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Measuring Aggressive Behavior Perceptions

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Running Head: MEASURING AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR PERCEPTIONS

MEASURING AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR PERCEPTIONS

Department of Psychology

Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Doctor of Psychology

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COLLEGE OF
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DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the thesis presented to us by Tammarra R. Jones on the 2nd day of June, 2017, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Psychology, has been examined and is acceptable in both scholarship and literary quality.

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Abstract

Poverty that is effectively perpetual and resource mismanagement are among the causes of negative outcomes in inner city public education. Learned helplessness is the principal result of the creation of perpetual poverty (*the great insult*). Manifestations of learned helplessness are endemic among African American elementary school students, but Learned Hopefulness is a potential remedy. The purpose of this study is to teach children (classified as both special education and general education students) in inner city and other schools about Africa's rich history, about which they know little. Group drumming is culturally relevant, and supports the value of collectivism present in many Eastern cultures. Reflection and self-disclosure are activities that help to reduce stress.

The Child Behavior Checklist Aggression Problem Scale (CBCL) was used to measure learners' aggressive disruption of the learning session. After the testing period, self-esteem improved and aggressiveness decreased. The current study was quantitative in approach, using the paired-samples, repeated-measures approach. In order to determine if aggressive behaviors and disruptive impulses were reduced, parents and teachers of 32 fifth-grade, 10-year-old boys answered 20 questions from the Child Behavior Checklist for Ages 6-18 Aggressive Behaviors and Disruptive Impulses survey.

A dependent t-test was conducted in each of the 20 areas identified as reflecting physical, social/emotional, or internalizing and externalizing behaviors. This study provided strong evidence of the benefits of group drumming to make education accessible and meaningful to children. Low cost and accessible, drumming can be free style or follow ancient rhythms from almost every continent.

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Measuring Aggressive Behavior Perceptions

Chapter One

Africans and their descendants are among the many peoples who have made substantial contributions to the development of human civilization. History has proven all too often, however, that these contributions are ignored or denied because of racist attitudes and influences that regard people of color as inferior to other humans. The authors of racist texts like *The Bell Curve* assert the existence of genetic distinctions among groups of human beings that significantly affect intelligence and adaptability. Such beliefs have been widely accepted and perpetuated in many arenas of human interaction.

People of African heritage are often easily identified by skin color. Even though race is a socio-political concept (not a biological reality) that carries more weight in the U.S. than in other parts of the globe, contemporary American culture influences norms in the rest of the world. When discussions of world history diminish or disregard contributions of Black people in America and their African ancestors, it has deleterious consequences for Black people everywhere.

In late 1994, the publication of *The Bell Curve* returned the word “eugenics” to the American lexicon. The research cited in the book is predominantly drawn from members of the American Eugenics Society and other eugenics advocacy groups. The premise of the book is that men are not equal, and that the Declaration of Independence’s claim to that effect is false. Eugenics is the study of methods of improving the human race by controlling reproduction. The word was first used by Francis Galton, Charles Darwin’s

half-cousin, in 1883. Galton believed that the proper evolution of the human race was thwarted by philanthropic outreach to the poor, when such efforts encouraged them to have more children. According to Galton and his ilk, charity upset the mechanism of natural selection. Galton wanted eugenics to develop from a science to a policy and, ultimately, into a religion. Eugenicists strongly advocated the supremacy and “purity” of the white race, epitomized by the “Aryans” in Nazi Germany’s delusional racist ideology. Eugenicists hoped to purify the bloodlines and improve the race by encouraging the “fit” to reproduce and the “unfit” to restrict their reproduction. They sought to contain “inferior” races through segregation, sterilization, contraception, and abortion.

The flagrant inequity of health care, criminal justice, and policing policies in the United States justifies the general distrust of dominant-group institutions by people of color. Moreover, in education, children of African descent are often ignored and underestimated to the point of exclusion. The fact that black children are in many ways devalued makes their need to assert themselves in the classroom understandable. What a teacher labels aggressive behavior in the classroom may be a child’s imperfect attempt to be included and recognized as a willing learner.

The eugenics advocates of the twentieth century, including early Planned Parenthood leaders, encouraged the sterilization of African women here and on the African continent, as well as throughout the African Diaspora. The objective was to control poverty and disease by restricting the reproductive freedom of Africans and African Americans. Instead of American society acknowledging the greed and racism that caused poverty and

inequality, the victims of irresponsible policies and institutions were blamed for the problems those very policies and institutions caused and perpetuated. Some health professionals still encourage African women to limit the number of children that they have, based on their assumption that economic disadvantage will blight the lives of those children. For some children, being born is considered an aggressive act (Randall, 1996). In schools, the phenomenon of the School-to-Prison Pipeline has emerged. The School-to-Prison Pipeline assumes that African American children are best suited to serve society as prisoners, as virtually enslaved laborers who must be managed through the criminal justice system. The residual effects of the eugenics movement are a toxic influence on American society that must be eradicated.

Children's art and literature, folklore, linguistics, science, economics, law, and education all exclude the African contribution to contemporary society. The countless achievements of the African Diaspora, if not systematically ignored and denied, would receive worldwide acclaim. However, racist institutions have imposed centuries of not only savage physical brutality but also of psychological brutalization, like erasing the contributions of people of color from world history by omitting important information from textbooks and curricula. These methods have weakened the self-concept of men and women of color. Imagine the impact that these methods have on children of color. How does this translate into the school system?

Children of color in urban schools are often regarded as psychologically unhealthy and disciplined more harshly than their white counterparts (Fenning, 2007). Nevertheless,

children of color are resilient, often tapping into their innate resources to surmount obstacles that are set in their path. The challenge to educators exceeds conventional teaching techniques. Instead, it is imperative to investigate coping and empowering strategies that are intrinsic to the cultural heritage of these students. This is a challenging undertaking, but one that may yield tried and true measures that will give children of color a healthy and productive response to their environments.

Self-Concept

The influential work *The Warrior Method: A Parents' Guide to Rearing Healthy Black Boys* (Winbush, 2002) argues that ancient Africans from western and southwestern regions of the continent had their own way of building self-concept. When a young member of the community exhibited unhealthy behaviors, elders, peers, and family members encircled him or her in the community square. The person was verbally and sometimes ritually reminded of all his or her contributions to the community that benefitted others. Because of this positive reinforcement, the young person was reassured by examples of his or her own beneficial behavior. Elders offered additional counseling to the young person, healing the injury caused by the offending behaviors. This is an authentic and exemplary demonstration of constructive community support of positive behavior. Not only was the offending behavior acknowledged and corrected, the entire community modeled an appropriate and affirming response for their young members.

According to Alexander (2012) in her book, *The New Jim Crow*, “by targeting black men through the War on Drugs and decimating communities of color, the U.S. criminal justice system functions as a contemporary system of racial control—relegating millions

to a permanent second-class status—even as it formally adheres to the principle of colorblindness” (49). The ancient African process of reconciliation and forgiveness stands in stark contrast to the contemporary operation of the Prison Industrial Complex, which is prevalent in the United States. This system arrests and incarcerates people of color in vast numbers, using the labor of the imprisoned to generate profit for commercial enterprises in the private sectors, and to fund the public institutions that so cynically exploit them. Educators witness a precursor to the Complex in the School to Prison Pipeline phenomenon: the systematic exclusion of children of color from the public school experience (with all of its legal safeguards). Children of color frequently have no recourse but illegal activities to generate income, which leave them vulnerable to depredations of the Prison Industrial Complex.

Many years ago, when African American students entered law school, they were asked to name five African peoples or cultures. They were unable to complete this simple task. One hesitates to ponder the effect of their ignorance of their cultural heritage on their self-concept. Why is ignorance about Africa and her cultures so pervasive? Can drumming and learning about their history and heritage nurture cultural awareness, pride, and self-concept, and thus improve the academic performance of children of color?

Statement of the Problem

The term *Maafa* was introduced by Mariamba Ani' in her book "Let the Circle Be Unbroken: The Implications of African Spirituality in the Diaspora" (1994). It is derived from a Swahili term for "disaster, terrible occurrence, or great tragedy." Some Afrocentric scholars prefer the term *Maafa* to *African Holocaust*; they believe that the indigenous

African term conveys the experience of those events more accurately. For Africans, the term *Maafa* may play much the same cultural and psychological role as does *the Holocaust* for the unique Jewish experience of genocide under Nazism.

Other arguments for the use of *Maafa* rather than *African Holocaust* emphasize that the denial of the African peoples' humanity is an unparalleled, centuries-long phenomenon: "The *Maafa* is a continual, constant, complete, and total system of human negation and nullification." (Ani', 1994). Convict leasing, Jim Crow policies, segregation, systematic brutality by law enforcement, and chronic economic underdevelopment provide the historical and social context for an analysis of poverty, and the societal and governmental systems that maintain perpetual poverty in the modern era. It is unreasonable to think that after more than two centuries of relentless oppression and ruthless violence, slavery simply ended, without inflicting a legacy of psychological trauma on future generations. The effects of *Maafa* extend even to the development of the fetus in the womb.

