The Jamaican Adolescent's Perspective on Violence and its Effects

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ABSTRACT

The Caribbean and in particular Jamaica is experiencing an epidemic of violence which adversely affects its youth who are the main perpetrators and victims. Early and protracted exposure to violence is part of the socialization experience that results in violence-related behaviours.

This paper examines the impact of the early and sustained exposure to violence on the attitudes and behaviours of Jamaican adolescents from their perspective. An analysis of qualitative data collected from three studies between 2005 and 2009 among adolescents across Jamaica was conducted using the recurrent theme approach. Exposure to violence was common and increased with age and lower socio-economic status and was most marked among marginalized inner city youth. While attitudes and behaviours in response to the violence varied among adolescents, there was a "dose response effect" in relation to age and lower social status. It is necessary to alter the socialization process in order to break the cycle of violence through wide ranging interventions that touch on every aspect of the spheres of influence in the life of Jamaican adolescents.

Keywords: Adolescents, emotional intelligence, violent environment, reslience

Perspectivas del Adolescente Jamaicano Sobre la Violencia y sus Efectos

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RESUMEN

El Caribe y en particular Jamaica, está experimentando una epidemia de violencia que afecta nega-tivamente a sus jóvenes que son tanto los principales perpetradores como las propias víctimas. La exposición temprana y prolongada a la violencia es parte de la experiencia de socialización que se traduce en comportamientos relacionados con la violencia. Este documento examina el impacto que la exposición – temprana y sostenida – a la violencia tiene sobre las actitudes y los comportamientos de los adolescentes jamaicanos desde la propia perspectiva de estos últimos. Se realizó un análisis de datos cualitativos recogidos de tres estudios realizados entre 2005 y 2009, entre adolescentes en Jamaica, utilizando el método del tema recurrente. La exposición a la violencia fue común, y aumentaba a medida que la edad era mayor y el estatus socioeconómico menor, siendo más acentuada entre los jóvenes de los barrios marginales. Si bien las actitudes y comportamientos en respuesta a la violencia variaban entre los adolescentes, hubo un "efecto dosis respuesta" en relación con la edad y el bajo nivel social. Es necesario alterar el proceso de socialización para romper el ciclo de la violencia a través de intervenciones amplias que toquen todos los aspectos de las esferas de influencia en la vida de los adolescentes jamaicanos.

Palabras claves: Adolescentes, inteligencia emocional, medio social violento, resiliencia

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INTRODUCTION

Violence among adolescents is an important issue in the Caribbean and has begun to receive much attention in developing countries (1). In recent years, Jamaica has suffered from an epidemic of violence against the person that has left many individuals dead and many more wounded and

physically disabled. Unfortunately, crime and violence are an entrenched part of Jamaican life. Even more unfortunate is that young people are the main perpetrators as well as victims of crime.

The Jamaican Youth Risk and Resiliency Behaviour Survey 2006 looked at youth involvement in violence both as victims and perpetrators and with respect to occurrences both in the home and wider community (2). A fifth of 15−19-year olds reported involvement in violence in the last twelve months with males reporting a higher frequency than females. Similar findings were reported in the Jamaica Youth Risk and Resiliency survey (2005), a school based survey, among a nationally representative sample of 10−15-year olds (3). Twenty-two per cent of male adolescents, 10−18 years, reported carrying weapons and seventeen per cent were involved in a gang (4). Crime statistics (1999) recorded that 13−19-year olds accounted for 24.2% of persons arrested for murders, shootings, rape and carnal abuse (5). Despite these daunting figures, it is important to note that the majority of adolescents do not get involved in crime or violent behaviour.

In 2002, adolescent males accounted for 22% of total visits and 24% of injury visits to the accident and emergency (A&E) departments of all government hospitals (4). As adolescent males make up 10% of the total population, they are disproportionately affected by violence (4). Children and young people, 15−24 years, make up 40% of murder victims according to the national crime statistics (5). In addition, the Caribbean Youth Survey reported that one out of every thirteen students has been knocked unconscious at least once from a fight or other violent act (6). Even where they are not direct victims of crime, many adolescents are affected. Over 30% of adolescents reported concern about fighting or violence issues at home while 50% worry about violence in their communities (6). Dealing in and using drugs contribute significantly to crime and some adolescents are very aware of the violence from drug deals going bad or from the protection of "turf" in their community and school (2). In fact, much of the exposure to violence often precedes the adolescent stage. A survey of a sample of 5−6-year olds in 1999 provides evidence that children were exposed to high levels of community violence. A half had heard guns being shot, a third had seen someone stabbed and a quarter had seen someone shot. A third had seen a dead body, the majority of which were relatives and close friends (7).

