safety.

Tables 6 and 7 show the breakdown of gun-violence themes from the one-on-one interviews and the focus-group discussion.

Table 6

One-on-One Model to Explain How Education Prevents Gun Violence

Lack of education	Gangs	Obeying the law	Solutions
Missing out on teaching of morals	Drug-addiction issues and false sense of security	Open-carry	Study various approaches for effectiveness
Lack of motivation	Machismo	Concealed carrying	Build trust
	Feeling in control	Not enough stipulations	Stay away from guns
			Intervention programs
			Work with other programs
			Counseling
			Rap music

Table 7

Focus Group Model to Explain Education as a Missing Link to Gun Violence

Active worlds	Innovations	Needed improvements	Learning experience	Future trends	Permit requirements
Salvation	Becoming familiar with Rap lyrics	Gun laws	No discipline; no structure	Avoiding dangers of open-carry	No felons
Education	Education	Education	Training necessary	Positive outlook	No mentally ill
Accountability	Protection		Avoiding straw purchases	Education	Training
Training	Safety		Gun show loophole	Training	
	Training		Lack of education	Emotions	
	Literature		Videos	Enforcing the laws	
			Emotions		

Salient data in the findings. The stakeholder groups provided many-sided information. One of the opinions expressed by the research participants was that society has failed the young men in their community. Participant 3 extrapolated that society has failed these young men because most of them grew up in a single-parent household. Participant 4 reported that the lack of a father in the home contributed to the breakdown of the family unit and created a problem for the young men because they were growing up without a male role model in their lives. In these families with no father present, young men did not have the needed guidance. Participant 1 believed that young men who came from homes in which a man was present had been taught more discipline.

Participant 1 also talked about the enormous number of guns in the hands of people. Phillips et al. (2015) found that the density of gun dealers increased the rate of

concealed handgun licensing. Seeing so many guns among the population today seems to lend credence to that claim. The young men feel the need to protect themselves because society cannot guarantee their protection. Participant 3 stated that law enforcement, not knowing what the young man wanted, shot and killed a young man while he was running toward the law officer for help. At another time, a young man got scared and was running away from the police officer when the police officer shot him in the back and killed him. At still another occasion, a young girl who was a mental case had a knife and was threatening someone. When the police came with guns, they shot and killed the young girl. Many similar incidents are making it increasingly difficult for young men to look toward law enforcement for protection.

Participant 6 stated that he noticed a prevalence of such guns as the AR15 and M16, and it was his perception that owners thought they needed protection. People other than law enforcement were carrying guns, and more laws were being passed to reinforce the proper purpose for carrying a gun. One of those laws was the open-carry law. Loughran, Reid, Collins, and Mulvey (2016) theorized that those who carried guns experienced greater exposure to violence than those who did not. Also, more powerful guns were being made, as well as guns that could shoot several rounds, some as many as 30 rounds before needing to be reloaded.

The proliferation of guns symbolizes the imperfection of society. Participant 5 thought that this was far from a utopian society and stated that “there is no perfect city.” The people are individually doing something to help themselves rather than depending on appointed officials and paid representatives to do their jobs. Everybody with a gun is

deciding to take control, and most of these people do not want the government to exercise control over them. The participants confirmed this perspective through their responses in individual interviews and the focus-group discussion. People seemed to be feeling helpless and defeated and thinking that the gun was the answer to securing a better existence; however, in some cases, that may not always be true. The participants mentioned accidental shootings by toddlers, suicides committed from stress on school campuses, road rage shootings due to out-of-control emotions, and gang shootings. Homes were being torn apart and destroyed by losing loved ones, and people were left hurting and feeling empty and void when that happened. Lives were ended with the use of guns. Participants described the gun as an inanimate object: If a gun is set on the table without a person coming to get the gun, it is not going to harm anybody. It is the use people make of the gun that does the damage. Participant 1 remarked, “The problem is not the gun, it is the purpose it is used for. Guns are amoral just like an automobile or money. It is what you do with it.” Participant 6 said, “Guns do not kill people, people kill people.” It is the person with the gun that needs to be focused on. It is the person with the gun that causes damage and the gun destroys what it contacts.

Evidence of quality. I first collected data through interviews from three different stakeholder groups for triangulation, and then prepared for data analysis by transcribing and coding the data. Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) theorized that coding was analysis. After coding the data, information was displayed in pie and bar charts (see Appendices C and D) with summary reports sent to participants. Member checking increased the validity and reliability of the results. In addition to the one-on-one

interviews, I also collected data through the focus-group discussion. The information gained from both sources is displayed in a comparison table (see Table 5), which shows the consistency of perceptions reported in the two types of data-collection interviews by three different groups of community stakeholders.

Conclusion

The goal of this qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of experienced and knowledgeable stakeholders regarding gun violence perpetrated by young men in three Greenwood urban communities and to help those three Greenwood communities to reduce the gun violence in their area. To achieve the goals of this study, I chose the research methods supporting a qualitative design. My aim was to show clearly and dependably how I collected and analyzed the data obtained through one-on-one interviews and a focus-group discussion. I pursued in-depth answers to my questions (see Appendix C) with the three stakeholder groups about the young male adult gun violence in the Greenwood urban communities, and to do so, I used the probing technique. Both reliability and validity were addressed by conducting a constant-comparison analysis with the perspectives of three different stakeholder groups. I used thick, rich descriptions of the data to draw connections. The findings were inductively derived from the data collected in interviews and discussions.

Research Question 1

Referring to the research question about the stakeholder groups' describing their perceptions regarding gun violence among young male adults, Participant 5 provided the link that tied together the responses from the data research to the original unanswered

questions in the study: Gun violence occurred not only in isolated communities, but it was a widespread phenomenon. Participant 5 remarked, “The young men in these communities had no family structure and no discipline.” Therefore, the young men would go out and do whatever they wanted. They skipped school and were neither educated nor respectful in their talk. They could not hold a job and wore baggy pants. Many of the young men ran the streets because they were involved with narcotics. Participant 5 exclaimed, “When their money was gone, the young men would probably rob a store. Therefore, the young men were going to take what they wanted and use whatever force they had by whatever means they could. Those young men involved in drugs were reported to be very paranoid probably because they worried about everything.” Participant 5 remarked, “The slightest thing that set the young men off would cause them to use a gun.”

One key factor the stakeholder groups perceived as contributing to gun violence in the community was easy access to guns. Joslyn and Haider-Markel (2013) reported that some believed gun availability was the main cause of gun-related tragedies. It was noted that people with gun shows would sell a gun to any young man if he had the money. The sellers did not worry about checking IDs or whether the buyers had a sound mind or the training to use the guns. The sellers were only concerned about making money. There were straw purchases as well, that is, people would buy guns at a gun show and, then, sell them on the street for a marked-up price. That made it easy for these young men to purchase guns. The purchase could be made in secret where the exchange took place just between the two people. All these young men needed to do was to come up

with the money, and the gun was theirs. Participant 4 said, “Many of the young men do what they do because the gun is available.”

Another factor that the stakeholder groups believed to contribute heavily to gun violence in their community was economic deprivation. When a person experiences consistent failure in what he is trying to do (such as earning a decent living), it makes it difficult to continue doing the same thing. Such failure may cause a person to look for a change. What they end up doing is finding help for themselves anyway they can. Participant 3 said, “The young men get a gun when things get so hard, and then they want to take what does not belong to them.” The young men in the three Greenwood communities lived in poverty conditions. They were not successful in improving these conditions with the incomes they were able to earn. Participant 3 said, “If the authorities could just raise the minimum wage and reach out and try to help these young men who want to better themselves, that gesture would be so good.” The young men’s honest efforts were in vain. They looked for other means of survival. When a person is in a desperate frame of mind, he does not always make good decisions. The young men often made bad decisions to get what they wanted, using the gun as a means and a shield for their actions. Some of them escaped while some of them were arrested.

Participant 6 described the situation in a similar manner, explaining that, once a person got that mark on his name, it could be hard to get it off:

Once a bad decision was made such as a felony conviction, sometimes it was hard for the felon to get a job and turn his life around. Many times, if *exfelony* appeared on an application, the application was discarded.

If young men cannot find a good job that produces an adequate income, the stakeholder groups believed that violence was more likely to occur. Participant 6 noted that, historically, the young men with that record were minorities; they were the young men out on the street, giving up on themselves. Participant 6 said,

That goes back to parents who have been into the system and have tried to go the right way but found themselves not able to get housing, not able to get a job; the parents reverted to what they knew best and that was committing crimes to supply the family with a roof over the family's head or put food on the table.

Participant 1 said, "A man needs to provide for himself and his family."

Participant 2 exclaimed, "Some of the young men had observed that same type of behavior in their own families while the young men were growing up, and that was how the young men had seen their parents make money." It was the glamorous way.

The young men thought the gang connection to be glamorous as well, but the stakeholder groups perceived gang affiliation as another emerging factor leading to gun violence. Participant 6 said, "A lot of young men believed being a gangster is the cool thing to do." The television set does not help because gangs are glamorized, and robbing banks is glamorized. The young men are seeing this, and some of the shows are very influential.

Not only did being in gangs encourage violence, but the drug atmosphere was also pushing them toward carrying guns. Participant 2 said, "With this society, having all the outward appearances of success is what is constantly glamorized." When the young men see that the dealers are walking around with large amounts of money, riding in expensive

cars, and wearing gold chains around their necks, the young men are impressed. They want the same type of car, nice clothes, and the caps also.” Participant 6 echoed this by saying, “Most of those items are rented to make an impression on the buyer, but the young men do not know that.”

Research Question 2

The stakeholder groups believed that there was a direct correlation between education, that is, dropping out of school, and criminal activity. With Research Question 2, I sought to explore what could be done to reduce gun violence in the community, and education appeared to be the key, in the stakeholders’ view, to reducing gun violence. Participant 1 said, “So many young men are frustrated because of their lack of education. Many of them have given up hope.”

Participant 6 agreed that it was important to let these individuals know that there is hope and that they can make it, but they must apply themselves. He said, “My staff and I are constantly trying to get these individuals to believe in themselves.” This gesture tied back into gun violence because many of these young men did not know how to handle confrontations. Throughout their lives, it has always been with a physical confrontation or the use of a weapon. This mindset had to change, and that required new knowledge, or education, in the stakeholders’ view. These young men needed to be taught other ways to deal with situations, that is, in a nonviolent way. They needed to be shown that they did not need to grab a gun every time they had a disagreement. There are ways to talk things out, but these young men needed to be educated in these unfamiliar ways.

More opportunities needed to be created for these young men to be successful in the neighborhood such as providing surrogate fathers or the Big Brother program. Most of these young men had no fathers in the home as they grew up, no role model, and no structure or discipline with which to comply to keep them in check. These young men, often, had the role of provider thrust upon them much too early. This caused them to miss so much school that it amounted to dropping out.

When the young men drop out of school and fail to get a high school education, they cannot make it in the job market. If they have not enough education to become a viable part of the workforce, a situation is present in which violence is most likely to occur. Participant 1 said, “If young men do not have any education to get economics, they are going to take a shortcut.”

The stakeholder groups also voiced that the interventions already being used needed to be improved. Participant 6 suggested, “The gun violence program can be improved by having gun laws stiffened to where individuals will have extremely hard times purchasing automatic weapons. The automatic rifles and weaponry should only be for our law enforcement officers.”

All but one of the participants were in favor of background checks before a gun permit could be issued. The lone hold-out found background checks to be too inadequate to prevent guns from ending up in the wrong hands. Participant 6 agreed that individuals were not being fully vetted even with a background check because the buyers’ mental state was not considered. He said, “Right now it is just, ‘Do you have anything on your

record?”” More thorough background checks would be helpful in combating gun violence, especially by vetting the mentally impaired as well.

Outcomes

From both the one-on-one bar chart and the focus-group bar chart (see Figures 2C & 4D), education was the highest code frequency indicated even with anger management training. After the professional development genre for this project had been approved by my dissertation 2nd committee member, I proceeded to design an adult education program for the Neighborhood Watch organization, to equip their members with the knowledge and training required to meet the needs of young men over 18 years of age and of those who have graduated from the 100 Black Men of America program on a more informed level to help them better their lives and avoid gun violence. The next section contains a full description of the professional development training curriculum.