One need only examine the letters and speeches written and orated by Willie Lynch (1712) to slaveholders to perceive the seeds of slavery's legacy. Lynch stated explicitly his desire for control over future generations of enslaved Africans. The objection that some doubt the authenticity of Lynch's letters and speeches seems irrelevant when one considers the behaviors of slaveholders that history records. In the West Indies and North America, where Lynch was most influential, Africans were dehumanized and terrorized. The climate of terror, arbitrary separation from loved ones, and extreme poverty had disastrous effects on enslaved families.

In most curricula, children of African heritage do find their ancestors as objects and subjects of learning. In addition, the instructors assigned to them are often the youngest, least experienced, and least effective teachers. Meaningful African contributions to the advancement of humanity are excluded from the canon. Authors including Molefi Asante and Ivan Van Sertima, along with clinicians and researchers like Amos Wilson and Na'im Akbar have done important work without mainstream acknowledgement. When we restore the past and present realities of Africa to the body of knowledge, all children, but especially children of color, will find connection and purpose.

The African Cultural Arts (ACA) program is designed to accomplish this objective. Can learning about the African experience before and during *Maafa* help to develop the skills needed to close or at least narrow the gap between children of color and effective, inclusive education? The drum is both the center of an African community and a symbol of the beating heart, a manifestation of the rhythm of nature that connects all living things. For too long, children of African heritage were denied the vision of themselves as the heirs to a glorious scientific and artistic legacy. The deliberate suppression of the truth of Africa's achievements must end.

The Multi-Generational Injury: Learned Helplessness.

In her thought-provoking work *Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome*, Degruy (2005) defines Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS) as a condition that is a consequence the oppression of multiple generations of Africans and their descendants. Learned Helplessness is the belief that any attempt to improve one's circumstances will be utterly defeated and is therefore futile. It is a manifestation of PTSS. Learned Helplessness is

sometimes imprinted by one generation on the next through communal and familial memory of centuries of chattel slavery. Legal bondage was succeeded by “institutional racism,” which continues to victimize people of color. According to Degruy (2005), key patterns of behavior reflective of PTSS include an absence of self-esteem evinced by analysis of facial expressions, a marked propensity for anger and violence, antipathy to one’s own culture, and dissociation from one’s African heritage.

The Need for the Study

Extensive research conducted by Niane (1965) into the history of the Old Malian Empire, which comprised a large part of West Africa, discovered that the people of that area incorporated music and dance into all aspects of their lives. There was a dance and song for every occasion. There were even dances and songs that retell *Maafa* from the perspectives of Africans who remained on the continent, as well as those who were removed.

Learning about African cultures as they existed before the slave trade, focusing specifically on celebrations of life, can reawaken curiosity about learning and help to develop self-regulation skills. These celebrations included a focus on physically and intellectually challenged members of the community. Exposing African American students to their cultural heritage teaches resilience in very simple and practical ways. The drumming experience can produce benefits individually or as part of a drum circle or group. The child drummer can express him or herself more effectively if drumming is introduced as a door to self-awareness. This leads to better communication with peers and cooperative

play. The benefits of drumming extend from the individual to the community and, over time, ensure positive personal development.

Purpose of the Study

Wilson (1978), in *The Developmental Psychology of the Black Child*, asserts that a careful examination of scientific, historic, and socio-psychological evidence reveals critical differences between Black children and other children. DeGruy (2005) has analyzed information presented by Wilson (1978) and concluded that children who are descendants of slaves suffer from Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome. The purpose of this study is to teach children “learned hopefulness” and other skills that enhance resilience in the context of their rich African history. Traditional drumming, dancing and singing from the West African region, as well as studying the cultures of other regions of Africa will be the substance of the African Cultural Arts (ACA) program. Participation in this program is expected to improve self-esteem and self-concept and to motivate students to participate more effectively in the educative process. By allowing students to be the subjects of their studies and to see themselves reflected in positive ways by what they learn, they will begin to recognize the value of exploring their heritage.

When people come to believe that they cannot control important aspects of their lives, the consequences may be even more crippling than we might presume. The central idea of Learned Helplessness theory is that all animals (including humans) are able to learn that the stimuli causing a feeling of helplessness are uncontrollable (Seligman, 1992). The theory of Learned Helplessness postulates that this awareness may lead to a pattern of maladaptive behavior, resulting in diminished performance in ordinary activities and

feelings of vulnerability and impotence. The expectation of helplessness is formed through cognitive processes of perception and attribution. Developmental experiences also play a significant role in establishing and reinforcing that expectation (Emmanuel, 1991-1992). The traumatic experiences of *Maafa* (both direct and vicarious) devastate victims and are particularly damaging to children. Its most bitterly ironic manifestation is the violence inflicted by African Americans on other African Americans that is endemic in this country

Summary

Poverty that is effectively perpetual and resource mismanagement are among the causes of negative outcomes in inner city public schools. The characteristics of perpetual poverty afflict many African-descended students, even those educated in Africa. In America, those characteristics derive primarily from the Great Enslavement, but are also attributable to sharecropping, Jim Crow statutes, the denial of African Americans' civil and human rights, and the use of racist code words rife among white "conservatives." Learned helplessness is the most insidious consequence of perpetual poverty (*the great insult*). The purpose of this study is to teach children (classified as both special education and general education students) in inner city and surrounding community schools about their rich African history, about which they know little. We hope to teach the traditional drumming, dancing, and singing of several African regions. We also hope to teach the history and culture of those regions to encourage children and adolescents to engage in the educative process in more meaningful ways.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

In the seminal autobiographical work *Up from Slavery*, Washington (1901) details memories of his life as a child in *Maafa* and the insights he garnered as he lived and worked as an adult during the Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction eras. Washington desired to help create a solid foundation in the country for development among “the hands, the heads and the hearts” of formerly enslaved Africans (Washington, 1901). Washington’s holistic perspective echoes the educational philosophies of ancient Egypt, Timbuktu, the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome, as well as the modern era.

Educational development can prosper in conditions of national stability and equitable treatment of the entire population. Washington, however, achieved great results amid some of the worst conditions ever endured by people of African descent living in America. Since Washington knew at first hand the hardships of slavery in America, he regarded the provision of economic stability through access to meaningful work as essential, so that formerly enslaved Africans could meet their material needs. Challenging theories of the sub-humanity of Africans, Washington savored the freedom derived from possessing knowledge that not only improved his life but also the lives of his descendants. He knew that the dominant group feared African American empowerment. In order to ensure continued cooperation from benefactors, Washington emphasized certain advantages of the intellectual development of African American students, but less emphatically than he approached the development of manual skills.

Self- Concept

Washington knew that survival, however meager the resources available, was essential to the growth of a people that hoped to coexist with their former masters. The survival of African Americans was precarious, and Washington worked to stabilize the entire group by producing scholars from former slaves, who could recognize and achieve the best lives possible for themselves and their people. It is important to be aware of the ways in which dysfunctional responses to racial oppression obstruct the ability of Black people to organize, collaborate, network, mentor, and mutually support one another. Black-Greek organizations are international mentoring groups that have operated under a cloak of secrecy and mystery, ostensibly because the development of African American scholars was a threat to the system of racial oppression. *The Handbook of Mental Health and Mental Disorder among Black Americans*, edited by Ruiz (1990), is an excellent resource for understanding the development of African American psychological health and liberation.

Self-Conceptualizations

In the summary of the chapter titled “Practical Strategies for Coping with the Impact of Racial Oppression,” Landrum-Brown (1990) asserts that optimally functioning Black people are not driven by dysfunctional responses to internalized racial oppression. They are not limited by the conceptual restraints of an imposed, self-negating worldview. They are not alienated from parts of themselves or from their African heritage and culture. Their awareness of available internal and external resources is unlimited, and they can use these resources for adaptive, healthy, and thriving psychological development and function (Ruiz1990). Landrum-Brown lists a number of terms that will help to define self-concept

as employed in this study. Among them are racism, internalized racial oppression (or self-loathing behaviors), split-self syndrome, world-view and self-view analysis, and emotional liberation.

Self-Analysis

Individuals conducting self-analysis need to discern value-laden connotations in their self-description. Individuals must allow themselves to tell the truth without self-condemnation and to attend to their feelings about the self, in order to acquire the most accurate self-knowledge. Landrum-Brown suggests that an individual and two trusted friends or partners each make a list of their personal strengths and weaknesses and then compare them. The process includes questioning, reflection, and acknowledgement. After comparison, the lists can be revised if necessary. Once identified, internal resources to compensate for weaknesses are more readily accessed and employed.

Self-Knowledge

When individuals attend to the verbal and nonverbal interactions in relationships, they can learn much from the parts of themselves they overlook or deny; “Self-knowledge is the basis of all true knowledge” (James 1976). Growth through self-exploration can be a painful process. To intervene effectively in maladaptive thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, providing a remedy is absolutely vital.

Effects of Racism

According to Hillard (1978), “Racism is an infection of the belief system, a mental illness with the following symptoms: 1) perceptual distortion, 2) denial of reality, 3) delusions of grandeur, 4) projections of blame (to the victim) 5) phobic reactions to

differences.” Racism originates in individuals with the power to impose on a specific group their shared biases and prejudices against them. Individual behavior, which may be crude, vile, and immoral, is racist when employed by a member of the dominant group in an oppressive environment.