Based on overwhelming evidence of the impact of violence on the society, the Jamaican Ministry of Health has identified violence prevention as a major component of its overall Healthy Lifestyle Programme. The National Policy for the Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles in Jamaica lists violence as one of the main contributing factors to the threat of lifestyle diseases/problems (3).

The frequency of children as victims and as perpetrators of violence also prompted the preparation of a National Plan of Action for an Integrated Response to Children and Violence. This was completed in 2005 (7). The plan recognized the many activities and agencies of government and civil society organizations that had been initiated to address the issues surrounding children and violence. It adopted five goals with a view to preventing children from exposure to violence, protecting those affected by violence, educating the public on children's rights and cooperating with and strengthening the capacities of the various stakeholders to address the problem.

It is generally accepted that violence-related behaviours are rooted in patterns of socialization that begin early in life including exposure (8). From very early, many Jamaican children are exposed to violence. Adolescence is usually the most important self-defining stage of human development (8). It is, therefore, an important place to intervene and direct or re-direct the impact of environment on attitudes and behaviours. Individuals respond to their environment differently and more than just quantitative evidence is needed to inform the design of interventions. The early identification of the process, impact and intervening factors that cause or prevent violent and anti-social behaviours is crucial for informing policy and programmes.

This paper seeks to examine the impact of the early and sustained exposure to violence on the attitudes and behaviours of Jamaican adolescents from their perspective. It is an analysis of qualitative data collected over three years from adolescents across Jamaica in order to capture their impressions of how they have been affected. This analysis will provide greater insight into the factors determining violent behaviours among adolescents and provide guidance in the development of interventions to prevent and reduce these behaviours.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

Data were collected in three unrelated qualitative research projects commissioned by the Jamaican Ministries of Health and Education to inform policy and programmes for adolescents. The method involved the use of focus group discussions with several groups of adolescents across rural and urban Jamaica between June 2005 and January 2009. The data from the three rounds are comparable as the instrument and data collection process were quite similar.

The first round of data collection was part of an exploratory study commissioned by the Jamaican Ministry of Health and a national interagency group, the Violence Prevention Alliance, that was convened to address violence issues among Jamaican youth. This consisted of twelve focus group discussions (FGDs) among in-school adolescents, age 9−17 years. The schools from which the students were selected were categorized by socio-economic status as 1) low income 2) middle to upper income based on location and whether they were public or private schools. Each focus group consisted of even numbers of males and females (10−12 participants each) divided according to ages 9−12, 13−15, 16−17 years. Schools were selected from Kingston

and St Andrew, St Catherine and St Thomas. These focus groups were facilitated by the researcher.

The second round of data collection was part of formative research for the development of interventions to be conducted by the Adolescent Healthy Lifestyle programme of the Jamaican Ministry of Health/USAID. Data collection took place in February 2006. A total of twenty FGDs were held (sixteen with in-school adolescents and four with out-of-school adolescents). Participants were selected from schools and communities in the case of the out-of-school adolescents categorized according to socio-economic status using the same criteria as in round one and divided as follows: rural middle class, rural low income, urban inner city and urban middle class. Groups were single sex consisting of 10−12 participants each and divided according to ages 12−13, 14−16 and 17−18 years. Adolescents were recruited from six parishes as follows: St James, St Ann, St Thomas, St Catherine and Kingston and St Andrew. These FGDs were facilitated by trained youth facilitators ages 18−21 years using a discussion guide developed by the researcher who also analysed the data gathered.

The third round of data collection was conducted between November 2007 and January 2009. These FGDs were commissioned by the Jamaican Ministry of Education to identify factors contributing to violent and anti-social behaviours among adolescents in school. Six focus groups were held with both males and females, ages 14−17 years; participants of four groups were from two urban schools and two groups from one rural school. All three schools experienced high incidences of violent behaviours. These students were selected to participate by the school administration because they had been involved in violent activities, had behavioural problems or were deemed to be "at risk".