Section 3: The Project

The problem prompting this study was the gun violence perpetrated by young male adults in three urban communities of Greenwood (a pseudonym chosen to protect the participants' rights and confidentiality). To identify a project that could help address this problem, I conducted a qualitative study with knowledgeable local stakeholder groups, namely members of the Neighborhood Watch organization, the local clergy, and law officials. Based on the findings gleaned through personal interviews and a focus-group discussion with these stakeholder groups, I developed a professional development training curriculum targeting factors that appeared to provoke and exacerbate gun violence perpetrated by young men. The analysis of the collected data helped to establish a professional development training curriculum that seemed to be the most appropriate genre for the Neighborhood Watch organization in the Greenwood urban community (see Appendix A). I chose the Neighborhood Watch organization as the focus of the curriculum because the members of this organization live in and are involved in the community. The members of this group can provide mentorship through positive relationships with the young men because they were trained in how to de-escalate behaviors by law officials.

The professional development training curriculum plan presents causes—or in the words of King (2013) “problems behind the problem” (p. 98)—of the gun violence and information to work toward a better environment and better economic conditions for these young men. I designed the project to help the Neighborhood Watch organization focus on the essential skills needed to mentor the young male adults to become

productive citizens in the community. The project includes engaging in education, providing leadership opportunities, and supporting identity factors by providing positive role models (see Harden et al., 2015). A series of courses was designed to guide the Neighborhood Watch members in helping young men to become responsible citizens. Other gun-violence intervention programs are available; however, this curriculum project is unique in that the topics for instruction are grounded in the local stakeholder groups' perceptions and experiences in the community (see Appendix A). The 3-day professional program could be held at a hotel containing a conference room and two rooms to separate groups with the privacy of rehearsing their skits to bring back to the parent body for discussion.

There was a consensus among the participants that education was the key to addressing the gun violence issue. The goal of the curriculum project was to equip members of the Neighborhood Watch organization, who were already situated in a favorable position in the community, with the best possible information needed for mentoring young male adults at risk of or having already been involved in gun violence. Graham (2012) reported that labels of low expectations make people think that they are not good enough, and eventually they start to identify with the labels. The objectives of the curriculum program were as follows: (a) develop skills through education (b) develop positive leadership skills, and (c) build a better community life by enhancing young male adults' self-esteem. These objectives substantiated the goal in supplying the participants with the best information to use to mentor the young men. The professional development training curriculum could be completed in a 3-day weekend workshop (see Appendix A).

The professional development program is one of the basic genres designed to provide educational opportunities for the individuals working with a local Neighborhood Watch organization to change the way of living of the young men in the community. The purpose of the professional development training curriculum was to provide potential mentors of young male adults with the knowledge needed to help young men ages 18 years and older develop skills in education, leadership, and community life. The curriculum plan could be implemented in a 3-day weekend workshop to equip members of the Neighborhood Watch organization with the necessary skills and strategies for mentoring young male adults. Once the members of the Neighborhood Watch organization understand how the curriculum plan works, they will need to enroll in each of the courses to implement the plan. I created the unit plans with teacher notes for guided instruction. The teacher will facilitate instruction through problem-based learning as well as through cooperative learning using real-world contexts (see Emamoke, 2013). I also included positive modeling and leadership development through social activities as learning strategies. The members of the Neighborhood Watch organization are required to do role-playing, discuss characters' actions, and suggest different outcomes as a solution or compromise to solve problems. Formative and summative evaluations will be administered to compare retention and generalization progress from the beginning of the professional development program to the end. After participants complete the project, the next step will be a follow-up to recommend curriculum changes. Focusing on knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes of the young men will address the problem through education.

Rationale

The stakeholder groups reported that the young men in the Greenwood urban communities live in poor environmental conditions and are economically challenged by not completing a sufficient level education to make a decent living. Participant 1 stated, “So many young men are frustrated because of the lack of education and the lack of access economically. They give up hope, and when hope is gone, people are dangerous.” This also causes low self-esteem in the young men. Ventura et al.’s (2015) research on self-efficacy indicated that low self-efficacy causes pessimistic feelings to turn into depression. This low self-esteem makes the situation unbearable for people. It creates a defensive position in which individuals are forced to meet their needs to survive, but their needs are inappropriately met through gang affiliation and gun violence. Based on Bandura’s social cognitive theory, Popescu (2016) reported that confidence could be boosted through project-based learning tasks. Therefore, I based the professional development training curriculum plan on project-based learning activities.

Participant 5 remarked that “it all starts with education. Dropping out of high school greatly reduces the window of opportunity and increases the potential of someone being involved in a life of crime.” Eight out of nine participants mentioned that education was needed to build a better community life. Three themes that emerged from the data were lack of education, economic deprivation, and gangs.

According to Participant 2, the young men learned from aggressive models. They physically fought for territorial grounds (Participant 5). Participant 3 reported that young men violently took things from others and killed others to gain authority and power.

Terrorism and antisocial behavior need to be combated by educating individuals to value life by using higher-order thinking skills (see Forawi, 2016). Dangerous social activities needed to be unlearned in favor of something new. The professional development program will educate the local Neighborhood Watch members, who will then be able to share their learning with the young men at risk in their neighborhoods.

I chose this project to address the problem because most of the participants emphasized the need for education to help reduce gun violence in the community. The project will also address the need for leadership and commitment to the community to develop a better place to live. The 3-day professional development program was the genre that met the specific educational need. The major issues of gun violence are addressed through the content of the curriculum by including classes such as achieving skills through education, developing positive leadership skills, and building a better community life.

Most of these young men in the three Greenwood communities did not graduate from high school. Therefore, they could not qualify for jobs with decent compensation. Having no job created survival issues. This drive triggered the need to take whatever steps necessary for survival. Participant 1 described it best by saying,

When a young man's hope is taken away and he is already frustrated and mad, he feels that he has nothing to live for. Now, add to this that something is said that creates a problem or that something is seen that is desirable, then the conditions are such that he just takes it. If someone says anything about it, they could be shot because the young man has nothing to lose.

The 3-day professional development program will provide to the local members of the Neighborhood Watch organization information that could be shared with the young men in their neighborhood to promote change in understanding what factors can be put in place through education, leadership, and community involvement.

Review of the Literature

Sources for the literature review were obtained from the Walden University library. I entered terms and combinations of related key words and terms such as *education* and *young men* and *social responsibility*, *curriculum* and *young men*, *curriculum* and *young men* and *gangs*, *curriculum* and *young men* and *computers*, *conflict management* and *communication skills*, *curriculum planning* and *theorists*, *curriculum planning* and *drugs*, *self-esteem* and *education*, *trust* and *education*, *trust* and *education* and *people*, *trust* and *young men*, and *trust* and *counseling* from various databases, including Academic Search Complete, Education Research Complete, ERIC, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, and Thoreau Multi-Database Search with education and psychology as selected subjects. Several articles addressed the effectiveness of curriculum planning and indicated education as the key source for learning social responsibility. Bandura's (1971) social learning theory was thought to be a source of education in learning social responsibilities through adult modeling in the home or at school. Duru and Balkis (2017) remarked that self-esteem was an important predictor of well-being. The well-being of the people will help to build a better community.

I used the directive approach, which begins with a framework to guide the textual interpretations of the study. Based on the interview data, the stakeholder groups identified

lack of education as the focal point needing improvement. Reason (2013) theorized that improving the climate for developing along one dimension (such as becoming better educated) would most likely increase development in other areas (such as economic equity). Dickerson and Agosto (2015) recognized the main problem of Black males was their continuing academic underperformance. Technology has impacted the educational environment and continues to do so (see Fujioka-Ito, 2013; Phillips, 2013), which adds to the young men's difficulty in staying abreast of educational and workplace requirements.

Based on these insights, I used the criteria described in the following sections to develop a professional training curriculum plan. The stakeholder groups perceived that it was not only beneficial but crucial for the young men in the Greenwood urban communities to be educated and learn to resolve conflicts without guns, to build self-esteem, to establish trust, and to receive training in anger management to build a better community. The stakeholder groups also pointed out that the young men needed to be educated and learn how to develop positive leadership skills to improve their quality of life. Such knowledge and skills will be imparted to the young men in the Greenwood urban communities through mentoring by members of the Neighborhood Watch organization who are taught in the professional development program.

Incidents of conflict and aggression are commonplace (see Liu et al., 2014; Taylor, 2014) among unemployed young men in the Greenwood community who are involved in gangs and are obsessed with survival (see Mestry & Bosch, 2013). However, good communication skills may reduce the risk of conflict and violence. The Neighborhood Watch organization will be trained in strategies of mentoring and

modeling good communication skills to the young male adults in the three Greenwood communities.

Peurača and Vejmelka (2015) noted that violent conflict resolution such as gang gun violence is often characterized by deficiencies in communication skills, which carry negative consequences. “Communication is taken to be the prime element of negotiation” (see Schoop et al., 2014, p. 184), and it is important for the young men to improve their skills in conflict resolution through an educational program involving a professional development training curriculum plan. Bidel, Sani, Mahpeykar, and Parvizpoor (2014) suggested that resolving conflicts through better communication skills should create a peaceful environment and prevent violence. Bidel et al. supported the use of communication skills to prevent misunderstandings and to identify and diffuse problematic situations. Bidel et al. further recommended remaining calm, not returning negative words, being assertive without being aggressive, and helping the other person understand why a problem exists and what could be done about it. These are the techniques that the Neighborhood Watch organization members will learn to mentor and model for the young male adults in the Greenwood communities.

The young men in the Greenwood urban community live in poverty, and some of them have experienced unfair treatment from their peers when they are singled out and mocked for not having brand named clothing and shoes (Participant 9). Using Bandura’s (1971) modeling theory was one way to effect learning. Sanderse (2012) affirmed “if role modelling is to contribute to moral education, there needs to be an explanation why the modelled traits are morally significant and an explanation on how students can acquire

these qualities for themselves” (p. 28). For these young men, the unfair treatment resulted in low self-esteem. Mossakowski (2015) reported that young men in poverty could hear humiliating remarks about their poverty and experience unfair treatment because of the stigma, which, in turn, would reduce their self-esteem. Because young men in the Greenwood urban communities live in poverty, it is most important for them not to feel defeated, but to keep hope alive. When there is no hope, dreams perish, and goals become meaningless. The future becomes obscured in the minds of people when hope disappears from the course of daily living. Educational success would allow these young men to take better advantage of employment opportunities and lead to positive levels of self-esteem (see Gale, 2012). That is why a professional development training curriculum plan designed to provide a course that could strengthen hope is so valuable to the young men in the Greenwood urban community to prevent depression while struggling to survive. The Neighborhood Watch members would be trained to strengthen hope through mentoring to the young adult men and this would in turn help to build a better community.

One of the stakeholders in the interview group mentioned that trust would have to be established within the Greenwood urban communities where the young men lived before any worthwhile results could be accomplished. One of the characteristics of the people making up a well-adjusted community is trust. Gershman (2012) also declared that the first step was to develop a relationship. The social environment can shape the kind of relationships young people will develop (see Laborde, VanDommelen-Gonzalez, & Minnis, 2014). Even when trust grows out of a distrustful environment, it has a chance

to recreate hope. Therefore, practitioners should attend to building trust (see Sedem & Ferrer-Wreder, 2015). Another very important factor was to make sure that a clear rationale was presented to the young men for every task before starting the task; at the same time, a profound source for potential hope and trust to develop would be an aura of authenticity surrounding the competence of the person reaching out (see Binder, Moltu, Hummelsund, & Holgersen, 2013). Establishing trust was one of the elements included in the professional development training curriculum plan for the members of the local Neighborhood Watch organization to utilize in building a better community.

Researchers and practitioners were encouraged to introduce ethical leadership training for young men to develop critical thinking in times of stress and enhance their economic well-being (see King, 2013). As with previous researchers, I integrated the value of moral reasoning into the curriculum. Although the development of leadership skills encompasses three factors—technical, conceptual, and interpersonal—only the interpersonal skills aspects related to effectively cooperating and communicating with others could be included in the curriculum plan for now (see Getha-Taylor, Fowles, Silvia, & Merritt, 2015).