Internalized Racial Oppression

Internalized racial oppression (Landrum & Batts, 1985) is a psychological response exhibited by individuals of the traduced race to the negative messages inherent in racism. This phenomenon is expressed in several ways. The first is system beating, which involves “getting over on” or acting out against the dominant group. The next is blaming the system, and taking little or no responsibility for one’s actions. The third is totally avoiding whites and Euro-American culture, manifested as Black separatism. Next is the denial of Blackness and African heritage, including distrusting Blacks, devaluing African culture and overvaluing Euro-American culture, and accepting the superiority of whites. The final expression is denial of the political significance of race and racism, which may take a host of manifestations, including Learned Helplessness (Landrum-Brown, 1990). Learned Helplessness, the belief that one is powerless and doomed in the face of one’s oppressor, is a residual effect of the eugenics movement and has very little basis in fact except as a self-fulfilling prophesy.

Conceptual Imposition and Incarceration

When a person is conceptually incarcerated, (Nobles, 1978) that person perceives reality through an imposed, culturally dissonant perspective or worldview. Perceptions of nature, the self, other people, institutions, indeed the entire universe, are defined through

the lens of that worldview. However, that pernicious worldview can be influenced by powerful feelings and memories, values and beliefs. Conceptual incarceration can derive from punishment by the dominant group for deviating from imposed Anglo-Saxon Protestant standards for perceiving reality, using language, and making life-style choices, or from a person lacking the capacity to conceptualize anything other than a self-negating perspective. Conceptual incarceration is more comprehensive than internalized racial oppression, because it encompasses a wider range of variables than race.

Split-Self Syndrome

The Split-Self Syndrome is the result of an individual accepting a dichotomous, hierarchical mode of either/or, all-or-none thinking. It includes accepting negative racial messages that may originate in internalized racial oppression or conceptual incarceration. For African Americans, living in a society that devalues Black-ness and African-ness, the split is a consequence of internalizing negative messages about their racial difference. In order to feel accepted and valued, the individual is compelled to disown their very selfhood.

Conceptual Liberation

The healing process for African Americans living in a racially oppressive society requires discarding any distorted, false, self-negating, or anti-African messages that they have internalized. Conceptual liberation entails restructuring personal perceptions and thoughts in ways that will refute distorted and false beliefs. Individuals can reshape self-perceptions and make whole a fragmented worldview. This process can rectify stress, depression, and destructive expressions of anger.

Emotional Liberation

Liberation is the release from oppression. Emotional liberation frees individuals not only from the emotional dependence on others for self-definition, it requires that individuals choose what is best for themselves, and work to create inner and outer environments that support the fully emancipated self. When a person learns to express feelings expression in an appropriate and constructive fashion, that person has achieved emotional liberation. When an individual chooses a way of being in the world that is harmonious with others and with nature and conforms to their religious beliefs, the individual is spiritually liberated. When an individual comes to accept and love immutable aspects of their body, the individual is physically liberated. Conceptual liberation is the process of reconstructing one's worldview and life style in a form that is more psychologically self-affirming and freeing.

What Landrum-Brown has omitted is painfully obvious. Individuals must have control over the resources in their immediate and extended environments to produce and distribute the wealth they generate in order to assure their economic wellbeing. The inner processes are critical for the development of the self. External conditions must at least be hospitable in order for liberation of any individual to be realized.

Disruptive Behaviors

Disruptive behavior is any behavior that threatens or intimidates people. The term is most often applied to children and adolescents, and consists of behavior that violates social norms and creates disorder, more often distressing others than it does the person displaying such behavior (*Miller-Keane Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing, and Allied Health, Seventh Edition, 2003*). More specifically, the *Diagnostic and*

Statistical Manual- Fifth Edition defines disruptive behaviors as part of the Disruptive Behavior Disorder NOS (not otherwise specified). Symptoms of Disruptive Behavior Disorder include the following: consistent defiance of authority figures, the inability to take responsibility for bad behavior, temper tantrums on a regular basis and vengeful or resentful behavior. Other manifestations of Disruptive Behavior Disorder are aggressiveness toward people or animals, destroying others' property, stealing, lying, bullying, and constant rule breaking. Verbal aggression is particularly harmful to children and adolescents. Negative self-directed speech and negative remarks to others that reflect internalized racial oppression can be destructive to the healthy ego development, self-esteem and self-concept of young people. Young people without the internal resources to counter insults and false statements can internalize this aggression and subsequently demonstrate maladaptive behaviors. The practice of "the dozens," in which participants trade insults of each other's mothers, is an example of deleterious speech that is familiar to many urban students.

School Climate

School climate is the quality and character of school life. A school's climate is based on patterns of students', parents' and school personnel's experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structure. A sustainable, positive school climate fosters the personal development and learning necessary for a productive, constructive, and satisfying life in a democratic society. This climate should promote norms, expectations, and values that

permit people to feel socially, emotionally, and physically safe. People are engaged and respected. Students, families, and educators work together to realize a shared school vision. Educators exemplify and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning. Each person contributes to the school's operation and to the care of its physical environment (National School Climate Council, 2015). Synthesizing past school climate research as well as NSCC's research efforts, the National School Climate Council and NSCC suggest that there are *four* major areas that school climate assessment should include: the first is safety, with the subheadings rules and norms, a sense of physical security and a sense of social/emotional security. The next major area is interpersonal relationships, including respect for diversity and social supports for both adults and students. The third major category is teaching and learning, with support for learning as a sub-category, along with social and civic learning. The fourth category is the external environment, which includes classrooms and intra-staff relations. The sub-categories of the fourth area are leadership and professional relationships. The final category is institutional environment, with the subheadings school engagement and the physical surroundings. Considering the neighborhood school (with a magnet school designation) in which the intervention will be conducted, there are areas of concern in the assessment of school climate.

The Intervention District Public School, located in a northern New Jersey community, enjoys the benefits of a diverse population. Artists, business leaders, community activists, and many others find comfort and fulfillment in this community.

Not unlike many other communities in the country, this community is stratified, with affluent people in one area and the impoverished in another. Given this reality, the public schools in this small district offer a impressive array of services. Families in the region are so confident in the Intervention District's educational performance that some have relocated there from nearby communities like Newark and as far away as White Plains, New York. The Intervention District Public Schools are closely aligned with a prominent state university, which has a very busy Learning Assessment clinic. This association provides a unique opportunity to work with students from a broad range of communities in the Mid-Atlantic region.

The Intervention school is similar to many others that serve urban students in that its disciplinary practices according to race. The disciplinary experiences of students of African descent are significantly harsher and more punitive than those of other students (Skiba, 2002). In too many cases, disruptive behaviors by non-African American students that are virtually identical to (and sometimes even more disruptive than) those of African American students are managed much more leniently. Two of the factors that make this possible are the level of parental presence in the school building and parent-teacher interaction (National School Climate Council, 2015).

Sense of Physical Security

Generally, staff and students feel safe from potential external threats. However, the Achiever Program, among whose students the intervention will be conducted, is an in-district program based on out-of-district therapeutic support program. Students-- all males of color-- are routinely physically removed from classrooms and coerced or carried into the "time out room." This spectacle occurs so often that many students seemed desensitized to it. However, when program members were asked if they thought these disciplinary measures applied to all students, they responded in the negative.

Sense of Social-Emotional Security

The line of demarcation between an Intervention school experience like that described above and one free from verbal abuse and emotional trauma is drawn according to socio-economic status. Faculty and staff are trained in Response to Intervention-focused instruction and behavior management. That reality has placed an enormous burden on some educators, who find themselves unable to establish an effective teaching standard. Consequently, the interpersonal climate was tense and laden with anxiety.

Support for Learning

What has become evident about the learning climate is that in many cases, the extent and quality of the individual attention students received was directly proportional to the amount of time that adult family members spent in service to the school. Children of families with adult members who volunteered to assist teachers during school hours received more positive individual attention than children whose adult family members were unable to provide the same type of support.

Respect for Diversity

Despite statements by district and school leadership about the importance of diversity in the community, almost none of the certificated staff in the district was a person of color until recently, when the school district hired several professionals of color to work in the school. The community is awaiting evidence of the impact of these professionals on the educational practices of the school.

School Connectedness/Engagement

It may be the case that some students and staff felt connected to the school and engaged by its teaching and learning practices; however, the most economically disadvantaged students did not. In fact, many of the most impoverished families felt alienated from the school and refused to communicate with the professionals of color. When some professionals began to visit them in their homes, those families' alienation decreased.

Creative Arts Therapies

Creative arts therapies focus on the self-expressive process of creating art, and include art therapy, music therapy, dance/movement therapy, and drama and psychodrama therapy. Until recently, creative arts therapies or CATs were employed to promote personal wellbeing and growth. This research emphasizes the effectiveness of CATs for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes (Zwerling, 1979). To empirically demonstrate the efficacy of CATs, we have used music to change or even improve mood. We have discovered that CATs, when employed in a methodical regime, achieve predictable results. Recent and promising techniques for treating victims of torture were among the modalities

considered. These techniques require that the impact of the experience be understood in the subjective context of the victim's experience. Art therapy, dance/movement therapy, drama, music, and ritual are among the somatic therapies that constitute the core of the healing process for torture survivors. According to Terr and Herman (2008), traumatic memory is recalled as imagery and bodily sensation, lacking any verbal narrative. Intervention with music therapy to convey sensations, images, and emotions not easily expressed in words creates a kind of emotional maturation.