A facilitator's guide was used in all three rounds with a pool of items some of which were excluded in the various rounds. All facilitators were accompanied by a note-taker. The sessions in rounds one and two were also taped. All sessions were held in private areas and no teacher, school administrator or other adult was present during the sessions. These FGDs were convened to attempt to capture the adolescents' perspective on their lives, their future, their real and perceived challenges as well as their hopes and aspirations. Specific questions were also asked about violence and drug use in order to capture their perceptions on these issues which so obviously affect their lives.

Data from all the FGDs consisting of notes taken during the discussion as well as transcription from tapes were analysed using the "Recurrent Theme" approach (9). In this method of qualitative data analysis, key phrases were used to identify similarities in responses to the individual themes. Themes from the focus groups in each round were compared and contrasted for triangulation and credibility. Quotes were also recorded from each FGD to illustrate group consensus. The results from each FGD were then compared for differences and similarities and themes and these were noted.

For the purposes of this paper, data from the discussions were arranged by typology, themes and sub-themes that emerged from each round. Responses to key themes were analysed separately also to ensure accuracy regarding the magnitude of agreement or disagreement on certain issues. Cut and paste techniques were then used to collate using tables to organize responses to the various key issues.

RESULTS
Exposure to violence
In round two and three, students were asked about their own and their peers' exposure to and participation in violence. In response to the questions:

* Do young people your age get involved in violence?
* Have you ever been involved in a fight or been attacked or hurt by someone?
* Does violence in your country, community or school affect you in any way? If so, how?

Adolescents expressed the fact that violence is a very real part of their lives. There was no noticeable difference between those from rural or urban school or community. Adolescents gave examples of their peers and themselves being involved in violent acts as well as being victims of violence at school and in the community. The participants in almost all schools worried about being able to get home from school when there were protests and roadblocks and most participants had an experience of being caught up in these situations. These adolescents do not think that they are safe especially away from their homes.

"Seen fights at school even using a piece of yam, chair-arm and knife"
"Yes violence is everywhere even when walking in the street, and in drive-by"
"...like gang war, turf war, some lose parents to violence and they are angry so they get weapons to defend themselves; politics causes violence. They do it to prove a point, when they are embarrassed and some have parents who are cruel"

Violence was an issue of special significance among rural low income youth. At least, a quarter of all four groups had been involved in a fight with more having observed a violent act. They however seemed to be more affected emotionally than their middle class peers and they expressed being affected not only by being inconvenienced by disruption of public transportation or school because of the violence but to be fearful of being victims themselves.

"My house was robbed, they beat-up my father but did not hurt me."
"I saw a person got shot and the bullet went through another person"

"I saw two bad men fight and they chopped-up each other at the bus terminus"

Inner City adolescents more than any other group had numerous experiences with violence. They also had a more accepting attitude of the "necessity for violent behaviour" and were far more vocal than any of their other counterparts about their own violent behaviours.

"Yes, violence is at school: Security guards and students"

"*Sometimes, we have to lock-up the house and lie on the ground, it affects me badly"*.

"....last week Tuesday, outside the school gate, two girls push and beat each other up; "one girl scarred the face of the other and made her lose respect".

The responses from the FGDs in round three where students were selected by the school administration as "at risk" were simply a more severe diagnosis of the same issues. There was unanimous agreement among the adolescent participants from all six groups that young persons were involved in violence. Most felt that even if you wanted to be non-violent it was very difficult and that refusing to fight would make you a target. They claimed that peer influence and association with those who practise violent behaviours in the school or community seem to be the driving factor. They even feel that those who are expelled before completing their education are driven into more and bigger violence

"It is all around you and both the people in the community and the police carry out violent acts".

Every participant from the urban schools in round three had witnessed violence of some kind and seemingly multiple times. The boys were especially vocal about what they regarded as police brutality. There were even admissions of being involved and having family members involved in violence. Girls gave stories of forced sex and rape.

"Stabbing and chopping always happen when people fight".

"Yes, 'big man' and young boy want to force you to "sleep with them".

"I witnessed two men shooting at each other in a car I was in. My father got shot.
I was afraid".

Values

Students from the twelve FGDs in round one were specifically asked: 'Would you agree that being tough or bad is one way of getting people's respect?' They were also asked: 'What do you think about persons who use force, fear or violence to get what they want or even to get help for other people?'