Because a trust connection with another human being has a direct effect on decreasing depressive symptoms, providing opportunities to build relationships with others was highly relevant to this project. By instilling trust, this project represented a basic building block for developing leadership skills and encouraging active participation in decision making (see Garcia-Retamero & Galesic, 2013). Through this curriculum, the Neighborhood Watch members will gain greater confidence by knowing that they can

help each other through mutual social support and encouragement (see Hoyt, Rielage, & Williams, 2012).

The stakeholder groups that participated in the interviews were concerned about the fierce anger of the young men who displayed road rage in drive-by shootings. Aggressive actions, while driving, are intentionally directed toward other drivers such as honking, gestures, and giving chase (see Roidl, Siebert, Oehl, & Höger, 2013). The people make up the community. Improving how the people think and act constitute a good community. The improvement will positively impact the relationships within the community. This curriculum plan would address anger management issues of this nature when mentoring to the young men in building a better community. Aggressive behavior can cause physical injuries to the angry individual as well as to others (see Travis & Sturme, 2013). For this reason, finding effective interventions to reduce aggression was critical.

Cha and Sok (2013) reported that appropriate expression of anger helps to maintain the physical and psychological well-being of an individual, but when anger is psychologically inappropriately expressed, the possibility of a resulting depression or low self-esteem is strong. When anger is inappropriately expressed on the physical level, hypertension and heart disease could very well be the result. Anger management skills had to be taught, including self-calming skills such as learning to relax by taking deep breaths (see Mackintosh, Morland, Frueh, Greene, & Rosen, 2014). Other effective anger management techniques to control behavior when provoked are speaking directly to the provocateur about the problem or, alternatively, putting it out of the mind, thinking of

something else, and walking away from an argument. These are techniques addressed by the training curriculum to help the members of the local Neighborhood Watch organization mentor to the young male adults in the three Greenwood communities to build a better community by de-escalating behaviors.

Project Evaluation Plan

This project study has a formative and summative recommendation for each unit in this 3-day weekend professional development training curriculum plan. The purpose of formative data was to change the thinking and behavior of the participants while the summative evaluation measured outcomes to determine whether program objectives have been met by the clergy, law officials, and members of the Neighborhood Watch organization (see Lodico et al., 2010). Both the formative and summative data are used to show progress. However, the evaluation design was built on the young men's being hired for a paid job after completion of the course to determine the worth of the program for young male adults whose specific problem is struggling to survive in the poverty-stricken Greenwood urban communities. To facilitate the program evaluation, the administrators could use the formative and summative evaluation suggestions provided as part of the curriculum. Therefore, it made sense—after evidence of the young male adults' learning had been collected and the curriculum administrators had a burgeoning confidence that the curriculum could also help in promoting academic success—to suggest that a summative evaluation be conducted as a follow-up to this project study. The overall goals of the project were to promote education and reduce community gun violence. To achieve these goals, the young men must acquire knowledge of work ethics and social skills.

The presence of male entrepreneurs who can advocate their business and be proud of their success will serve as encouragement to the young men and give them hope for the future. Self-efficacy allows a person to gain confidence by viewing the success of others before he or she experiences the same encounter. The modeling of successful males and mentoring from the neighborhood watch members with assistance from the clergy and police officers serve as resources and support for the young men to keep hope alive. If low self-esteem surfaces as a potential barrier, the young men can find a solution by reaching out to the stakeholder groups for comfort and guidance.

Project Implications

This project will hopefully represent the first steps for the members of the local Neighborhood Watch organization to mentor to the young adult men in the local community the educational needs to increase their knowledge and social skills, to improve their self-esteem, to avoid the need to join gangs, and to help with resolving conflicts without violence. Young men who were struggling in poverty could become a benefit rather than a menace to the community. The young men who succeeded in the program would not need to prove themselves through violent acts to become leaders or maintain their leadership abilities. The program's importance to the young men would be in their immunity to pressures to join a gang. They would be trained to resist peer pressure to follow or join gangs. However, not only would there be training on resisting peer pressure, but there would be a focus on developing interpersonal skills that would build identity without connecting with gangs. Families could be proud to see young men educated so they would not remain dependent on them or at risk for turning to crime and

drugs (see Varani-Norton, 2014). The instructors and administrators would be confident about the success of their curriculum implementation to build a better society.

In the larger context, the curriculum could be shared to include other local Neighborhood Watch organizations where low academic achievement is prevalent. It is precisely where low academic achievement exists that the risk factors for joining gangs are high (see McNeil, Herschberger, & Nedela, 2013). This curriculum could be important because it complements the teaching of the family, or the first place where children are experiencing the world around them, and it continues with its teaching role into adulthood. This work could also be useful as a guide and to spark ideas for further studies on andragogy-based education that could be organized for young male adults (see Guclu, 2016).

Conclusion

In this section, I described the professional development training curriculum plan as the appropriate genre for this project. Based on the data analysis, the stakeholder groups identified achieving skills through education, developing leadership skills, and building a better community as themes needing improvement to reduce gun violence perpetrated by young male adults in the Greenwood urban communities. Kegan's (1994) adult development theory played a significant part in the framework for the study. The stakeholder groups believed that the lack of maturity seen in the behavior and decisions of the young men without fathers in the home was one of the contributing factors for gun violence in the Greenwood communities. Also, Bandura's (1971) social learning theory helped to form the framework for the study. The key source for learning social

responsibilities was thought to be education, either in the home or at school through adult modeling, rather than through explicit instruction. These young men, by and large, missed out in both these areas due to a disrupted home life with no father in the home and by dropping out of school (Participant 1). While this research project could not directly fill the academic needs of these young men, it could at least start to make up for the missed education in social skills and responsibilities through the mentoring activities of the Neighborhood Watch members. With this project study, I took the first step in addressing the educational vacuum by, first, exploring the needs through the perceptions of the neighborhood stakeholders and, then, by developing a curriculum for teaching the Neighborhood Watch members how to mentor these young men and teach them needed social skills for the peaceful resolutions of conflicts, with the hope and expectation that better social skills and better self-esteem would lead them toward making up for their missed academic skills, as indicated by Reason (2013). The unit details of the 3-day professional development training curriculum plan are included in Appendix A. The activities included were described as learning tasks. The program was designed as comprehensive training to enhance hope and provide for an improved lifestyle. The next section serves as a reflection on the project and includes strengths, limitations, and projected insights resulting from this study.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

In this project study, I explored the perceptions of three community stakeholder groups—members of the Neighborhood Watch organization, the local clergy, and police officials—regarding the reasons young male adults engaged in a lifestyle of gun violence and what measures should be taken to turn the young man away from gun violence and make the neighborhoods safe again. Based on the findings, I decided that a professional development training curriculum plan was the most appropriate means to address the local problem. Developing a program based on participants' experiences and perceptions could help the young male adults become productive citizens and assets to the community rather than destructive liabilities through gun violence.

Project Strengths

This study of young male adult gun violence contributed to the literature on child and adolescent violence. The research project was designed as a direct response to a serious local problem and was informed by the data collected from three community stakeholder groups. All participants mentioned in their individual interviews that lack of education was a prominent source of the problem. In addition, leadership and community involvement were also mentioned. This project, therefore, promoted a Freirian-inspired approach to advising by the Neighborhood Watch organization to engage the young male adults in dialogue about social justice (see Puroway, 2016). Community members would have their voices heard and their problems described and explored in their own language and from their own perspective.

This project was grounded in the Freirian (1972) notion of *claim* involving a practice area for gaining emancipation from an oppressor. Freire taught that those who are oppressed must reclaim their freedom and safety through mutual process and, subsequently, help those who are causing the oppression. According to Freire, such projects are developed not by an individual or two, but by the community. This notion was captured by the Freirian expression of *conscientization*. Because the solution to the local problem in the Greenwood area was grounded in the ideas of those who suffered from oppression, the project adhered to Freire's argument. Moreover, the project was directly informed by those affected by the problem as well as those causing the problem. Helping those who cause the problem to discover ways to break free from their oppressive practice may liberate them. The project was firmly entrenched in the local setting, which "enables the conducted research to draw on insider or emic perspectives" (Lodico et al., 2010, p. 290), meaning that it was developed with no external disturbances in the form of what an outside expert might think the solution ought to be from an etic perspective. The professional development curriculum plan was the genre chosen for the study, and unit plans were created for the courses to be offered.

The professional development training curriculum plan has three strengths. First, it provides the Neighborhood Watch organization training in leadership skills. As with other curriculum plans, this project included a summary of the day's lesson in the form of a test for each of the 3 days of professional development activities. The concept of evaluation forces participants' thinking to be much more focused. This project also included formative testing to guide the direction of the course and summative testing to

validate the success of the curriculum. Both evaluations were included to ensure ongoing success. Emamoke (2013) reported that after the content has been presented to the learner, testing is needed to ensure learning has occurred.

Second, the project plan includes strategies for providing mentoring to young male adults who did not have a male model in the home by introducing the presence of positive male role models. Berk, Berg, Mortimer, Walton-Moss, and Yeo (2005) posited that “a mentoring relationship is one that may vary along a continuum from informal to formal in which a person with useful experience offers advice to another” (p. 67). Third, the project promotes the possibility of reducing gun violence in the three Greenwood communities through educational strategies as well as leadership and community involvement that demonstrate how healthier and more vibrant alternatives are possible and desirable.

Project Limitations

One limitation of the project was that the voices of the young male adults were not included. This limitation may influence the cooperation of the young male adults in being liberated from gun violence and embracing a healthy and peaceful community where all have the opportunity to lead a productive life. Also, this project was geared toward the Greenwood communities. The findings may not be transferable to young male adults in other communities. In addition, the professional development training curriculum plan focuses on a specific economic condition.

Alternative Approaches

One alternative approach would be to develop and conduct a series of community trainings in the form of town hall meetings. Community members would have the opportunity to define and label the problem in attempting to own it and develop plans for remedying the situation (see Freire, 1972). Freire's (1972) work was aimed at helping to provide the platform where community members could organize and develop strategic plans to address social problems. This forum would provide the time and space for the community to assemble and review the triggering events and situations giving rise to gun violence by young male adults (see Horton & Thomas, 1998). Further, the town hall meetings would provide a safe space for those affected by or interested in gun violence to learn about possible steps to mitigate the problem.

Another approach would be a policy paper focused on guiding the municipalities to find grant monies (see Cook, Horton-O'Connell, Fitzgibbon, & Steigman, 1998) to subsidize programs. These programs would provide skill training with the objective to help young male adults learn a trade such as carpentry, electrician, and bricklayer. These trades would provide the young men with marketable skills for an honorable and dignified life.

Another approach would be to conduct a case study of a young man with added stakeholders' perceptions. In gathering different information from other stakeholders about the case study, Black and Kassaye (2014) observed that stakeholders will provide additional sources without using alternative possibilities and limit their results to a single outcome. In addition, Black and Kassaye concluded that stakeholders' experiences were

the best way for them to learn coupled with having discussions and receiving feedback from people.

Analysis of Self as a Scholar

A scholar is a continuous learner and a good planner (see Haselsberger, 2011). There is no failure if the master plan fails because it can be considered part of a broader learning task. Haselsberger (2011) reported that learning from failure provides a knowledgeable base for future planning. The literature review in this project study broadened my horizon and expanded my perspectives on topics outside the chosen research problem. Literature searches produced successful and unsuccessful leads in my study. However, I considered the leads valuable and potentially useful in other circumstances. I find gaining new information exciting and rewarding because it raises my level of confidence as a researcher and problem solver. Furthermore, the information gained can be passed on and become productive for others.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

A practitioner is concerned with the difficulties experienced and is dedicated to finding out what is working well and what is not with the presenting problem (see Lathlean, 1992). Lathlean (1992) reported that there are certain expectations as to the responsibilities of a practitioner that are built into the job description. Lathlean reported that a practitioner is expected to be a curriculum developer and an organizer. As a practitioner, I gained new insights regarding biases. I learned how important it was for the researcher to identify and monitor his or her biases rather than to concentrate on eliminating them (see Fergus, Bardeen, & Wu, 2013).