Dance/ Movement Therapy

Dance/Movement Therapy (DMT) is regarded as fundamental to human expression, a "primary language for all human beings, which is both somatic and expressive." Ritual in African and African-Caribbean communities "discharge[s] aggression and restore[s] interpersonal connection." Poverty and its consequences are similar to torture: both experiences traumatize the child. Treatment of poverty, as in the case of torture, demands a holistic approach, which attends, according to Gray, to the physical, psychological, and cultural elements of the whole person. By definition, oppression restricts the physical, social/emotional, and psychological movement of the victim. Liberation from oppression requires the removal of any perceived limit to full human expression.

Therapy

Music therapy is the empirically validated, clinical use of music to accomplish therapeutic goals. Several trials and reviews have determined that music therapy has several therapeutic applications. These include, but are not limited to, improving motor skills and social/interpersonal skills, enhancing cognitive development, heightening self-awareness, controlling pain, reducing anxiety, stress, anger, and agitation, and improving mood (Choi, Lee, & Jung-Sook, 2007). A review of the music therapy literature indicates at least three broad domains of function in which music therapy has been successfully used in the treatment of emotionally disturbed children: affect regulation, communication, and social/behavioral dysfunction (Hussey, 2004). The most helpful interventions in therapy include playing musical instruments, both melodic and percussive, listening to music, singing, song writing, and song drawing, which encourages children to create pictures while listening to music.

Specific music therapies may involve creating, singing, listening to, and/or moving to music. According to Lev-Wiesel et al. (2012), the creative arts can be enjoyable, but they are not primarily recreational or instructional lessons. Children don't need previous experience or proficiency for music therapy to be useful in treatment. Creativity and imagination, along with a degree of playfulness, contribute to the development of valuable abilities to grow, to solve problems, to integrate mind and body, and to acquire more vitality. After participating in music therapy, children are better able to express emotions and feelings, to face fears and misgivings, and to bypass dissociative mechanisms.

Rhythmic Entrainment

The concept of greater individual and group awareness is central to the function of this intervention. Entrainment entails the learner balancing the goals of awareness and regulation and appropriate response to stimuli. Rhythmic Entrainment Intervention is an auditory program that uses musical rhythm to stimulate and re-pattern neurological function. The developer, Jeff Strong, is an ethnomusicologist who has identified hundreds of rhythmic combinations that correspond to specific behavioral and cognitive symptoms. Listening to specific rhythmic patterns elicits immediate calming and focusing effects, and repeated exposure to these rhythms often results in long-term behavioral and cognitive improvements. These improvements are generally observed within three to four weeks. This intervention technique uses a diagnostic survey, custom-made CDs, promises to revise those CDs if the desired results are not seen, and provides on line and manual training for practitioners. The program can be administered in the home or school, does not require headphones; it is compatible with other therapies and will not negatively affect anyone who hears it.

Among the improvements this intervention yields are less hyperactivity and impulsivity, increased learning ability, a longer attention span, better social skills, less aggression and anxiety, and better sleep. The discovery of the concept of entrainment is credited to Dutch scientist Christian Huygens in 1665 (Friedman, 2000). He found that if two pendulum clocks were placed side by side, by the next day their pendulums would swing in unison. Similarly, when drummers play they become entrained. Through

rhythmic repetition of ritual sounds, the bodies, brains, and nervous systems of the players are energized and transformed.

African Cultural Arts (ACA)

Despite the *Maafa* and other traumatic experiences endured by people of African descent, the gifts of the ancient culture still have a healing power for Africans on the continent and throughout the diaspora. The cooperation of Africans in the diaspora has helped contemporary Africans and others around the world rediscover rituals and other cultural practices of ancient Africans. Even though the African drum was once an illegal instrument for people of color in this country, now members of all ethnic groups can benefit from its use. An African Cultural Arts Program (ACA) can be effective through incorporating music and creative arts interventions. In addition to playing and singing songs from the Old Malian Empire (whose lyrics impart coping skills), children will become familiar with the history, language, values, system of government, and other aspects of the culture.

Childhood aggression is a major obstacle to psychosocial development in youth. Treatment for aggressive behavior includes techniques that reduce impulsive behavior. Studies with adults show that music therapy provides opportunities to enhance the participants' sense of control over their emotions through catharsis. Group music intervention reduced children's displays of highly aggressive behavior and increased their self-esteem. Longitudinal studies have demonstrated that early childhood aggression has a relatively high likelihood of persistence over time. Narrowly focused approaches to treatment yield less enduring positive changes than comprehensive interventions. The

inclusion of risk and resilience in a framework for predicting psychosocial outcomes in aggressive youth has refocused the study of developmental psychopathology. The question becomes which has more influence, risk or protective factors?

Empirical evidence confirms the value of protective factors that encourage resilience in children and adolescents. Psychiatric symptoms would be less predictive of outcomes than risk and protective factors, and risk would be less predictive of outcomes than protective factors. The research design utilized experimental methods in a longitudinal study. Participants were evaluated annually for four years. The participants included children who were state-certified as chronically or violently aggressive, diagnosed with a neurological or psychiatric disorder, placed in public custody, or excluded from access to needed treatment and educational services. One hundred-nine participants were classified as low performers. One hundred-twelve were classified as high performers. The initial severity of psychiatric symptoms was not predictive of outcomes. However, childhood aggression during the earliest school years was a significant predictor of poor behavioral outcomes. Risk and resilience mechanisms continued to moderate outcomes, even at very high levels of risk and in the presence of severe disorders.

Dance

What are the feasibility and potential efficacy in reducing obesity among African American girls through after-school dance classes and family-based intervention to reduce television viewing? Modes of dance that affirm African American girls' identity and cultural heritage may potentially improve the health and self-concept of girls in inner-city educational settings. Prior research suggested that introducing African American girls to

culturally specific dancing while reducing television viewing would be a potentially feasible and effective means to combat obesity in African American girls. Since many barriers exist to the weight reduction intervention that are specific to African American girls and women, researchers needed to find an intervention that provided opportunities for immediate positive feedback, moderate to vigorous physical activity, and an elucidation of the social, cultural and historical importance of dance in the African community. Dance is one of the few art forms that survived forced transplantation to the United States, slavery, and social oppression.

African Wellness

The African American Wellness Village was founded by a group of volunteers that included both Black health professionals and advocates for social and racial equality who organized to eliminate unequal access to health care opportunities in minority communities in Oregon. The Wellness Village uses a model of cultural sensitivity in offering free health screenings and opportunities to receive health care to the African American community. More than half of the participants reported that the Wellness Village was the only place that they received screenings, and that the culturally sensitive environment inspired trust. For these reasons, these respondents preferred the screenings at the Wellness Village. The work of the African American Health Coalition, Inc. (AAHC) has called attention to the glaring disparities in health care opportunities available to certain groups of Oregonians. These disparities were documented in the *Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Black and Minority Health* (1985). According to the authors, the Portland African American community is easily mobilized when approached by individuals whom they trust. This

may also be true of other predominantly African American communities in the country. The AAHC has proven its commitment to the community it was created to serve. The annual Wellness Village has become a reliable source of health education, preventive screenings, and links to resources and referral information. The Wellness Village is a vital community event.

To overcome the stigma attached to mental health treatment, interventions need to engage low-income youth and their families through an affirmative approach that focuses on core characteristics that influence a wide range of behavioral problems. Group drumming is one of those interventions. It is inclusive, non-verbal, and requires no prior experience for participation. Its universal appeal notwithstanding, group drumming allows the development of individual proficiency and mastery of the discipline. Group drumming is an expression of the cultural heritage of African American students and promotes a collectivist value found in many Eastern cultures. Reflection and self-disclosure are activities that help to reduce stress. Group drumming encourages these stress relievers and has demonstrated its bio- psychosocial efficacy.

Changes in the neuroendocrine and immune systems indicated reduced stress levels in adults, improved mood, and reduced burnout in long-term care nurses, as well as improved social-emotional function in adolescents living in a court-referred residential treatment center. According to Social Cognitive Theory, group drumming combined with group counseling would encourage self-efficacy and enhance prospects of a positive outcome through enactive attainment, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and reduction of physiological arousal. Chronic stress in low-income youth and their families

is a problem that requires innovative interventions. School based group drumming is a low-cost, easily accessible, culturally appropriate activity, when complemented by group counseling methods, may improve social and emotional behavior in low income children. Traditional African concepts of illness and health integrate the social, spiritual, physical, and mental realms, all of which are impaired by trauma. According to the author, the African worldview uses dance as a conduit of individual and community healing. The belief underlying this worldview holds that for the individual as a part of the community, mind and body must be subsumed into ritual practices to facilitate healing, as well as to affirm and empower the individual and the group. Rituals played an integral role in socialization, self-expression, and communication. They helped to build and maintain a healthy sense of self and provided a cathartic experience for individuals and the community.