Responses from FGDs among 9−12-year olds in rural and urban low, middle and high income schools were similar.

There was definitely a split in the feelings about respect for tough, bad people. Weakness, it is felt, will result in oppression but most bad people are feared rather than respected.

"If you're not tough, other children will pick on you"
"When people are tough and bad others may be afraid of them".

The same group of 9−12-year olds saw violent behaviours in extremes of black and white with no grey areas *ie* either good or bad. Their responses can be summarized as: persons who use force or violence, even if they help others, are definitely bad.

"It is a bad habit they learn from a young stage"
"You can't trust people who steal and rob"
"It is good that they are not keeping it for themselves but what they are doing is still bad because it is stealing".

Responses changed as the ages increased. There were mixed feelings among the 13−15-year olds about tough bad people. Some felt they were feared not respected while others saw being bad and tough as a legitimate way to earn respect

"Most people respect tough and bad people"
"It's good and bad; when fighting, you don't cry, so that people can respect you".

Mixed responses were also given about people who use force, fear or violence. There was acknowledgement that this behaviour was not desirable but some justification was offered in certain circumstances.

"They get that way because of desperation"
"No matter what they do with the money it's still stealing, that's the bottom line".

In contrast, there definitely seems to be a legitimate place for toughness and badness for the 16−17-year olds across all the socio-economic groups. There is, however, a definite limit to its acceptance and the distinction remains between respect and fear.

"You can't be soft if you want people to look up to you"
"There is a limit to how tough is alright, but people don't respect you when you're weak"
"Toughness gets respected (only the tough and the bad will make it); persons only care about themselves".

With respect to using force, fear or violence to benefit the less fortunate, 16−17-year olds acknowledged that this is wrong behaviour. All socio-economic groups however had some understanding and sympathy with the perpetrators or the beneficiaries who support them. More persons in the mid-upper socio-economic groups were against such be-haviour.

"Its wrong but if everyone had a fair chance it would not happen"
"World history shows you that some things don't change without war or conflict"
"They just have their own system to run things because the country is not going right".

Attitudes

Greater frequency and intensity of violent experiences also seemed to have resulted in a greater effect. Adolescents from

the round two focus groups felt everyone was involved in violence including the political leaders. Two extreme reactions were noted.
1) A stoic acceptance illustrated by the comment:
    "It does not affect me, I am use to it". "It does not affect me anymore, it's like the norm".
2) Extreme fear and depression; as one boy put it:
    "Sometimes it does not make any sense to live".

Out-of-school youth gave very similar responses to the in-school youth. Their attitudes to violence especially among the male and female urban groups are very similar to the urban inner city adolescents who are in school. They openly admit to fighting and other violent acts and see shame in backing away from conflict. Being violent and having violent acts committed on them is all too familiar and there seems to be little difference between the rural and urban participants. There is a mixed reaction to the high levels of violence being experienced. Stoicism and anxiety were side by side in the groups despite the fact that all had very similar experiences

> *"Violence, nowadays, makes one scared; afraid to leave your houses or walk on the road at certain times"*
> *"it doesn't affect me but other youths can't go to school"*
> *"that's what happen regularly" they war over drugs and 'man an woman' business.*

Coping strategies
Many of the students expressed the need to be tough and not allow any kind of disrespect. When asked if there were non-violent ways of dealing with disrespect, there were no suggestions. Discussion, negotiation skills and emotional intelligence are not viable options to most of these students. In the discussion when the facilitators made these types of suggestions, the students' feedback indicated that these measures are regarded as ineffective approaches to dealing with conflict. Except in the case of the rural schools, almost everyone had been involved in a fight or been attacked or hurt by someone in the past. Some confessed to be the perpetrators of violence because of a perceived *"dis"* meaning disrespect meted out to them. Many felt forced to either defend themselves or were simply victims.

> *"Yes, I will not make a man do me something and I don't do it back"*
> *"Get hurt sometimes when you're defending yourself; sometimes you have to defend people".*
> *"Dis a flex an get mi vex an yuh know how it affi go" (disrespect is serious and makes me angry, so you know how I must respond)*
> *"Sometimes some youth target you because of your reputation".*

At least a quarter of each of the four focus groups of inner city adolescents openly admitted to enjoying fighting and being tough. Their very school environment seemed to be a source of much conflict and the "eye for an eye" rule was definitely firmly in place.