Biases are real, and they can become part of the data collected through interpretive results. Tan (2015) found that a researcher has to be careful not to interpret data in a way that is favorable to the researcher. Tan also noted that everything a person perceives is interpreted through his or her existing beliefs and values. Biases can also be displayed through facial expressions while interviewing if they are not identified and carefully monitored. Patterson (as cited in Kokin, Younger, Gosselin, & Vaillancourt, 2016) posited that facial expressions imply emotions and attitudes that would have an impact on the study. In future research, I will be more aware of my biases because all data impact a study; researcher bias could affect the outcome if inadvertently included with the collected data.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

A project developer generates significant benefits to a community, including enhancing employment opportunities and increasing incomes (Lesbirel, 2011). One characteristic of a good project developer is patience. I learned that patience has to accompany all worthwhile goals. Without patience, it is difficult to make things happen. I had to remember to encourage myself when others were not encouraging me. I had to keep in mind that things of prime importance to me may not necessarily have occupied a priority position for others. Patience was necessary when dealing with others who did not cooperate with my efforts.

Potential Impact on Social Change

Stakeholder groups agreed on why the young men were attached to guns: for gaining status and recognition in gangs, for feeling in control, for personal gain from the

drug trade, because they lacked confidence, because they lived in poor environmental conditions, and because they were unemployed or unemployable due to lack of a proper education. Stakeholder groups also perceived education as the solution to the problem. The project's potential impact on social change starts at the local level to help young men modify their behavior and live productive, responsible lives.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Future researchers could investigate the relationship between exposure to opportunities and learning effects. In addition, future researchers could evaluate the professional development plan using a quantitative design with a large sample. Researchers could also compare video modeling to other models of instruction. Although evidence supports causative factors for gun violence across several domains, future research may reveal additional factors involved in gun violence perpetrated by young male adults.

Conclusion

This study provided a bridge for me to transition from practitioner to scholar (see Lesbirel, 2011). The reflections in this section helped me to realize that a change had occurred within me. I am now able to have a bigger impact and contribute to a worthy cause in society. Learning is a remarkable, eye-opening process that can reveal both good and troubling things. A person is rewarded by the good things he or she learns and can use the lessons from the troubling things to adjust how he or she thinks to make better choices in the future. My reflections in this section provided an opportunity to look back

at the journey and appreciate my personal and professional growth. Overall, this journey has been a very rewarding experience.

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Appendix A: The Project

An Educational Program for a Local Neighborhood Watch Organization

Purpose

A 3-day professional development program is one of the basic genres designed to provide educational opportunities to socially change an individual's way of living. The purpose of the professional development program is to acquire knowledge on an adult level necessary for the members of a local Neighborhood Watch organization, who will be learners, to mentor to the young men, ages 18 and older.

Each lesson that is part of the professional development activity begins with an introduction that links the lesson with the learners' background knowledge through brainstorming so that it will provide a purpose for the enhancement of a better life and a smoother connection for the learners to understand. This can be accomplished by achieving skills through education, developing leadership skills, and building a better community life. Following the introduction, examples that reinforce the skill taught in the introduction are included.

Goals

1. The goal of the 3-day professional development program is to equip and position the members of a local Neighborhood Watch organization to be able to help the community in a more informed level by mentoring the young male adults that live within the community.
2. The project will also provide strategies in mentoring to young male adults in the areas of education, leadership skills, and building a better community life.

Learner Outcomes**The learner outcomes are as follows:**

1. The learners will be able to specify how education and learning can educate the males living in the community.
2. The learners will be able to be leaders in delivering issues with accuracy to those persons that are responsible to changing needs.
3. The learners will be able to differentiate between positive and negative role models.
4. The learners will be mentors in building a better community life by using successful project-based learning activities.
5. The learners will learn how to de-escalate behavior in building a better community life.
6. The learners will enhance social skills generalization in community involvement through mentoring.
7. The learners will provide protection for the community by becoming mentors of social skills in building a better community life.

Target Audience

A local Neighborhood Watch program is the focus of the professional development activity as those members in the organization live among and are involved in the community. The members of the local Neighborhood Watch organization can provide mentorship in positive relationships, and they will know how to de-escalate

behavior after their training from law officials and by attending the professional development activity.

Activities

Social activities are provided within each part of the professional development activity. Both large and small group activities will be provided. Some activities will include creative writing, discussion groups using open-ended questions, and role-playing using visual images to point out good and bad behavior. Confidence is boosted through project-based learning tasks and cooperative learning in groups. These activities will align with education because these activities are learning tasks and align with building a better community because the activities help to build self-esteem in the person who lives within the community.

Materials

Handouts will be distributed with PowerPoint presentations and space for notes. Implementation plans are provided with teacher notes included for suggested guidance of instruction. A list of references will also be provided to access articles directly.

Evaluation Plan

Each day a test will be given relating to the lesson of the day. Formative and summative evaluation are provided as part of this 3-day professional development program. The purpose of formative data is to change the thinking and behavior of the participants while the summative evaluation measured outcomes to determine whether program objectives had been met by the stakeholder groups (Lodico et al., 2006). Both the formative and summative data are used to show progress in generalizing information.

Seminars

The participants, who are the members of the local Neighborhood Watch organization, are required to attend the seminars and encouraged to use all the resources to be successful learners. The seminars will be teacher-directed, and the seminars will include activities for the members of the local Neighborhood Watch organization to do. The seminars will be held daily for 3 days, and the seminars will last 8 hours per day.

Timeline

This a 3-day weekend professional development program to teach the members involved in a local Neighborhood Watch program the necessary skills and strategies when mentoring to the young men how to achieve skills in education, develop leadership skills, and build a better community. The daily schedule will be from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm with 1 hour designated for lunch and a 15-minute break in the morning and a 15-minute break in the afternoon.

Schedule Day 1

8:00 am – 8:45 am Check-In/Coffee break

8:45 am – 9:15 am Welcome Meeting

The participants, who are the local Neighborhood Watch members, are required to attend the welcome meeting, as well as the other sessions for each time block each day. Join the program coordinator for a warm welcome meeting, featuring an overview of the day. Introduce the program coordinator and the staff. This period will give the program coordinator an opportunity to introduce the upcoming topic “Achieving Skills Through

Education,” enabling the local Neighborhood Watch members to visualize and connect to the communities in their area and support one another.

9:15 am - 10:45 am Seminar 1 – Achieving Skills Through Education

A handout of the PowerPoint presentation will be distributed. Space is provided for notes to be written beside each slide for convenience. This period is teacher directed. Link the lesson with the learner’s background knowledge by brainstorming, soliciting answers to a question, or displaying a visual image (See the Teacher Guide on p. 160).

10:45 am – 11:00 am Break

11:00 am – 12:30 pm Group Discussions

Discuss the items listed below together as a team in a small group. Write individual answers to questions. Reassemble and share information in the large group.

1. How is low income associated with education?
2. Tell me how education can impact unemployment.
3. How can having no education contribute to poverty?

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm Lunch

1:30 pm – 3:00 pm Group Discussions

Discuss the items listed below together as a team in a small group. Then write individual answers to each item listed below including solutions to the problem.

Reassemble and share information in the large group.

1. Tell how inappropriate role modeling can educate young men as well as appropriate role modeling.
2. Tell me how celebrities are role models.

3. How can rap singers be role models?
4. Are benefits gained from limited education? If so, what are they?

3:00 pm – 3:15 pm Break

3:15 pm - 4:30 pm Closing Colloquium

The colloquium will conclude with a summary of the day’s discussions. Check for understanding and a clear view of solutions to problems.

4:30 pm - 5:00 pm Summary of the day’s activities

Write your thoughts regarding plans and emotions as you relive the day of graduation through the eyes of a picture. How did your plans materialize?

Schedule Day 2

8:00 am – 8:45 am Check-In/Coffee break

The participants, who are the local Neighborhood Watch members, are required to attend the sessions for each time block each day. In this time block, you may sign up for the class “Developing Leadership Skills.” Make sure that you are wearing your name badge or get a replacement while registering. All participants must check in by 8:45 am.

8:45 am - 9:15 am General Assembly

As a group, the local Neighborhood Watch members will gather for a welcome meeting. Join the program coordinator for a review of yesterday’s lesson and an introduction of the format for the day.

9:15 am - 10:45 am **Seminar 2 - Developing Leadership Skills**

A handout of the PowerPoint presentation will be distributed. Space is provided for notes to be written beside each slide for convenience. This period is teacher directed.

Link the lesson with the learners' background knowledge by brainstorming, soliciting answers to a question, or displaying a visual image (See the Teacher Guide on p. 167).

10:45 am – 11:00 am Break

11:00 am – 12:30 pm Group Discussions

Discuss the items listed below together as a team in a small group. Then write individual answers to each item listed below. Reassemble and share information in the large group.

1. What do you know about a good leader?
2. Tell me about your experience with good and bad leadership.
3. Role play both good and bad leadership skills (See p. 180 for a role play skit on Leadership).
4. In what ways did the man show good leadership to his scout? (never criticized him; accepted a different way of thinking; gave him confidence to succeed)
5. In what ways did the scout show his ability to be a dependable scout? (showed determination and a willingness to keep trying; showed enthusiasm for meeting a challenge; showed a desire to be accepted)
6. Role play appropriate behaviors for conversing with persons responsive to changing needs.

Guest Speaker

Listen to a positive role model from the law official stakeholder group. Discuss the items listed below together as a team in a small group. Then write individual answers to each item listed below.

7. Point out qualities of a good leader from the speaker.
8. What new ideas would you add to the list after making a comparison of the speaker with prior knowledge?

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm Lunch

1:30 pm – 3:00 pm Group Discussions

Discuss the items listed below together as a team in a small group. Then write individual answers to each item listed. Reassemble and share information in the large group.

1. Think of traditional moral values that are important to use daily.
2. Role play examples of traditional moral values.

Guest Speaker

Listen to a positive role model from the clergyman stakeholder group. Discuss the items listed below together as a team in a small group. Then write individual answers to each item listed.

3. Point out qualities of a good leader from the speaker.
4. What new ideas would you add to the list after making a comparison of the speaker with prior knowledge?

3:00 pm – 3:15 pm Break

3:15 pm - 4:30 pm Closing Colloquium

The colloquium will conclude with a summary of the day's discussions. Check for understanding and a clear view of solutions to problems.

4:30 pm - 5:00 pm Summary of the day's activities

Write an essay on what you learned about being a good leader.

Schedule Day 3

8:00 am – 8:45 am Check-In/Coffee break

The participants, who are the local Neighborhood Watch members, are required to attend the sessions for each time block each day. In this time block, you may sign up for the class “Building a Better Community Life.” Name badges must be worn throughout the day, and participants must check in by 8:45 am.

8:45 am - 9:15 am General Assembly

Join the program coordinator for a review of yesterday’s lesson and an overview of the day. This period will give the program coordinator an opportunity to introduce the upcoming topic of “Building a Better Community Life,” enabling the local Neighborhood Watch members to visualize and connect to the communities in their area and support one another.

9:15 am - 10:45 am **Seminar 3 – Building a better Community Life**

A handout of the power point presentation will be distributed. Space is provided for notes to be written beside each slide for convenience. This period is teacher directed. Link the lesson with the learners’ background knowledge by brainstorming, soliciting answers to a question, or displaying a visual image (See the Teacher Guide on p. 173).

10:45 am – 11:00 am Break

11:00 am – 12:30 pm Group Discussions

Discuss the items listed below together as a team in a small group. Then write individual answers to each item listed below. Reassemble and share information in the large group.

1. How can positive self-esteem help to build a better community life?
2. Tell how acquiring confidence can build a better life.
3. How can project-based learning activities help gain confidence and trigger building a better community life?
4. Describe how the professional development activities support project-based learning to build a better life.
5. How can you provide protection for the community in building a better life?
6. How can social activities help make a better community life?
7. Name some social activities that are naturally rewarding?

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm Lunch

1:30 pm – 3:00 pm Group Discussions

Discuss the items listed below together as a team in a small group. Then write individual answers to each item listed below. Reassemble and share information in large group.

1. What are some ways to de-escalate unwanted behavior that is seen in the community?
2. Choose one social skill and explain how you have maintained it.
3. Role play one of the social skills and discuss the actions of the characters (See p. 182 for role play on Respect).

4. What does the word “respect” mean?
5. In what ways did the old man show respect to his customer?
6. In what ways did the customer show lack of respect for the old man?
7. The old man also showed respect for his country. How?
8. Suppose certain people in powerful positions don’t earn our respect (e.g., policemen, politicians, judges, parents, teachers). Should we show respect to them anyway? Why or why not?
9. Create and share with the class a memorization trick that is naturally rewarding.