The philosophical perspective of the historical African tradition centers on holism and socio-cultural and psycho-spiritual themes. Movement, especially when occurring in the context of ritual, may be a method evolved to address problems. The suppression of dance in many African cultures has caused the disruption of the spiritual, communal, and interpersonal qualities that regulate the individual and unify societies. According to Hanna (1987), dance served as a physical expression and symbolic representation of emotions and thoughts that could function as a more effective medium than language to express one's needs and desires. In essence, using dance to heal restored part of the historical system of balance (*Maat*) that Africans have used for millennia.

Children who have difficulty integrating themselves into traditional scholastic programs are sometimes labeled "at risk". These children are particularly vulnerable to the lure of gangs and often display anxious, aggressive, often hostile behavior at school and in the community. Were these children to become less aggressive and anxious, they might be able to participate more effectively in their learning at school. If these vulnerable children found success in their traditional academics, especially in the disciplines that can lead to post-high school success, they may be better-positioned to transform their lives and communities in healthy ways. According to Choi et al. (2007), the benefits of music therapy are well established, and include improved motor and social skills, enhanced self-awareness and cognitive development, and reduced anxiety, stress, and anger. A review of the music therapy literature indicates at least three broad domains of function in which music therapy has been successfully used in the treatment of emotionally disturbed children: affect regulation, communication, and social/behavioral dysfunction (Hussey, 2004).

Many children of African heritage may be able to trace their ancestry to the Old Malian Empires of West Africa, which encompassed all or part of the modern-day states of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. The students from many communities' lack connection to their heritage because of *Maafa*.

Studying African cultures as they existed before the slave trade, and particularly a focus on celebrations of life, can reawaken curiosity about learning and help to develop self-regulation skills. These celebrations embrace the physically and emotionally disabled

people of the community and ritually observe birth, child naming, various rites of passage, and death, as well as communal and even historical events. These celebrations teach resilience in very simple, understandable ways. Interventions based on these celebrations are feasible; civic organizations and businesses sometimes sponsor cultural programs, just as they do sports and recreational programs.

When the role and importance of music education in the lives of at-risk children is defined, educators can design music programs that meet specific needs and directly address particular concerns. Very little work has been done with at-risk students, especially with respect to music education. Research (Choi, Lee, & Jung-Sook, 2007) has shown that music has a positive effect on re-acclimating students to the educative process. The teachers and parents of students in a large, urban alternative school for the arts in the Midwest participated in the study.

In the school where the intervention took place, there were 139 students in the academic category, 120 in the adjustment and behavior category, 102 classified as at-risk, and 68 classified as posing a physical or mental health risk. Participating students were surveyed preintervention and 16 weeks later, post-intervention, with the “Self-Perception Profile for Children” instrument. The summaries of each student's participation were divided into three categories of outcomes: students showing some improvement over the course of the intervention, with observable decreases in at-risk characteristics, students showing no observable positive or negative changes, or students that grew observably worse. Music education was found to be helpful, but the prospect of performance was sometimes a chaotic confounding variable. Performance pressures can cause distress; the

therapeutic value of music creation and participation does not rest in one's ability to perform, but rather in one's ability to function.

The mental health care and child welfare fields have searched for effective therapies for treating victimized children, especially those suffering with post-traumatic stress disorder. The literature reveals a troubling lack of methods developed to alleviate the plight of the many emotionally disturbed children suffering from cognitive deficits and developmental disabilities. Music is ideally suited to fill this gap. Since direct therapeutic work can be problematic for children in this population, music has the potential to bypass the defensive operations of the higher cortical functions of the brain and directly affect the limbic system, where emotions are processed. When clinicians can use what is effective in experimental settings and make those methods viable in quotidian settings, they have advanced the field by generalizing the therapeutic technique. This study examined several case studies that assessed the effectiveness of music therapy with children and adolescents of all ages. Techniques typically employed in music therapy included free and structured improvisation, singing familiar or improvised songs, listening to music, and verbal reflection on the relation of musical therapy to the child's problems. Several researchers regarded improvisation as vitally important in most cases; however, precomposed music and songs can be utilized to create a safe, familiar environment. To encourage families of low-income youth to overcome the stigma associated with the treatment of such well-established psychological risk factors as behavioral problems and academic failure, interventions need to target low-income youth and foster a development approach of a child's inner resources that can influence a wide range of problem behaviors.

Resilience

In essence, resilience is a positive relationship between an individual's internal state and external experiences. Resilience derives from the synergy of supportive relationships, adaptive capacities, and positive experiences. We can see and measure resilience in terms of how students' brains, immune systems, and genes respond to stressful experiences. A common set of such responses predisposes children to positive outcomes in the face of adversity.

Enhanced resilience entails the presence of at least one stable, caring, and supportive relationship between a child and an adult caregiver. A sense of mastery over life circumstances is critically important, and strong executive function and self-regulation skills are helpful. The support of an affirming faith or cultural tradition lends stability to a child's life. In addition, learning to cope with manageable threats to physical and social wellbeing is vital for the development of resilience. Over time, positive and negative experiences influence a child's mental and physical development, and some children demonstrate greater sensitivity to both negative and positive experiences. However, resilience can be cultivated; it is not merely an innate trait or a resource that can be used up. Individual responses to stressful experiences vary dramatically, but resilience can be situation-specific. Nevertheless, extreme adversity nearly always generates serious problems that require treatment.

The implications for research into analyzing and fostering resilience in children are far-reaching. Educators know from experience that children are resilient, but if we can identify the process through which they develop resilience, we can teach it to

children for whom building resilience doesn't come easily. In addition, we can enhance the development of resilience by teaching proactive measures that promote *living* resiliently.

Early clinical case descriptions provided some understanding of why some children are able to cope with adversity, but others are not. *Invulnerable* and *stress resistant* were two terms used by Bleuler and Anthony (1984, 1987) in describing such coping skills.

People that cope well in pro-social situations were described by Murphy and Moriarty (1976). Rutter (1987) conducted longitudinal studies that have evolved into a four-decade-long study of high-risk infants born into poverty on the Hawaiian island of Kauai. These studies provided a strong foundation for subsequent research. Evidence suggested that children can recover from trauma and develop normally, and Masten (2001) challenged the idea that resilient children possess or have developed some special qualities. Instead, she argued that resilience is normal and can be taught. Researchers concluded that resilience should be considered as an acquired, gradually internalized set of attributes that enable a person to adapt to life's difficult circumstances. Resilience is a skill that can be taught and enhanced with the support of proactive measures. After completing the ACA therapeutic program, it is the author's hope that the participants will become life-long learners.

Summary

Acquired skills can assist students in steering clear of harmful associations and toward helpful community involvement, a social navigation that indicates healthy self-esteem and self-concept. In order to encourage families of low-income youth to overcome

the stigma attached to treatment for well-established psychological risk factors for behavioral problems and academic failure, interventions must be tailored to suit low-income youth, and enable them to develop core characteristics that can ameliorate a wide range of problem behaviors.

Group drumming is one of those interventions. It is inclusive, non-verbal, and does not require prior experience for participation, yet holds the promise of developing proficiency or mastery in the discipline. Group drumming invokes the cultural heritage of African American students, and espouses a value of collectivism present in many Eastern-based cultures.

Reflection and self-disclosure are activities that help to reduce stress. Group drumming has demonstrated its bio-psychosocial efficacy in enhancing these stress relievers. Chronic stress in low-income youth and their families is a problem that requires innovative interventions to address. School-based group drumming is a low-cost, easily accessible, culturally resonant activity that, if coupled with group counseling, could improve the social and emotional health and behavior of low-income children.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Poverty significantly impacts children in urban schools. As a result, children in inner city schools, as well as their families, exhibit the symptoms of learned helplessness. Among those symptoms is low self-esteem. In many instances, children do not see the value of school or the educative process. Many children do not see school as a viable method for attaining the things they want from life. When students are unable to benefit from the school experience in concrete and meaningful ways, they are disappointed and may become a disruptive presence.

The Intervention

A review of the literature concerning music therapy reveals three broad domains of functioning in which music therapy has been used successfully to treat emotionally disturbed children: affect regulation, communication, and social/behavioral dysfunction (Hussey, 2004). Specific interventions that were most helpful in therapy included playing musical instruments, listening to music, singing songs, song writing and song drawing, which encouraged children to create pictures while listening to music.

The ACA Intervention comprised several activities conducted over a 60-day period. Eight 40-minute drumming sessions were conducted. Each learner received a weekly, 40-minute individual counseling session. A 40-minute group counseling session, including a discussion of goals, occurred each Friday. In addition, the Individual

Education Plan for each student aimed at achieving goals such as greater self-awareness, improved self-expression, and self-regulation (CBC).

The ACA drumming sessions were a part of the general education curricula music program. The newly constructed elementary school intervention served students from kindergarten through fifth-grade. Periods of active drumming lasted 30 to 40 minutes. Each week, five minutes were reserved for cultural orienting, with descriptions of instruments, rhythms, and their origins; each week, another five minutes were devoted to contemporary adaptations, songs, and dress descriptions. Thursday afternoons, immediately after lunch, learners participated in a group drumming session taught by an African drum instructor. The receptive, understated demeanor of the male instructor served as a marvelous model of the self-regulation and control of temperament that were cited as goals of the M.A.P curriculum. Instruments and rhythms associated with the Old Malian Empire, Brazil, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and hip-hop were particularly interesting to the students.