> *"Try to avoid a fight, but if someone hurt me or treat me unfairly and people keep pushing me then I will have to deal with it".*

The students expressed the negative effect of the violence as being both an inconvenience and causing emotional distress. In the case of the inner-city school, some episodes, like the war between factions, prevented them from going about their normal day to day activities. Some confided to becoming numbed by the frequency of the violent acts they witnessed but a significant amount still felt constant fear and/or anger.

> *"Yes – I cannot go where I wish"*
> *"I have to keep a weapon to defend myself and my friends".*
> *"Yes, when police brutalize people, it causes anger"*
> *"Dons who run a community the right way, get them involved to defend people from a gang".*
> *"Every time you think of it, it makes you feel weak".*

FGDs responses among students from the schools in lower middle class and rural communities recorded very mixed opinions on the effects of violence. Some admitted to psychological and physical effects while others were quite jaded and cynical, possibly a coping mechanism to protect their mental health

> *"Not really… I live in the midst of it"*
> *"You wonder what might happen to you out of a simple argument"*
> *"No. people have to die everyday, one born and one dead"*
> *"It must affect you… when a friend is dead or family member dead it does affect you and you have to deal with it".*

Perspective on Authority
In round three, students were asked to give their perspective on the teachers and the general school administration. The general trend of their response was

> *"Judgmental"*
> *"They need to show us respect and we'll show respect"*
> *"Only certain people are liked, by the principal and the teachers"*
> *"All they do is practise favouritism".*

These students obviously resented the school administration and thought they were being picked on unfairly by them. No one related their own behaviour to the response they were getting from the staff and senior administrators.

When asked about their parents, all three groups expressed positive feelings about parents and the sacrifices they were making. The exceptions were those who obviously had resentment for absentee parents especially fathers. The older adolescents however felt that their parents did not really understand "runnings" and felt the best way to deal

with that is to keep them in the dark about things they believe would create conflict.

> *"They always blame the DJ and dancers for everything"*
>
> *"It is better not to cause them anxiety"*

Although this was not asked directly, it came out in the discussion of several other themes that inner city adolescents had deep resentment for the police as expressed below

> *"Police brutalizing people"*
>
> *"Police pick on the youth".*

DISCUSSION

The three rounds of FGDs involved groups of adolescents from both rural and urban areas. Responses show that violence is a very real part of everyday existence despite location. Violence is sadly the one common factor that impacts all their lives. All adolescents admitted to being affected by this violent environment and it is clear that their attitudes and opinions towards violent behaviours have been influenced by the familiarity to crime and violence.

They speak of violent experiences at school and in their communities as if these were the norm. It is clear that their environment is rife with it and that they have internalized the attitude of not backing down when faced with conflict. There was no indication that an effective coping mechanism that is not positioned as being weak has been offered nor demonstrated. Interaction with the students during and after the FGDs suggests that promoting the development of emotional intelligence is not a regular part of their socialization process.

In the first round where students were asked about persons using violence to do good, a comparison of the opinions of younger adolescents aged 9−12 years, the middle group aged 13−15 years and the older group 16−18 years reveals what could be described as a dose response. The younger ages are clear in their minds that violent and criminal behaviours are negative. This opinion becomes mixed among the older groups. The oldest set of adolescent participants 16−18 years, have adjusted their attitudes to accommodate a greater tolerance of crime and violence. Reasons for this adjustment are clearly articulated by the adolescents: The system oppresses poor powerless people, the system forces some persons to become criminals, many dons bring order to the communities that they control and respond to the needs of the poor in their communities; extortion is alright especially if the rich do not help the poor.