3:00 pm – 3:15 pm Break

3:15 pm - 4:30 pm Closing Colloquium

The colloquium will conclude with a summary of the day’s discussions. Check for understanding and a clear view of solutions to problems. There will be oral questioning of the learners by each other. A quiz will be given on the last day following the conclusion of the units (See p. 186 for final quiz).

4:30 pm - 5:00 pm Evaluation

Professional development activities evaluation (See Appendix A, p. 188)

Comparison of formative and summative evaluations (See Appendix A, pp. 190-

191)

Teacher Guide or Implementation Plan

An Educational Program for a Local Neighborhood Watch Organization

Presented

by

Birda Garrett

Achieve Skills Through Education**Introduction**

Learners are informed about the specific skills they will be taught. The teacher presents the goals and objectives, then relates them to previous learning. To focus learners on the lesson they are about to have, begin by showing a picture of hats flying in the air after graduation.



Ask learners to think about and discuss the emotions occurring during the event, the obligations leading up to the event, and the planned accomplishments after the event in the picture. What do you think is happening in this picture? List present emotions, prior obligations, and future accomplishments on a flip chart as learners respond to the question. If learners cannot respond, the teacher may provide coaching to the learners using the answers listed below or use the answers in the section as additional information.

Possible Answers: The learners will discuss the emotions during a graduation, the obligations leading up to the event, and the planned accomplishments after the event. The learners may suggest (a) emotions such as happy, proud, jubilant, and glad; (b) obligations, for example: complete assignments, earn credits, class participation, hard work; and (c) planned accomplishments including getting a job, living independently, buying a house, or buying a car.

Teacher-Directed

The teacher will reinforce the responses given in the introduction. Ask learners, “How did your education help you?” Have learners discuss the question together as a team of 2 or 4 and write their individual answers before additional discussion continues. Each team member should be able to explain his answer. Teacher will continue by stating what learners will accomplish during the lesson.

Instructional Goals and Objectives

- A. Outcome: The learners will be able to specify how changing economic conditions through education could decrease an economic situation 80% of the time. The teacher will have the learners discuss the need to change economic conditions through education. Provide coaching to the learners, if necessary. What about spending? How can spending affect the economic conditions?
 1. Economic conditions: The economic situation is affected through decrease spending or no spending and people cannot spend what they do not have.

Almgren, Guest, Immerwahr, and Spittel (1998) reported that low income is associated with higher homicide rates in a community.

Give learners an opportunity to assess their understanding and get clarification surrounding any confusion. Have each learner write an answer to the question, “How is low income associated with education?” Then have learners check their answers with the group. If there is not a consensus, the teacher will allow more discussion. If there is a consensus, the teacher will continue to have learners involved in other discussions. Ask learners, “Tell me about the impact of poverty in a community.” Learners will get help from one another in the group.

2. Poverty: Šileika and Bekeryté (2013) found that poverty is the strongest cause resulting from no education because poverty results when income is inadequate for food and physical needs. These are strong survival drives that cause individuals to inappropriately react.

After the partner conference, the teacher will assess understanding by having learners write the answer to the question, “How can having no education contribute to poverty?” If learners master the concept, have them reassemble and discuss, “How can education impact unemployment?”

3. Unemployment: Having no education has a direct impact on the growth of unemployment. Income reduces as unemployment increases, which contributes to people having no education. After learners have discussed and

written their answer, the teacher will continue by stating other objectives that learners will accomplish during the lesson.

- B. Outcome: The learners will demonstrate how inappropriate role modeling can educate young men as well as appropriate role modeling 95% of the time. The teacher will have the learners discuss how inappropriate role modeling can also be educational. If coaching is needed, ask learners about role models with high celebrity standing. What about rap singers? Education is learning. Even though it may be undesired or inappropriate learning, it is still learning.

Possible Answers: Egregious role models contribute to education and learning. The teacher will inform the learners that the research from a study was based on learning through the effectiveness of Bandura's (1971) modeling and observational theory. He believed that models with high celebrity standing are powerful role models. Rap singers use lyrics that are influential (Hernandez-Ramdwar, 2009). Clergyman/Participant 2 said that the young men in the study are being educated to conform to the way the rap singers sing because they can identify with them. Hernandez-Ramdwar (2009) continued by saying that continual and sustained consumption of specific images and texts over time does have an impact on behavior.

Ask learners about limited education. Limited education could be described as a lack of skills. Not having the basic qualification from high school for higher education was considered the low qualified level (Kyndt, Dochy, Onghena, & Baert, 2012). Often this pay scale is below the poverty level. Limited education causes limited job opportunity

options and a lack of salary satisfaction. The teacher will monitor understanding from the learners after they gather in small groups and write their individual answers from their discussion of the question, “How can limited education contribute to unsatisfactory living in a community?” Have them include solutions to the problem.

- C. The evaluation techniques will be both formative and summative evaluations. For the formative evaluation, ask learners, “What does the picture represent?” Include the emotions, prior obligations, and plans.



For summative evaluation, show a picture representing education. Have learners write about their thoughts regarding plans and emotions as they relive the day of graduation through the eyes of a picture. How did the plans materialize? What did you accomplish?



- D. Teacher notes would include preparing topics to discuss, listing emotions during the event, listing prior obligations leading up to the event, and listing the planned accomplishments after the event on a flip chart. It should also be noted that the teacher should secure a transparency of an education event for an overhead projector or use your power point print out.

- E. The materials needed will be an overhead projector, 2 transparencies showing education representations, a flip chart, a marker, an eraser, and a stand for the flip chart.

Learner Practice

- Have learners think about things that would cause the event to happen in the picture. What do you think is happening in this picture?
- Have learners write about how low income is associated with education.
- Have learners write a summary telling how inappropriate role modeling can educate young men as well as appropriate role modeling.
- How can having no education contribute to poverty?
- How can education impact unemployment?

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Teacher Guide or Implementation Plan

An Educational Program for a Local Neighborhood Watch Organization

Presented

by

Birda Garrett

Develop Leadership Skills

Introduction

Learners are informed about the specific skills they will be taught. The teacher presents the goals and objectives, then relates them to previous learning. To focus learners on the lesson they are about to have, begin by brainstorming. Ask learners to think about things they would consider a good leader doing. What do you know about a good leader? Compile a list of things on a flip chart as learners respond to the question. If learners cannot respond, the teacher may provide coaching to the learners using the answers listed below or use the answers in the section as additional information.

Possible Answers: The learners will develop the following good leadership skills: (a) Good communication is likely to reduce the risk of conflict and violence. Incidents of conflict and aggression are commonplace (Liu et al., 2014; Taylor, 2014). That makes it even more important to improve skills in conflict resolution, (b) Conflict management is often characterized by deficiencies in communication, (c) A large part of communication involves listening, (d) Leaders need to inspire their workers to go the extra mile, (e) The

leader who delegates tasks is a sign of a strong leader, (f) Be open and honest to gain trust and respect, (g) Leaders need to be able to think outside of the box, (h) Leaders should constantly look for opportunities to deliver useful information about performance, (i) A leader is responsible for both the successes and failures of his group, (j) It is important for leaders to follow through with what they agree to do, and (k) Leaders need to be flexible, accepting whatever changes come their way.

Teacher-Directed

The teacher will reinforce the responses given in the introduction. Allow learners to tell about their experiences with good and bad leadership. Have learners together as a team of 2 or 4 decide what to do to role model good and bad leadership skills before presenting it to the rest of the class. The teacher will ask the learners to do role modeling. Then the teacher will continue by stating what learners will accomplish during the lesson.

Instructional Goals and Objectives

- A. Outcome: The learners will be able to be leaders in delivering issues with accuracy to those persons that are responsive to changing needs. The teacher will have the learners model appropriate behaviors for conversing with persons responsive to changing needs. Provide coaching to the learners, if necessary. What about moral values? Think of ways to model traditional moral values.
 - 1. Moral Values: Traditional moral values help individuals become preservers of life. Sweeney and Fry (2012) define respect, fairness, caring, loyalty, integrity, humility, and service to all as traditional moral values.

Modeling can be incorporated by using live demonstrations. Learners can also model honesty and integrity. Moral values help individuals become assets to society (Linsenbach, 2013). Not acquiring these morals reflect immaturity in adult development.

2. Social Skills: Rhode, Jenson, and Reavis (1995) reported that being noncompliant and disruptive when you are young will also be a part of the adult lives as well. Thus, it is essential to be taught directly focusing on specific social skills training to break the cycle of transitioning from childhood to adulthood.

The teacher will have the learners model the “compliance” social skill. Discuss the role of the characters. Choose a different ending. After role modeling, the teacher will continue by stating other objectives that learners will accomplish during the lesson.

- B. Outcome: The learners will be provided representatives from the law official stakeholder group to serve as role models and implement policies addressing the local gun violence problem 100% of the time.

Give learners an opportunity to listen to the guest speaker. The teacher will introduce the presence of a law official stakeholder representative who is a positive role model. At the close of the presentation, a question and answer period will be provided for the learners. Allow the learners to ask the speaker questions. Have the learners point out qualities of a good leader from the speaker. Then have the learners look at the list of things that they knew about a good leader before the speaker presented his topic. Ask the

learners, “What new ideas would you add to the list now?” Then have each learner write an essay on what they learned about being a good leader.

- C. Outcome: The learners will be provided representatives from the clergymen stakeholder group to serve as role models through religious-based coping 100% of the time.

Give learners an opportunity to listen to the guest speaker. The teacher will introduce the presence of a clergyman stakeholder representative who is a positive role model. At the close of the presentation, a question and answer period will be provided for the learners. Allow the learners to ask the speaker questions. Have the learners point out qualities of a good leader from the speaker. Then have the learners look at the list of things that they knew about a good leader before the speaker presented his topic. Ask the learners, “What new ideas would you add to the list now?” Then have each learner write an essay on what they learned about being a good leader.

- D. The evaluation techniques will be both formative and summative evaluations. For the formative evaluation, brainstorm and make a list of good leadership skills. For summative evaluation, have learners write an essay on what they learned about being a good leader.
- E. Teacher notes will include listing leadership skills on the flip chart, providing role models for class, and getting a clergyman and law official stakeholder representative to be guest speakers for class.
- F. The materials needed will be a flip chart, a marker, an eraser, a portable podium for the speakers, and a stand for the flip chart.

Learner Practice

- Have learners brainstorm about the things they would consider a good leader doing. What do you know about a good leader?
- Have learners discuss their experiences with good and bad leadership.
- Have learners together as a team of 2 or 4 decide what to do to role model good and bad leadership skills before presenting it to the rest of the class.
- After listening to a guest speaker, look at the list of things that learners knew about a good leader before the speaker presented his topic. What new ideas would you add to the list now?
- Have learners write a paragraph explaining why they think it is important to develop good leadership skills.

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Teacher Guide or Implementation Plan

An Educational Program for a Local Neighborhood Watch Organization

Presented

by

Birda Garrett

Build a Better Community Life

Introduction

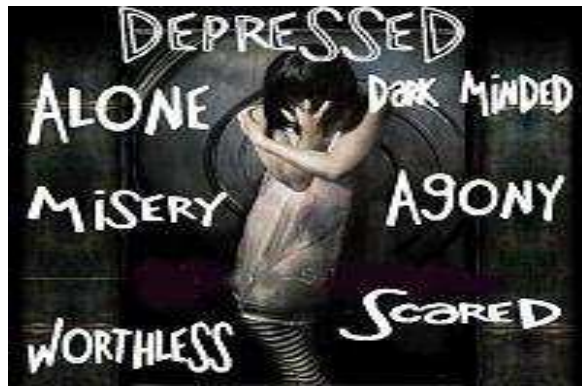
Learners are informed about the specific skills they will be taught. The teacher presents the goals and objectives, then relates them to previous learning. To focus learners on the lesson they are about to have, begin by showing a picture of a person in stress.



Ask learners to think about and discuss how they think the person in the picture feels.

Ask learners “How do you think the person in the picture feels?” List the learners’ responses on a flip chart. If learners cannot respond, the teacher may provide coaching to

the learners using the answers listed on the picture below or use the answers in the section as additional information.



Possible Answers: The learners will discuss how the person in the picture feels. The learners may suggest the following: (a) depressed, (b) sad, (c) lonely, (d) worthless, (e) miserable, (f) alone, (g) scared, (h) in agony, (i) distressed, (j) uneasy, and (k) dark minded.