Descriptive Analysis

A total of 40 surveys were distributed; 32 surveys were appropriately completed. Eight surveys were excluded because they were incomplete, completed only by parents, or not received by the appropriate date. The children were grouped according to their special education classification, *emotionally disturbed*. The New Jersey statute Title: 18: A defines *emotionally disturbed* as the presence of one or more of the following dysfunctions. These students' educational performance is adversely affected by an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors. Students demonstrate an

inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers. Students manifest inappropriate behaviors or feelings under normal circumstances. Emotionally disturbed children display a pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression. Finally, these students display a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

In almost every instance, the students did not meet *emotionally disturbed* criteria, making the statutory classification inappropriate for those participants. Most of their learning problems stemmed from poverty. However, legal and educational policies made the statutory classification helpful; it was therefore used. The learners classified themselves as African American or Black. The active participants were ten years old and formally enrolled in fifth grade. They functioned on various reading levels, ranging from second-grade mastery to seventh-grade mastery. Four learners disclosed use of mood-stabilizing or psychotropic medicines, as per medical directive. Seven students lived with caretakers who were not the learner's biological parents. One student was living with a foster parent. Another saw his mother murdered by his father. Eight students received social services beyond those provided in school, and all of the students had some experience with being physically restrained in school.

Measures and Procedures

The Child Behavior Checklist for ages 6-18 Aggressive Behaviors and Disruptive Impulses data were used. Due to varying levels of reading comprehension, words were defined and explained. In every case, the learner knew the purpose of this study and provided informed assent and full cooperation. Parental consent was also provided. The

students were curious about the prospect of improving their school and home functioning. They wanted to become acquainted with artistic expression in general and group drumming in particular.

Analysis

The findings from the Child Behavior Checklist for ages 6-18 Aggressive Behaviors and Disruptive Impulses surveys were statistically evaluated on SPSS 22. The study utilized repeated measures analysis, specifically the dependent t-test. To provide answers to specific research questions, descriptive and inferential statistics were calculated.

Analyses were based on data from 32 fifth-grade males, classified as emotionally disturbed. The M.A.P. program, a special education experimental course of study (an in-district, out-of-district, more flexible therapeutic program), included curricula consistent with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for fifth-grade learners. Group therapy, individual counseling, communication with private therapists, intense parental communication, and other services were offered.

Statistical Analysis

This study was conducted using archival data consisting of parent and teacher ratings. Statistical analyses were conducted using a dependent t -test with repeated measures. The level of .01 ($\alpha = .01$) was used to determine statistical significance. The data were derived from pre- and post-administrations of the twenty-question portion of the Child Behavior Checklist for ages 6-18 concerning Aggressive Behaviors and Disruptive Impulses.

Summary

Many children do not see school as a viable means to attain what they want from life. Since some students are unable to benefit from the scholastic experience in concrete and meaningful ways, they are disappointed and may become a disruptive presence. A review of the music therapy literature reveals three broad domains of functioning in which music therapy has been used successfully in the treatment of emotionally disturbed children: affect regulation, communication, and social/behavior dysfunction (Hussey, 2004). The Child Behavior Checklist Aggression Problem Scale (CBCL) measured a learner's aggressive disruption of a learning session. After the testing period, self-esteem increased and aggressiveness diminished.

Drums have been used very successfully with at-risk adolescents in high schools (Friedman, 2000). Drums are a very natural way of helping adolescents manage anger, for a number of reasons: drumming is a peer-respected activity, drumming is fun, drumming releases suppressed emotions, and drumming aids in developing a stronger sense of self-worth (Friedman, 2000).

Chapter Four

Results

This study was conducted to determine if the ACA Therapeutic intervention results yielded significant reductions in aggressive and disruptive behaviors over time. This study's methodology was quantitative, using the paired-samples, repeated-measures approach. In every case, students demonstrated that the weekly drumming and cultural orientation sessions decreased their aggressive and disruptive behavior. Students' levels of disruptive behaviors were assessed in pre- and post-intervention tests using the twenty-question portion of the Child Behavior Checklist for ages 6-18 Aggressive Behaviors and Disruptive Impulses (CBCL), which parents and teachers completed to measure individual student's levels of self-concept.

Source of Archived Data

To assess and reward reduced aggression and disruption, those data were collected and analyzed. The district director of special services granted permission for the author to analyze the data, as did school leadership. The data were saved as part of the school record of each child.

Student Program that Provided the Data for Analysis

The M. A. P. program is an experimental special education course of study (an in-district, out-of-district, more flexible therapeutic program), which included curricula consistent with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for fifth-grade students. In addition, group therapy, individual counseling, communication with private

therapists, intense parental communication, and other services were offered, as described in Table 1.

Table 1
Additional Services Offered to Participants

Type of Therapeutic Activity	Participants	Percentage
Speech Therapy	17	53.1%
Occupational Therapy	32	100.0%
Individual Counseling	15	46.8%
Group Counseling	32	100.0%
Intense Parental Communication	32	100.0%
Communication with Private Therapist	12	38.0%
Interventions Outside of School	20	62.5%

Note: N= 32

This study's methodology was quantitative, using the paired-samples repeated measures approach. Students' levels of disruptive behaviors were assessed in pre- and post-intervention tests using the twenty-question portion of The Child Behavior Checklist for ages 6-18 addressing Aggressive Behaviors and Disruptive Impulses (CBCL), which parents and teachers completed.

Some questions related to such physical behaviors as clinging to adults, screaming, cruelty to animals, making threats, and bullying or physical attacks on others. Questions addressing social/emotional behavior focused on characteristics like willingness to talk, lying, clowning, using profanity, and individual levels of maturity. Questions about internalizing/externalizing behaviors focused on those that signaled fear of failure and obsessive anxiety, such as finger sucking, displaying a hot temper, suspiciousness, and demanding attention. Finally, questions explored external behaviors associated with

troubled children, such as whining and vandalism. In each of the four areas, physical, social/emotional, and internalizing and externalizing behaviors, as well as behaviors associated with troubled children, significant improvement appeared, according to parent and teacher responses on the post-intervention Child Behavior Checklist for Ages 6-18 test. The results of the statistical analysis of those parent and teacher responses appear in Table 2.

Table 2
Child Behavior Checklist: Pre- and Post-Test Differences

Behaviors	Mean Difference	Standard Deviation	t-Value	Significance Level	Cohen's d
Immaturity	-1.59	.49	18.0	p<.000	3.19
Clinginess	-0.53	0.50	5.92	p<.000	0.97
Cruelty to Animals	-0.34	0.60	3.23	p<.003	0.57
Bullying	-0.34	0.60	3.23	p<.003	0.57
Demands Attention	-1.12	0.90	7.01	p<.000	1.24
Perfection	-0.87	0.70	7.00	p<.000	1.23
Fights	-0.87	0.87	5.68	p<.000	1.00
Associates with Troubled Peers	0.00	0.68	7.44	p<.000	1.31
Lying	-1.40	0.66	11.95	p<.000	2.19
Physically Attacks	-1.21	0.70	9.76	p<.000	1.72
Refuses to Talk	-0.56	0.75	4.19	p<.000	0.74
Screams	-1.00	0.95	5.95	p<.000	1.05
Clowning	-1.40	0.75	10.52	p<.000	1.80
Suspicious	-1.18	0.99	6.73	p<.000	1.18
Profanity	-0.71	0.85	4.77	p<.000	0.84
Hot-Temperedness	-0.53	0.84	3.57	p<.001	0.63
Threatens People	-0.53	0.76	3.94	p<.000	0.69
Finger Sucking	-1.06	0.94	6.33	p<.000	1.12
Vandalism	-1.06	0.71	8.39	p<.000	1.48
Whining	-1.50	0.76	11.13	p<.000	1.96

To determine if aggressive behaviors and disruptive impulses were reduced, based on parents' and teachers' answers to the 20 questions from the Child Behavior Checklist

for Ages 6-18 regarding Aggressive Behaviors and Disruptive Impulses, scores were completed by parents and teachers of the 32 fifth-grade, 10-year -old boys. A dependent t-test was conducted in each of the 20 categories reflecting physical, social/emotional, internalizing and externalizing behaviors.

Physical Behavior Results

Results revealed that aggressive physical behaviors were reduced, based on scores from the Child Behavior Checklist for ages 6-18 Aggressive Behaviors and Disruptive Impulses. The fifth-grade boys were less clingy to adults, less cruel to animals, and engaged in less bullying and fewer fights at home and in school. Physical attacks on other people occurred much less frequently, as did making threats. Screaming as a means of expression stopped. One child who had developed larger breasts as a side effect of psychotropic medicine began to wear more formal clothes to school each day (a shirt and tie), ostensibly to affirm his masculinity and to project a more serious and mature attitude.

Social/Emotional Deficit Results

Results also revealed that social/emotional deficits had diminished. The children in the study appeared more mature to parents and teachers. They rarely lied, very infrequently refused to talk, mostly eschewed profanity, and eliminated “clowning” behaviors altogether.

Internalizing Behavior Results

Internalizing behaviors, such as demands for attention from teachers at school and parents at home, also lessened, according to the post-test Child Behavior Checklist for Ages 6-18 scores. Suspiciousness eased. Boys who had evinced “Hot Tempers” ceased

manifesting low thresholds of anger. Without exception, participants less frequently resorted to physical displays of anger. A long-term study of these participants would be valuable in determining if these improved behaviors were indeed lasting changes or short-term adjustments to gratify parents and teachers. Such questions notwithstanding, children who had been observed sucking their fingers, indicating an inappropriately low level of maturity, were not reported to resume that behavior after post-test results were collected.

Externalizing Behavior Results

Externalizing behaviors, including associating with troubled children, vandalism, and whining diminished; whining almost disappeared as an observed behavior. Group drumming engaged the students' hands and senses; by powerfully reinforcing efforts to correct externalizing behaviors, group drumming made a positive difference in the lives of these fifth-grade, African American boys in the short term (after 60 days).

Summary of Results

Results of this study demonstrated that aggressive and disruptive impulses, and the expression of these impulses in problematic behavior, were significantly reduced by weekly 30-minute sessions of group drumming, as part of an African Cultural Arts Therapeutic program for learners classified as emotionally disturbed. The three program elements of group drumming, group therapy, and individual counseling helped these children to lessen, and in some cases to eliminate, behavioral problems.

Chapter Five

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to determine whether weekly 30-minute sessions of group drumming in the context of an experimental, therapeutic public school program could reduce aggressive behaviors and disruptive impulses in fifth-grade African American boys classified as emotionally disturbed. The author hypothesized that group drumming would reduce aggressive behaviors and disruptive impulses. The results of the study indicated that aggressive behaviors and disruptive impulses lessened significantly.

At the end of the academic year, all but two of the 32 participants in this study had left the more restrictive M.A. program, were promoted to the next grade, and entered class support or resource programs that included general education classes. One participant continued in the M.A. program, and the other participant transferred to a school outside the state. It is not known if that participant resumed their education in a less restrictive program.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study addressed the following research questions. Research question 1: Can 30 minutes weekly of group drumming, as part of an African Cultural Arts therapeutic program, decrease disruptive and impulsive behaviors in African American male students? Hypothesis 1: Thirty minutes weekly of participation in an African Cultural Arts therapeutic program can decrease disruptive and impulsive behaviors in African American male students. Research question 2: Can the ACA therapeutic intervention assist students in transitioning from a more restrictive learning environment to a less restrictive learning

environment? Hypothesis 2: Students will transition from a more restrictive learning environment (the M.A. program) to a less restrictive environment that permits students to enroll in general education classes (with in-class support or remedial resources in language arts and mathematics). Research Question 3: Can students become re-engaged in the learning process and more invested in school as a means to attain their goals in life as a result of participating in the ACA therapeutic program? Hypothesis 3) Students will become re-engaged in learning and come to consider education as the best way to achieve their goals in life.

The philosophical basis of the activities that are a part of the African Cultural Arts program derive from the ancient Egyptian principle of *Maat*, whose meaning encompassed truth, order, harmony, morality and justice. The doctrine of *Maat* is carved in ancient Egyptian stele and recorded in the *Papyrus of Ani*, translated by Budge in 1895. The principle of *Maat* is often referred to as “the 42 negative confessions;” it is the template for human existence in this world and the next, according to Memphite theology. Among the “42 negative confessions” are declarations about not lying, not using profanity, not letting anger hold sway (maintaining a balanced disposition), not physically attacking people. The study’s participants learned these guides for living and discussed them as part of the group therapy sessions held each Friday. Most of the participants were familiar with the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule. When they learned that *Maat* antedated those moral touchstones and originated in the most ancient of African civilizations, Egypt, their interest was piqued and their imaginations inspired.

In addition to the influences of emerging natural maturity, rewards in school and at home for constructive behavior, and role models from both history and their own community, parent and teachers observed that discussing and understanding the principle of *Maat* helped the participants to change their behavior for the better.

The study expected the participants to benefit from the group drumming intervention; it also expected that aggressive behaviors and disruptive impulses would decrease, as a result of the weekly group drumming class in the context of the experimental, therapeutic, in-district program. The results indicated that disruptive impulses and aggressive behaviors subsided, as demonstrated by the significant decrease in deleterious behaviors, like screaming, lying, cruelty to animals, physically attacks, etc., as observed by teachers and parents. Regarding the four categories of behavior, physical, social/emotional, internalizing, and externalizing behaviors all diminished significantly, as attested by parents and teachers in their responses to that The Child Behavior Checklist for ages 6-18 Aggressive Behaviors and Disruptive Impulses. The individual counseling process placed major emphasis on teaching the importance of self-reflection. Participants were encouraged to take time to examine their feelings, and consider how their behaviors might be perceived by and affect parents, teachers, and others in the school community. When participants became more aware of how they presented themselves and affected others, they became more skilled at regulating their aggressive behaviors and disruptive impulses. Self-reflection was particularly effective in decreasing aggressive behaviors and disruptive impulses. As well as examining their feelings, participants recorded those feelings in journals and audio recordings, both spoken-word and music chosen for its

evocative effect. This was very helpful in tracking progress or regression and provided strong evidence for actual change. As participants' behavior improved, so did their compatibility with other members of the drumming group. Participants developed preferences for drumming partners and, as urged, reflected on the reasons for these affinities. As participants' preferences in partners became clearer, the group's sound improved; this concrete growth reinforced other efforts to promote participants' self-regulation of aggressive behaviors and disruptive impulses.

Physical Behaviors

Seven of the Child Behavior Checklist for ages 6-18 Aggressive Behaviors and Disruptive Impulses questions addressed physical behaviors, including clinging to adults, screaming, cruelty to animals, and threatening or physically attacking others. All the behaviors decreased, and screaming to communicate ceased.

Social/Emotional Behaviors

Five of the questions addressed social/emotional behaviors. Clowning, lying, refusing to speak, and use of profanity all decreased. Parents and teachers observed that clowning ceased.

Internalizing Behaviors

Five of the questions from the Child Behavior Checklist for ages 6-18 Aggressive Behaviors and Disruptive Impulses concerned internalizing behavior, including demanding attention, suspiciousness, hot-tempered displays, and finger-sucking. Internalizing behaviors diminished, and parents and teachers observed that finger sucking and hot-tempered displays ended.

Externalizing Behaviors

The remaining three questions addressed whining, vandalism, and associating with other troubled children. Each of those behaviors lessened, and parents and teachers reported that whining ceased. The individual and group therapy sessions were vital in enabling participants to change their behavior.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study include the implicit biases of the measures in the Child Behavior Checklist, which were not developed for the purpose in which this study employed them. The study chose 20 questions to assess aggression and disruptive impulses. However, the questions selected may not reflect actual aggression or disruptive impulses. The study is not causal; it reveals correlation or relationship. Any assertion that the intervention yielded good results by excluding factors over which it had no control, like family trauma and community empowerment, is inappropriate. The African Cultural Arts program relied on a convergence of historical and contemporary resources. It is possible that the necessary resources might not be available in some settings

Another limitation of this study is that only 32 fifth-graders participated. A larger sample might show that some participants did not benefit from the ACA intervention and natural maturation factors. However, it is the author's hope that a larger sample including both girls and boys classified as "emotionally disturbed" would produce similar results. Moreover, additional studies are necessary to explore the aims of the intervention. The potential of the study's results for generalization is limited. Children who are not classified as emotionally disturbed might respond differently to the group drumming intervention,

since it was structured with such children in mind. The ACA program was structured to encourage and reward even the slightest behavioral changes that might lead to a reduction in aggressive behaviors and disruptive impulses. Since the participants were accustomed with not meeting expectations of parents and teachers, the program was flexible. For example, instead of taking recess in play areas outside with their general education peers, some participants elected to drum together inside the school. In addition, participants received positive acknowledgement when they wore traditional African dress to school. These and other encouragements reinforced the positive changes participants had begun to make.

The raters of the students, pre- and post-intervention, were parents and teachers, who were not differentiated according to their roles. These raters were the only source of data. It is very possible that these raters were biased and may have had a personal investment in the program's success. Future studies should categorize rater groups to assure that differences between groups are perceived clearly. Other sources of data may have provided valuable evidence of the program's effects. It is not clear whether group drumming was the determining factor in the intervention's positive results, or other aspects of the ACA therapeutic program caused the significant changes in behavior that the data showed. Future studies should include a control group that receives counseling and other therapeutic supports, like occupational, physical, and speech therapies, but does not participate in the group drumming intervention.

Implications for School Psychology

School psychologists often need readily accessible, low-cost means for managing aggressive and disruptive students in school. To that end, obtaining several drums and establishing a drumming group is a feasible step, even if a master drummer is not available. While rhythms from the Old Malian empire are a meaningful, perhaps ideal option, it is not necessary to teach specific rhythms for participants to reap the benefits of group drumming. The students themselves can create engaging, infectious rhythms to play together.

Drumming is fun, and can also benefit students who are not aggressive and do not display disruptive behaviors. School psychologists may enjoy working with general education students who want to drum, in addition to the students who need to reduce aggressive behaviors, as indicated by the number of times they were disciplined with sanctions like suspension or detention. Even staff members might enjoy participating in a drumming group. Their participation could foster better relationships between staff members and students, who may otherwise conflict frequently.