Teacher-Directed

The teacher will reinforce the responses given in the introduction. Tell learners that everyone experiences depressed feelings for a short time, but prolonged depressed feelings cause people to lose hope. Have learners share experiences when they felt depressed. Allow learners to tell about their experiences. The teacher will continue by stating what learners will accomplish during the lesson.

Instructional Goals and Objectives

- A. Outcome: The learners will be mentors in building a better community life by enhancing self-esteem. The learners will mentor how to acquire confidence by using successful project-based learning activities 100% of the time.

B. The workshop in attendance supports a project-based learning style.

Blumenfeld et al. (2011) posited that project-based learning is designed to help people learn. In small groups, the teacher will have learners write the steps included in the lessons presented in the class. While in their groups, the teacher will circle the room, check for understanding, and supervise work.

Appropriate answers should include (a) connect prior knowledge, (b) tell what will be learned, (c) give knowledge, if necessary, (d) show or model what to do, (e) check understanding, (f) supervise work, (g) practice independently, and (h) summarize learning. If learners master the concept, the teacher will continue to have them involved in discussions while still in their groups. Tell the learners that Gale (2012) theorized that educational success would lead to positive levels of self-esteem. The teacher will have the learners discuss what makes a project that is educational a good one. Ask learners, “What makes a project geared toward education or any project a good one?” Provide coaching to the learners, if necessary. What about having the project revolve around a real-world topic? Is this project topic one that is popular in most places? The teacher will tell the learners that the evidence to look for in a good project is how it revolves around a real-world topic. The more popular the topic, the more popular the project. In a large group, have the learners think about projects they have done and make a list showing the criteria for having good projects after each learner writes an answer to the question “What are the criteria for good projects?” Learners will get help from one another. If

learners cannot respond, the teacher may provide coaching to the learners using the answers listed below or use the answers in the section as additional information.

Possible Answers: Another sign of a good project is when learners show they are involved by suggesting questions. Also, a sign of a good project is when experts are included. Give learners an opportunity to assess their understanding and get clarification surrounding any confusion while they are in the group. The teacher will continue by stating other objectives that learners will accomplish during the lesson.

C. Outcome: The learners will learn how to de-escalate behavior 95% of the time by using anger management techniques. Finding effective interventions to reduce aggression is critical. Mackintosh, Morland, Frueh, Greene, and Rosen (2014) reported that anger management skills are taught by applying self-calming skills such as having the person relax by taking deep breaths. Ask learners, “What are some other ways to de-escalate behavior?” If learners cannot respond, the teacher may provide coaching to the learners using the answers listed below or use the answers in the section as additional information.

Possible Answers: One other effective anger management technique to control behavior when provoked is speaking directly to that person about the problem. Another thing that could be done is to put it out of your mind and think of something else. Still another thing is just walk away from an argument. The teacher will continue by stating other objectives that learners will accomplish during the lesson.

- D. Outcome: The learners will enhance social skills generalization through mentoring 100% of the time. It is important to teach self-management skills to help maintain improved social skills. The teacher will ask the learners to choose one social skill and explain how they maintained it.
- E. Outcome: The learners will provide protection for the community by becoming mentors of social skills. As knowledge about social skills is received, the new knowledge will alter the way one used to think to partner with those who think the same way. Thus, the community is a safer place to live. The teacher will ask learners to role play one of the social skills and discuss the actions of the characters.
- F. Outcome: The learners will provide mentorship in positive relationships through social activities 100% of the time. Apostol et al. (2013) reported that teaching and learning are highly social activities because they involve social interaction. Rhode et al. (1995) declared that some social activities are naturally rewarding. Bingo is one of those naturally rewarding social activities. The teacher will ask learners to create and share with the class a memorization trick (e.g., music, acronym, visual cue, or gesture) that works for them. If learners cannot respond, the teacher may provide coaching to the learners.

Possible Answer: The alphabet song is taught to young children in school to improve classroom learning of the alphabets. Color coded dominoes are used for counting and teaching math. Directional songs are sung to learn directions and teach the

parts of the body, such as “Put Your Right Foot in and Shake It All About.” Some acronyms assist in spelling, such as M is for the many things she gave me.

G. The evaluation techniques will be both formative and summative evaluations.

For the formative evaluation, there will be oral questioning of the learners by each other. For the summative evaluation, a quiz on the last day following conclusion of the units will be given.

H. Teacher notes will include listing emotions on the flip chart, preparing topics to discuss, listing causes of depression on a flip chart, and securing 2 transparencies showing depression pictures for an overhead projector.

I. The materials needed will be an overhead projector, 2 transparencies showing depression, a flip chart, a marker, and a stand for the flip chart.

Learner Practice

- Have learners list what they think the emotion is of the person in the picture.
- Have learners to role play a social activity and discuss the characters' actions.
- Have learners to suggest different outcomes for the solution.
- Have learners to exchange papers and write another ending to the role play.
- Have learners to create and share with the class a memorization trick in education (e.g., music, acronym, visual cue, or gesture) that helps them learn.

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Presentation Slides: Achieve Skills Through Education

**An Educational Program
for a
Local Neighborhood Watch Organization**

Achieve Skills Through Education

Presented
by
Birda Garrett

Introduction

- Present goals and objectives.
- Relate previous learning.



Instructional Objectives

- The learners will be able to specify how changing economic conditions through education could decrease an economic crisis 80% of the time.
- The learners will demonstrate how inappropriate role modeling can educate young men as well as appropriate role modeling 95% of the time.

Brainstorming

- List emotions.
- List obligations leading to event.
- Discuss accomplishments.



Small Group Activities

- Discuss question.
How did your education help you?
- Write answer.



Large Group Activities

- Discuss question.
How can spending affect the economic conditions?
- Write answer.
How is insufficient income associated with education?



Partner Conference

- Discuss topic.
Tell me about the impact of poverty in a community.
- Write answers to the questions below.
How can having no education contribute to poverty?
How can education impact unemployment?



Inappropriate Role Modeling

Inappropriate role modeling can educate young men as well as appropriate role modeling.

- Egregious role models
- High celebrity standing
- Rap singers



Small Group Activities

- Discuss how role models with high celebrity standing are associated with education.
- Discuss the outcome of a limited education.
- Write an answer to the question below.

How can limited education contribute to unsatisfactory living in a community?



Reflection



What does the picture represent?

Closure

- What problems result from a limited education?
- How can economic conditions be linked to education?
- Have learners write about their thoughts regarding plans and emotions as they relive the day of graduation through the eyes of a picture. How did the plans materialize?



Presentation Slides: Develop Leadership Skills

**An Educational Program
for a Local
Neighborhood Watch Organization**

Develop Leadership Skills

Presented
by
Birda Garrett

Introduction

- Present goals and objectives.
- Relate previous learning.

Instructional Objectives

- The learners will be able to be leaders in delivering issues with accuracy to those persons that are responsive to changing needs.
- The learners will be provided representatives from the law official stakeholder group to serve as role models and implement policies addressing the local gun violence problem 100% of the time.
- The learners will be provided representatives from the clergymen stakeholder group to serve as role models through religious-based coping 100% of the time.

Brainstorming

- What do you know about a good leader?
- Tell about good and bad leadership experiences.



Small Group Activities

- Practice role playing good leadership skills
- Practice role playing bad leadership skills.



Large Group Activities

- Present role play to the large group.
- Critique the characters roles.
- Choose a different solution to the problem.



Small Group Activities

- Model traditional moral values.
- Model the “compliance” social skill.



Large Group Activities

- Listen to guest speakers from the law official and the clergymen stakeholder groups.
- Ask the speakers questions.



Small Group Activities

- Discuss question.
What new ideas would you add to the list now?
- Write an essay on what was learned about being a good leader.



Reflection



Closure

- Why is it important to develop good leadership skills?



Presentation Slides: Build a Better Community Life

**An Educational Program
for a Local
Neighborhood Watch Organization**

Build a Better Community Life

Presented
by
Birda Garrett

Introduction

- Present goals and objectives.
- Relate previous learning.

Instructional Objectives

- The learners will be mentors in building a better community life by enhancing self-esteem.
- The learners will learn how to de-escalate behavior 95% of the time by using anger management techniques.
- The learners will enhance social skills generalization through mentoring 100% of the time.
- The learners will provide protection for the community by becoming mentors of social skills.
- The learners will provide mentorship in positive relationships through social activities 100% of the time.

Brainstorming

- How do you think the person in the picture feels?
- Share experiences when you felt depressed.



Small Group Activities

- Write the steps included in the lessons presented in the class.
- Discuss topic.

What makes a project geared toward education or any project a good one?



Large Group Activities

- Discuss question.
What are the criteria for good projects?
- Tell about good projects you have done.



Small Group Activities

- Discuss question.

What are some ways to de-escalate behavior?



Large Group Activities

- Choose a moral value and explain how you maintained it.
- Role play one of the moral values.
- Discuss the actions of the characters.



Small Group Activities

- Create a memorization trick that works for you.
- Share your memorization trick in the group.



Reflection

How can you build a better community life?



Closure

- Give a quiz.

Exchange papers and check answers.

Presentation Handouts

**An Educational Program
for a
Local Neighborhood Watch Organization**

Achieve Skills Through Education

Presented
by
Birda Garrett

Introduction

- Present goals and objectives.
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Instructional Objectives

- The learners will be able to specify how changing economic conditions through education could decrease an economic crisis 80% of the time.
- The learners will demonstrate how inappropriate role modeling can educate young men as well as appropriate role modeling 95% of the time.


Brainstorming

- List emotions.
- List obligations leading to event.
- Discuss accomplishments.




Small Group Activities

- Discuss question.
How did your education help you?
- Write answer.




Large Group Activities

- Discuss question.
How can spending affect the economic conditions?
- Write answer.
How is insufficient income associated with education?



Partner Conference


- Discuss topic.
Tell me about the impact of poverty in a community.
- Write answers to the questions below.
How can having no education contribute to poverty?
How can education impact unemployment?



Inappropriate Role Modeling


Inappropriate role modeling can educate young men as well as appropriate role modeling.

- Egregious role models
- High celebrity standing
- Rap singers



Small Group Activities

- Discuss how role models with high celebrity standing are associated with education.
- Discuss the outcome of a limited education.
- Write an answer to the question below:
How can limited education contribute to unsatisfactory living in a community?




Reflection



What does the picture represent?

Closure

- What problems result from a limited education?
- How can economic conditions be linked to education?
- Have learners write about their thoughts regarding plans and emotions as they relive the day of graduation through the eyes of a picture. How did the plans materialize?



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Develop Leadership Skills

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Instructional Objectives

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- The learners will be provided representatives from the clergymen stakeholder group to serve as role models through religious-based coping 100% of the time.

Brainstorming

- What do you know about a good leader?
- Tell about good and bad leadership experiences.



Small Group Activities

- Practice role playing good leadership skills
- Practice role playing bad leadership skills.



Large Group Activities

- Present role play to the large group.
- Critique the characters roles.
- Choose a different solution to the problem.



Small Group Activities

- Model traditional moral values.
- Model the “compliance” social skill.




Large Group Activities

- Listen to guest speakers from the law official and the clergymen stakeholder groups.
- Ask the speakers questions.



Small Group Activities

- Discuss question.
What new ideas would you add to the list now?
- Write an essay on what was learned about being a good leader.





Closure

- Why is it important to develop good leadership skills?



**An Educational Program
for a Local
Neighborhood Watch Organization**

Build a Better Community Life

Presented
by
Birda Garrett

Introduction


- Present goals and objectives.
- Relate previous learning.

Instructional Objectives

- The learners will be mentors in building a better community life by enhancing self-esteem.
- The learners will learn how to de-escalate behavior 95% of the time by using anger management techniques.
- The learners will enhance social skills generalization through mentoring 100% of the time.
- The learners will provide protection for the community by becoming mentors of social skills.
- The learners will provide mentorship in positive relationships through social activities 100% of the time.


Brainstorming

- How do you think the person in the picture feels?
- Share experiences when you felt depressed.




Small Group Activities

- Write the steps included in the lessons presented in the class.
- Discuss topic.
What makes a project geared toward education or any project a good one?




Large Group Activities

- Discuss question.
What are the criteria for good projects?
- Tell about good projects you have done.




Small Group Activities

- Discuss question.
What are some ways to de-escalate behavior?



Large Group Activities

- Choose a moral value and explain how you maintained it.
- Role play one of the moral values.
- Discuss the actions of the characters.




Small Group Activities

- Create a memorization trick that works for you.
- Share your memorization trick in the group.



Reflection

How can you build a better community life?



Closure

- Give a quiz.

Exchange papers and check answers.

Leader Skit

The Would-be Den Leader

Characters: Den Leader
Prospective Den Leader

Pop up out of a chair, run up to the front and, acting like a real dweeb, say...

“Ms. Den Leader Coach. Oh, Ms. Den Leader Coach.”

“Yes, what do you want?”

“I wanna be a Den Leader, I wanna be a Den Leader. What do I have to do to be a Den Leader?” *Ham this up a lot. Be bouncy and enthusiastic.*

“Well....OK, so you want to be a Den Leader.” Hesitantly.

“Yea, Yea!! I wanna be a Den Leader, I wanna be a Den Leader. What do I have to do to be a Den Leader?” *Ham this up. Turn and nod to the audience.*

“Well...OK. But you first have to answer three questions in order to be a Den Leader.”

“OK, OK. What are the questions? What are the questions?” *With great enthusiasm.*

“OK, here is the first question. Are you ready?”

“Yea, yea. What is it?”

“Here we go. How many days of the week begin with the letter ‘T’?”

At this point the prospective Den Leader begins to mumble, might say a thing or two to the audience, counts on his fingers, then says... “I have it, I have it!!”

“OK, so how many days of the week begin with the letter ‘T’?”

“Well, let’s see. There’s ‘Today’ (*pausing*) and ‘Tomorrow’. How’s that, huh, huh?”

“Well, that’s certainly a different answer but I guess that IS correct.”

“What’s the next question, what’s the next question?”

“OK, here’s the next question. How many seconds are there in a year?”

“Oooh, that’s a real tough one. Let me think.” *At this point, the dweeb really ponders this, counts on fingers, mumbles, maybe says something to the audience, and counts on his fingers some more, then says...* “I have it, I have it!!”

“OK, so how many seconds are there in a year?”

“Twelve!!!”

“Twelve? How did you arrive at that number?”

“It’s easy.” *Starts counting out on his fingers.* “There’s January Second, February Second, March Second. See, twelve!”

“Arrrrgh! Well, once again you have a pretty creative answer and we certainly need creativity in our Den Leaders.”

“So, what’s the third question, what’s the third question?”

“OK, here it is. How many ‘D’s are there in the song, ‘Rudolf, the Red Nosed Reindeer’?”

“Oooh, that’s the toughest one yet. Let me think.” *At this point, the dweeb really ponders this, counts on fingers, scratches figures in the air, mumbles, maybe says something to the audience, and counts on his fingers some more, then says...* “I have it, I have it!!”

“So, how many ‘D’s are there in the song, ‘Rudolf, the Red Nosed Reindeer’?”

“Seven hundred forty-three.”

“Seven hundred forty-three. That’s incredible. How did you arrive at that figure?”

“It’s easy... DE-DE DE-DE-DE-DEE-DEEEE DE-DE-DE-DE-DE-DE-DEEEE...” *Sing about that much of it, that way, and leave the stage.* –

Thanks to Kyna and Gary Hendra, The MacScouters, skits@macscouter.com.



Respect Skit

PERFORMANCE TIPS

1. Suggested props: various goods for sale, a table to represent the counter, cash register, maps, oil containers, etc.
2. The customer is in a hurry. All of his actions should indicate impatience.
3. The old man moves and speaks slowly. Everything he does is deliberate.
4. The old man always speaks respectfully to the customer; the customer rarely speaks respectfully to the old man.

CHARACTERS

OLD MAN

CUSTOMER

CUSTOMER: *(CUSTOMER comes running into service station.)* Hey! Hey! Hey!
Hop to it! Car's outside, needs a fill. I'm in a hurry. Move it, old fellow.

OLD MAN: On my way, sir. *(Slowly shuffles offstage.)*

CUSTOMER: *(To himself.)* Doddering old fool. *(To OLD MAN.)* C'mon, c'mon, c'mon. I got things to do, places to go, people to see. Move it! *(OLD MAN slowly shuffles onstage.)*

OLD MAN: Want the oil checked, sir?

CUSTOMER: No, no, no! Fill it with gas. Move it, move it, move it! *(OLD MAN slowly shuffles to oil rack, picks up container.)*

OLD MAN: It's on special today, sir.

CUSTOMER: How many times do I have to tell you? No! N-O! Fill the car!
Go, go, go!

OLD MAN (*saluting CUSTOMER*): Right away, sir. (*Slowly shuffles
offstage.*)

CUSTOMER (*looking at merchandise*): Everything here but speed. (*Looks at
watch.*) Hurry up, old fellow. I don't have all day. (*OLD MAN slowly shuffles
onstage.*)

OLD MAN: You've got a broken headlight, sir. Could be dangerous driving
at night. Want I should fix it for you? (*Shuffles over to counter, picks up box.*)
Got some really good ones on special.

CUSTOMER: No! I'm not planning to drive at night, old-timer. Gas?

OLD MAN: Filling up now, sir. Help yourself to coffee. (*Points.*) On the
house. (*Shuffles offstage.*)

CUSTOMER: What a place! TURTLES move faster! C'mon, c'mon, c'mon.
(*Paces around. OLD MAN shuffles onstage.*)

OLD MAN: There. The windshield's nice and clean. But there's a problem,
sir.

CUSTOMER: What, what, what, what, WHAT?

OLD MAN: You got a star. Right up near the roof line where it's hard to see. Should take care of it, sir. Could turn into a crack if you don't.

CUSTOMER: And you've got a special to take care of it?

OLD MAN: Nope.

CUSTOMER: Well, that's a surprise.

OLD MAN (*pointing*): Harry's Glass.

CUSTOMER: Look! I came in for GAS! Hurry, hurry, hurry. I don't WANT other things. If the glass cracks, it cracks. Now get out there and finish filling my tank!

OLD MAN: Almost finished, sir. (*Shuffles offstage.*)

CUSTOMER: That's what I get for stopping at a small town. Geezerville. What's taking him so long? (*OLD MAN shuffles in, goes behind counter.*)

OLD MAN: All filled, sir. Will that be cash or credit card?

CUSTOMER: There's no difference. It doesn't matter, Pops.

OLD MAN: Discount for cash, sir.

CUSTOMER: Yeah, OK. Cash.

OLD MAN: Figure that discount for you, sir. (*Takes pencil and slowly writes. CUSTOMER throws up hands in despair, looks around, sees picture on wall.*)

CUSTOMER: I see you're a (name of political party currently in power).

OLD MAN: No, sir. Been a (name of alternate political party) all my life.

CUSTOMER: But you've got a picture of (name of current president) on the wall.

OLD MAN: No, sir.

CUSTOMER: Sure, you do. Are you blind as well as lame? Right there.

(Points.)

OLD MAN: No, sir. That's a picture of the president of the United States on the wall. That'll be nine dollars and twenty-five cents.

CUSTOMER: Here! *(Throws money on counter, turns to leave.)*

OLD MAN: Thank you, sir. You from around these parts?

CUSTOMER: *(Turns.)* No! Why?

OLD MAN: Might need a map, sir. Wouldn't want to get lost on a back road.

(Shuffles over to map stand, picks up map and holds it out.) On the house.

(CUSTOMER looks at OLD MAN, gestures disdainfully and leaves.)

OLD MAN *(looking off stage, saluting):* Happy motoring, sir.

One block down. Special this week, sir.

Final Quiz

How is low income associated with education?

How can education impact unemployment?

How can having no education contribute to poverty?

How can inappropriate role modeling educate young men as well as appropriate role modeling?

How can celebrities be role models?

How can rap singers be role models?

Are benefits gained from limited education? If so, what are they?

What do you know about a good leader?

How can positive self-esteem help to build a better community life?

How can acquiring confidence build a better life?

How can project-based learning activities help gain confidence and trigger building a better community life?

What are some ways to de-escalate unwanted behavior that is seen in the community?

Evaluation Plan

An Educational Program for a Local Neighborhood Watch Organization

On a scale from 1 – 5, with 5 being the highest value, rate the evaluation of the workshop on each of the statements below.

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. Concepts effectively communicated during the workshop					
2. Appropriate materials presented in a systematic manner during the workshop					
3. Materials presented in a timely manner during the workshop					
4. Handouts contributed to the learning and remembrance of key points					
5. Learning objectives were stated and appropriate to topic presented					
6. Language was appropriate for a general audience					

In your opinion, what changes need to be made to improve the workshop?

The following formative and summative evaluations will be administered to show a comparison of retention and generalization progress from Day 1 of the professional development activities to the end of the 3-day program.

Formative Evaluation of Lessons Presented

1. What kind of emotions do you have after you learn something new?
2. Name some prerequisites or prior obligations needed before learning is complete.
3. How are small goals helpful before the primary goal is reached?
4. How do you reward learning?
5. Will education be considered a one-time task? Why or why not?
6. What benefits are derived from having an education?
7. How will you specifically use your education?
8. When will an education be most favorable?
9. Do you consider the need for an education a prevention or requirement?
Explain.

Summative Evaluation From Lessons

1. How did the lessons help you?
2. Name some prior obligations you need to perform before completing your education.
3. What did you do to accomplish your education?
4. How will you reward yourself for completing the education?
5. Can age be a factor in learning? Explain.
6. How will the education benefit you?
7. What will you do with what you have learned?
8. Was the learning from the lessons favorable or unfavorable?
9. Was the learning from the lessons considered a prevention or requirement? Explain.

Appendix B: Face-to-Face Interview Guide and Coding of Responses

1. Tell me as much as possible about yourself and your experience with gun violence in the urban community up to the present time.
2. Have you had any family members connected with gun violence? For instance, has anyone sought your help for carrying a gun, been arrested for armed robbery, been indicted for accessory, been called as a witness to other gun violent acts, helped another friend, or called for police in a gun incident?
3. What do you do on your job?
4. Given what you have said about your work now, how do you understand gun violence by young men in your life?
5. There is a lot being said and written about controlling or not controlling guns in the gun-violence debate. For example, some people say that having a gun provides protection for them and their family. Others say that having a gun makes it too easy to use it without giving some thought to alternative ways to a solution. Which of these statements do you think is true for yourself?
6. What is good about gun control? Are guns too easy to obtain?
7. What is bad about gun control? Does gun control speak to irresponsibility by gun owners?
8. What do you think encourages gun violent acts by young men?
9. What are your perceptions about young men engaging in crimes that involve gun violence in the Greenwood urban community?

10. What factors do you perceive to contribute to gun violence in the Greenwood urban communities?
11. What do you believe can be done within the Greenwood urban communities to help reduce the gun violence?
12. Is there anything else you would like to say about the gun violence program that was not covered in these questions?

Thank you for that valuable information. If there is nothing else you'd like to add, the interview is ended.