Group drumming can take place both in school and in the greater community. Performances by special education students that demonstrate their skill can foster positive impressions of those students. When families and friends of emotionally disturbed students have reason to be proud of them, these performances provide positive reinforcement of cooperative behavior.

Future Research

In order to expand the research presented in this study, several avenues of research should be explored. Both qualitative and quantitative studies could be conducted to learn more about methods of reducing and eliminating aggressive behaviors and disruptive impulses in 10-year-old African American boys who are classified as emotionally disturbed.

Longitudinal studies that examine the differences in parent and teacher ratings of African American boys in the four areas of behavior, physical, social/emotional, internalizing, and externalizing, at regular intervals (perhaps every 4 years at ages 10, 14, and 18) over extended periods of time could reveal which behavioral changes were sustained or expanded, adjusting for maturation levels, into young adulthood. Instead of finger sucking, which is problematic at age 10, participants at 14 and 18 could be asked about smoking and substance abuse. This process could explore similar behaviors that would reflect the greater personal freedom of an adolescent compared to rather controlled existence of a 10-year-old.

Qualitative research could provide insight into maintaining the decreases in aggressive behaviors, or into the increase or decrease of certain behaviors with maturity. Interviewing participants may reveal why more reductions in specific behaviors took place after 60 days.

Research that considers the impact of phonological processing in the reduction of aggressive behaviors and disruptive impulses would be very helpful. If reading ability

were to improve as aggressive behaviors and disruptive impulses diminished, this might provide more incentive for school districts to adopt this method of behavior modification.

Comparisons of the reductions in aggressive behaviors and disruptive impulses to the academic performance of participants would be useful. Determining whether greater self-control and stronger self-concept improved the work habits and academic performances of participants may yield a compelling argument for including group drumming in schools for both special needs and general education program children. For some time, many communities have enjoyed artistic exploration and educational programs that showcase the drum. On every continent, drumming in some form of has amplified and elaborated the beat of the human heart. The universality of the drum should be further investigated in future research. If communities and school systems recognize its potential, children can reap the benefits of group drumming early in their education.

Artist-in-Residence positions for master drummers should be a resource in every school system that wants to enhance students' resilience skills. Future research could prove the advantage of professional artists mentoring school children. Dance is the natural partner of group drumming. In the old Malian empire, boys and men were the drummers, girls and women the dancers, though school systems can dispense with those gender-defined roles. Accompanying dance programs can be another excellent low-cost resource for schools in any community. Researching the origin of the drum/dance relationship in ancestral cultures would be a worthy complement to those activities.

Summary

This study provided strong evidence of the benefit of group drumming in reducing aggressive and disruptive behavior and re-engaging children in education as a means to realize their goals in life. Low cost and accessible, drumming can be free style or follow ancient rhythms from almost every continent. Many inner-city communities are home to African dance classes, with skilled drummers playing the rhythms. Japanese, Irish, and Latino cultures are among the many that use the drum in powerful ways.

The impoverishment of generation after generation of African Americans is a legacy of the enduring psychological effects of racial oppression product of poverty. The purpose of this study was to teach children (both those classified as emotionally disturbed and general education students) in inner-city and nearby community schools about their African history, which is extraordinarily rich, and about which they know little. The study expected that participants would respond positively to the group drumming intervention, and that aggressive behaviors and disruptive impulses would diminish, as a result of the weekly group drumming class in the context of the experimental therapeutic in-district program. Those expectations were borne out by the results. In the four forms of behavior examined, physical, social/emotional, internalizing, and externalizing, all showed significant reductions, as reported by parents and teachers in their answers to the 20 questions chosen from the Child Behavior Checklist for Ages 6-18 Aggressive Behaviors and Disruptive Impulses.

This study provided strong evidence of the benefits of group drumming in making education a viable and valued resource for children. Low-cost and accessible, drumming

can be free style or follow ancient rhythms from almost every continent. Classes in African dance accompanied by skilled drummers are common to many inner-city communities. Japanese, Irish, and Latino cultures, among others, also use the drum in powerful and meaningful ways.

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Appendix A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF STUDY

Measuring Aggressive Perceptions

(Previously titled: Improving Self-Concept of Urban Students)

TITLE OF STUDY IN LAY TERMS

Can drumming and learning about your history make you feel better about yourself and make you better at school activities?

PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to learn if 30 minutes of African drumming each week, as part of a comprehensive, therapeutic African Cultural Arts program, can reduce aggressive behaviors and disruptive impulses enough to encourage learning in children with psychiatric and social/emotional needs in group settings? .

You and your child are being asked to participate in this research study because your family depends upon the Public Schools for a thorough and efficient education. If your child is not enrolled in the Public Schools, you and your child can not take part in this study.

INVESTIGATORS

Principal Investigator: Dr. Yuma Tomes Co-Investigator:

Institution: Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Department: School Psychology

Address: 4190 City Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19131

Telephone: 215-871-6946

Responsible (Student) Investigator: Tammarra R. Jones

The program that your child is being asked to volunteer for is part of a research project.

If you and your child have questions about this research, you can call Dr. Yuma Tomes at (215) 871-6946. If you or your child may have any questions or problems during the study, you or your child can ask Dr. Tomes, who will be available throughout the entire study. If you want to know more about Dr. Tomes' background or the rights of research subjects, you can call the PCOM Research Compliance Specialist at (215) 871-6782.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURES

If your child decides to participate in this study, your child will be asked to play an African drum and explore information about the cultures that developed the instruments and the rhythmic patterns. The study's sessions will each last about 30 minutes. There will be three sessions over the course of one week, for a total of 5 hours of your child's time.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

Among the potential benefits to participants is an improved self-concept. We also expect improved academic performance and greater reliance on self-regulation of behavior. Learners may improve their social skills and become better able to interpret non-verbal messages. It is possible that your child may not benefit from taking part in this study, but other children in the future may benefit from what the researchers learn from the study.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Playing drums can at first cause discomfort or bruising to hands from the impact of hand on drum. Usually, adjustment occurs almost immediately.

ALTERNATIVES

You can choose that your child not participate in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information and records relating to your and your child's participation will be kept in a locked file. Only the researchers, members of the Institutional Review Board, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration will be able to look at these records. If the study's results are published, no names or other identifying information will be used.

REASONS YOUR CHILD MAY BE TAKEN OUT OF THE STUDY WITHOUT CONSENT

If health problems develop that could possibly endanger your child, or if other issues emerge that could pose a threat to your child's wellbeing, researchers may remove your child from this study. In addition, the entire study may be ended if unforeseen risks or side effects endanger other people.

NEW FINDINGS

If any new information emerges that may affect your child's willingness to continue taking part in this study, you and your child will be informed immediately.

INJURY

If your child is injured while participating in this research study, your child will be provided with. However, your child will not be reimbursed for care or receive other payment. PCOM will not be responsible for any of your child's bills, including any routine care unrelated to this study or reimbursement for any side effects that may occur, from participation in this program. If you and your child believe that your child has suffered injury or illness in the course of this research, you should notify the PCOM Research

Compliance Specialist at (215) 871-6782. A review by committee will be arranged to determine if the injury or illness is a result of your child's participation in this research. You should also contact the PCOM Research Compliance Specialist if you or your child believe that you have not been sufficiently informed about the risks, benefits, other options, or that you or your child are being pressured to continue to take part in this study against your wishes.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

You and your child may refuse to participate in this study. You must voluntarily consent to participate in this study with the understanding of the known possible effects or hazards that could occur during this study. Not all the possible effects of the study are known.

You and your child may leave this study at any time.

If your child drops out of this study, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you and your child are entitled.

I have had adequate time to read this form and I understand its contents. I have been given a copy for my personal records.

I agree to allow my child to be in this research study.

Signature of Parent: _____

Date: ____/____/____ Time: _____AM/PM

Signature of Investigator or Designee _____

(circle one)

Date: ____/____/____ Time: _____AM/PM

Appendix B**Pre- and Post-Tests**

DIRECTIONS: Please respond to the following questions about the behavior of your child or student behavior in the last 3 months.

Answer 0 for not true. Answer 1 for sometimes true. Answer 2 for very true.

1. Does your child/student act too young for his age? _____
2. Does your child/student cling to adults too much? _____
3. Is your child/student cruel to animals? _____
4. Does your child/student bully other children? _____
5. Does your child/student demand adult attention? _____
6. Does your child/student require perfection in his work? _____
7. Does your child/student fight with other children? _____
8. Does your child/student “hang” with troubled children? _____
9. Does your child/student lie to protect himself? _____
10. Has your child/student physically attacked others? _____
11. Does your child/student refuse to talk? _____
12. Does your child/student scream to communicate? _____
13. Does your child/student engage in clowning? _____
14. Is your child/student excessively suspicious? _____
15. Does your child/student use profanity? _____
16. Is your child/student hot-tempered? _____

17. Does your child/student threaten people? _____
18. Does your child/student suck his fingers? _____
19. Does your child/student vandalize property? _____
20. Does your child/student whine to communicate? _____