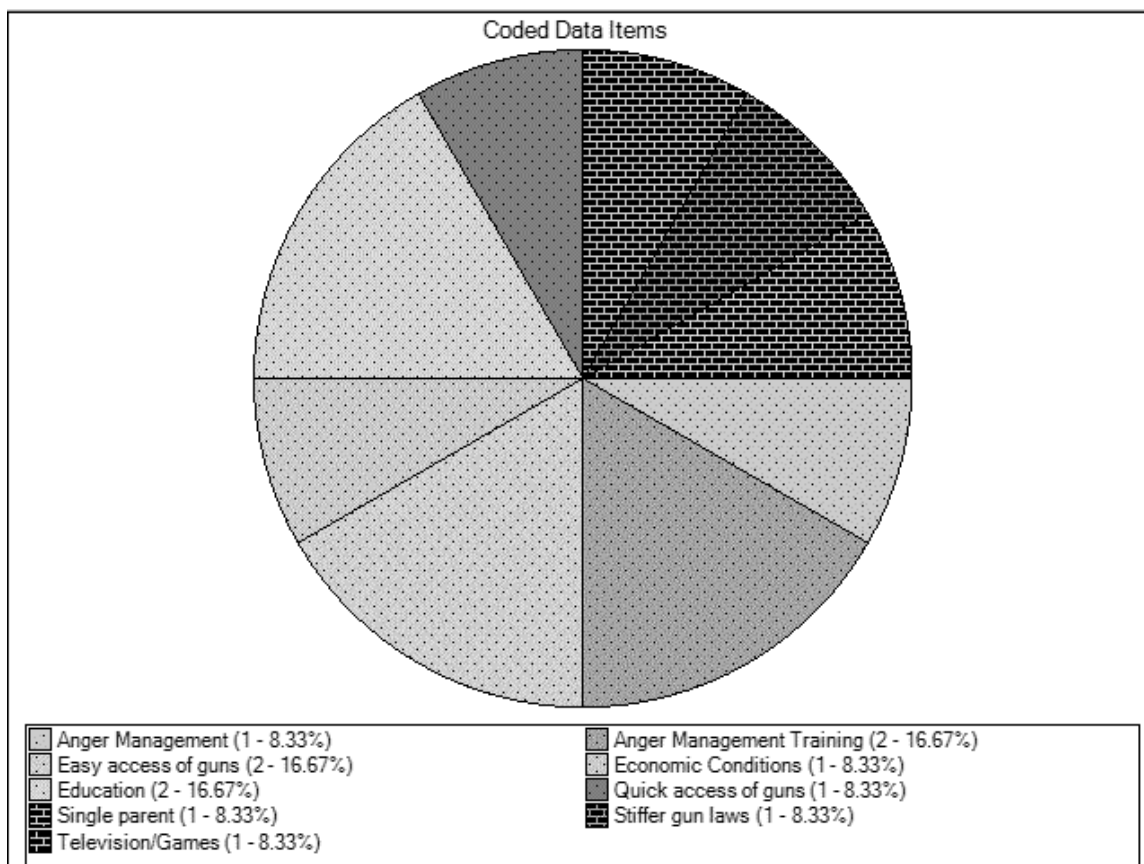


Figure 1B. The one-on-one pie chart depicts the percentages of themes emerging in the face-to-face interviews.

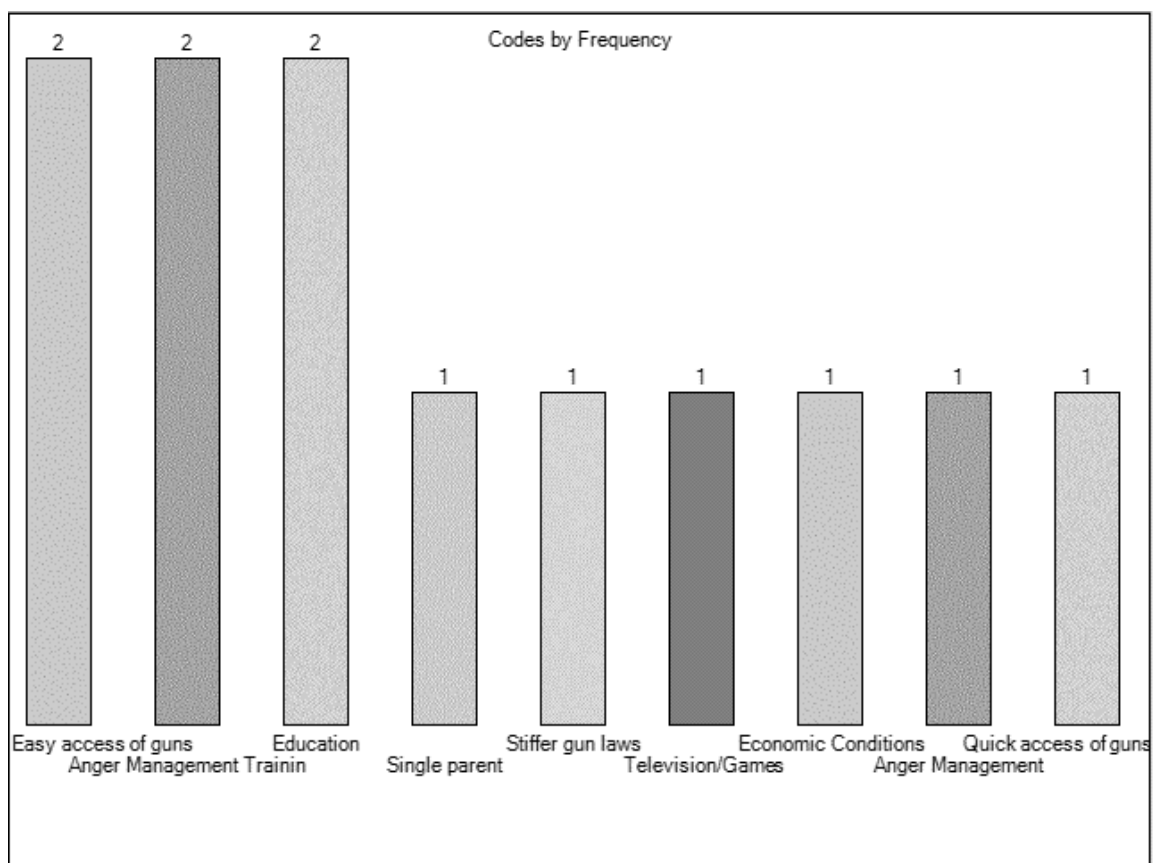


Figure 2B. The one-on-one bar chart shows the code frequencies from the face-to-face interviews.

Appendix C: Focus-Group Interview Guide and Coding of Response

1. Introduce yourself to everyone.
2. To what extent do you consider yourself active in both the gun violence world and the safe world?
3. What kinds of innovations about gun violence have you taken so far?
4. How could the gun violence program be improved?
5. What do you feel you have learned from working with gun violence?
6. Given what you have reconstructed in these interviews, where do you see yourself going in the future?
7. Is there anything else you'd like to add before we end?

Thank you for your participation. The interview is ended.

Figure 3C depicts the percentages of themes emerging in the focus-group discussion.

Figure 4C shows the code frequencies from the focus-group discussion.

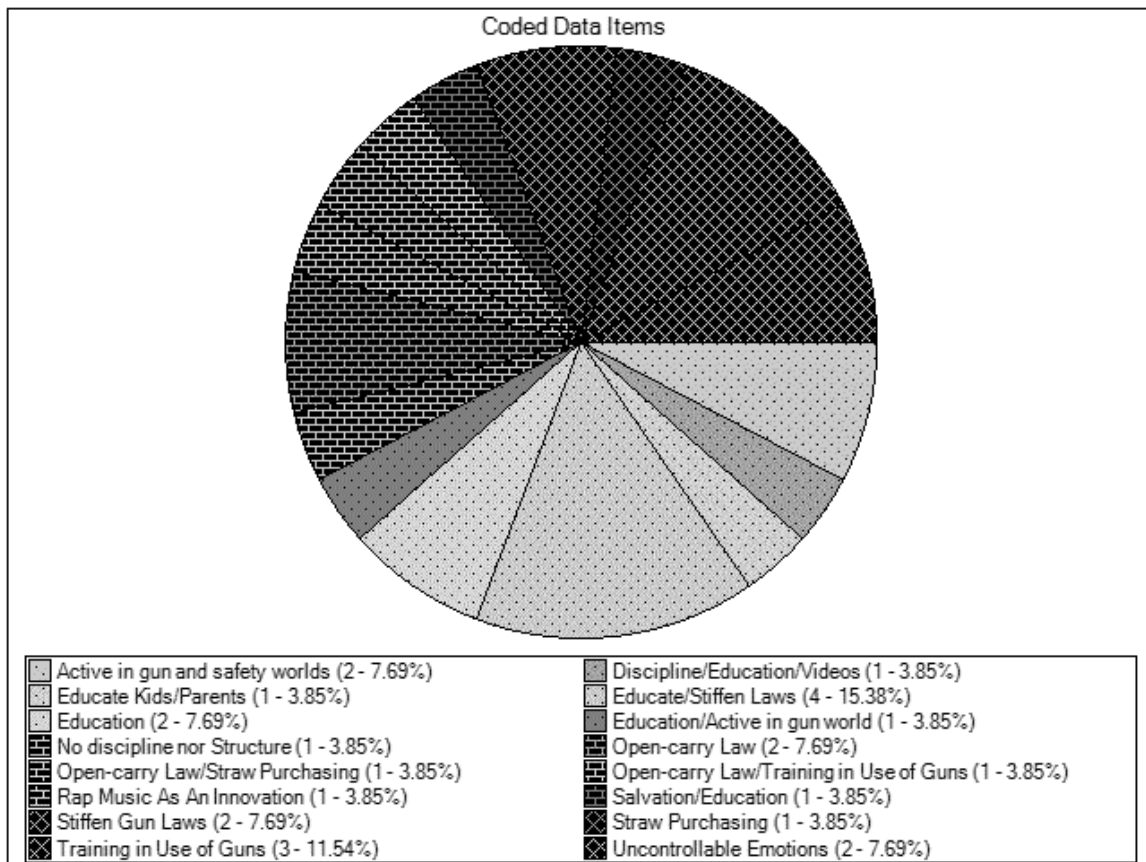


Figure 3C. The focus-group pie chart depicts the percentages of themes emerging in the focus-group discussions.

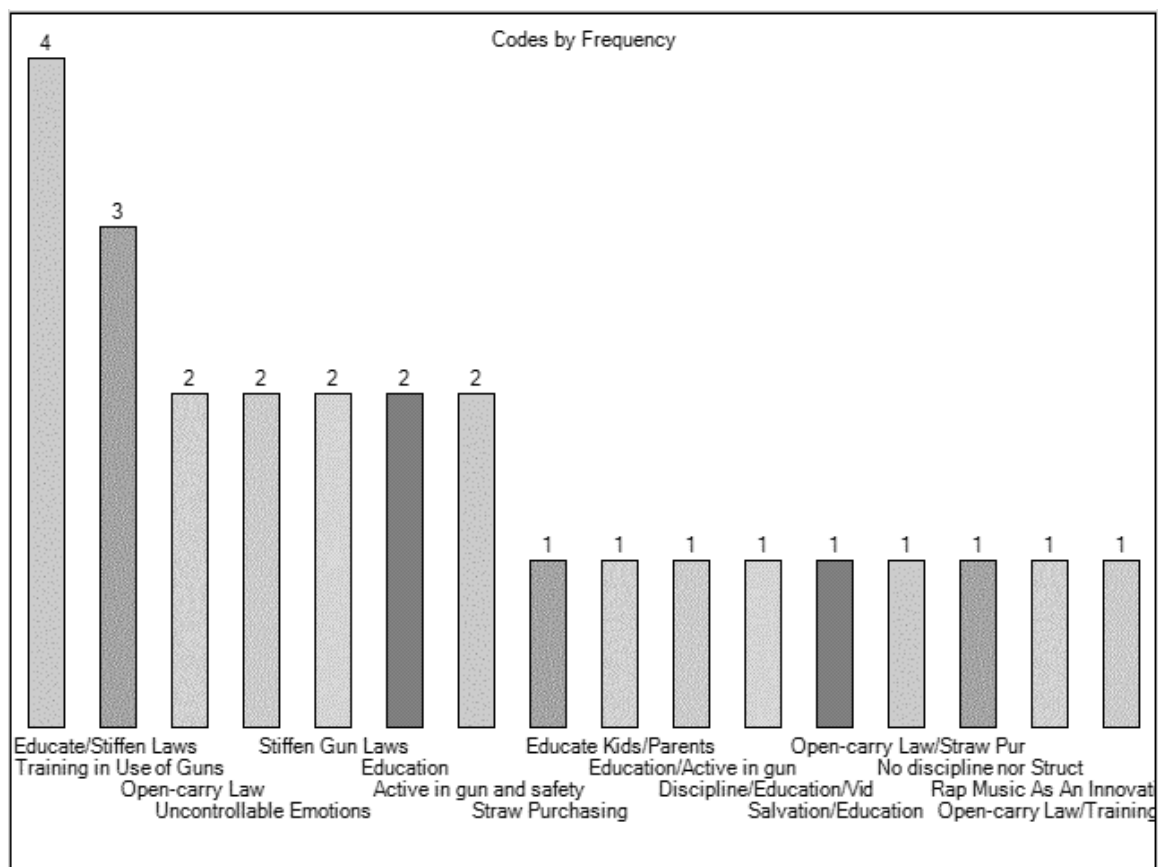


Figure 4C. The focus-group bar chart shows the code frequencies from the focus-group discussion.