Socio-economic status also seems to provide a dose effect on attitudes towards crime and violence as well as participation in violent activities. In round two where schools were not selected based on high occurrence of violence or location in violent communities more than half of the participants in the FGDs from the rural low income and all the participants in the inner-city schools as well as out-of-school youth participants had been involved in a fight or other violent experience as perpetrators or victims. They also voiced more stoicism and were more willing to admit to violent behaviour. In fact, many felt that it was required of them to fit in with these behaviours in order to defend themselves and not become victims. This finding is supported by the sociologist Herbert Gayle in his review of "Adolescent Male Survivability in Jamaica" He states "There is no doubt that the social structure of Jamaica fosters violence (10). It embodies sharp class difference, an almost ineffective and partial system of law, intensely concentrated poverty, a major gap between material goals and the legal means to achieve them, the socialization of males to be tough and to resist authority". Gayle further suggests that violence has been learned as an effective means of achieving power and economic gain. These factors along with the development of the illegal drug trade are important clues to the high levels of violence among poor unrepresented youth who with little or no access to social services turn to crime and violence.

The responses to other FGD themes not recorded in the results section of this paper on drug use and sale, especially ganja, seems to be common and acceptable. The use of ganja is obviously socially acceptable in their communities and many regard ganja use as beneficial if not harmless. This is cultural, and their attitudes to this practice is influenced by what they see and hear around them as well as the need to find a release for stress in a very materialistic society as well as the negative "vibes" treatment they claim to experience within the school system. In addition, ambivalence about alcohol and cigarettes as drugs is obvious. Ganja is readily available and affordable across Jamaica and may possibly be a factor in the behavioural problems of some students. Unfortunately, drug testing with the permission of parents is not always readily available.

One other FGD theme asked adolescents about opportunities for structured non-academic activities and exposure to other positive environments besides their community and school. This seems limited based on the responses. These adolescents obviously need better supervision away from school and protection within the school plant as well as on the way to and from school. The lack of structured and supervised activities in their daily lives (apart from school) among those participants regarded as "trouble students" must contribute to their mostly disregard for order. These kinds of opportunities may go a far way in training adolescents in adopting a different approach to handling conflict from the way they are now accustomed.

All groups unanimously expressed a desire to make a contribution to the society, to help others and to help their parents. This is admirable. It is also an important driving force and an excellent opportunity for behaviour change interventions among these students. The students also admire persons who have achieved in spite of challenges. Their list of admired persons is influenced by their knowledge and perceptions of successful persons and most adolescents are attracted to the glamour surrounding performing artistes and sportsmen and women.

Sociologists and psychologists emphasize the role of socialization and environment in aggression and violent behaviours in humans. A number of sociologists believe that crime is socially constructed, that social factors determine who and what are considered criminal. Labelling theorists, phenomenologists and Marxists all agree this is the case (11). Taylor, Walton and Young (1973) proposed that crime needs to be examined from different angles (12). Erickson claims that no other time in one's life is it as important to define oneself *vis-a-vis* the society at large as in adolescence. One of the greatest developmental tasks of this stage is to forge a sense of identity. It may be possible therefore to design interventions that are so wide ranging that they affect every aspect of the spheres of influence in the life of Jamaican adolescents. This is necessary in order to alter the socialization process in order to break the cycle of violence. Conventional behaviour change programmes that have targeted adolescents in Jamaica have focussed primarily on at-risk youth and the problems associated with their behaviour. Programmes focussed on problematic behaviours and associated risk factors. A recent paradigm shift has led to more focus on resiliency, which is the ability to successfully adapt to and recover from adversity. An increasing body of research in psychology, psychiatry, and sociology is showing that most people, especially the young, can recover from risks, stress and trauma and experience success in life. Resiliency, however, must be nurtured or it will cease to function effectively (13).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the cliché "children live what they learn and learn what they live" is applicable here. How to teach emotional intelligence in this environment will be a serious but not impossible challenge. Having a "good reputation" was something that is valued and this phrase came up several times in the FGDs.

A comprehensive strategy is needed to assist young people, their families and communities, and the public and private sectors to make young people more resilient. Adolescents need more supervised activities and access to services that can address the effects of exposure to violence such as counselling and mental health services. They need to be taught emotional intelligence and be given greater community support and better opportunities to seek healthy lifestyles so that they can lead productive and fulfilling lives.

School/education are not necessarily seen as means to social mobility and achievement. While school is the centre of their lives, it is not regarded in a positive light by many. They desperately need for school to make them feel good about themselves as in the case of those involved in sports. This is not necessarily the fault of the school but perhaps the entire educational system.

Interventions should be focussed in all 14 parishes,

begin before age 10 years and address substance abuse. They should be designed and implemented in all spheres of life and influence including and especially parenting, media and school. In addition, there needs to be differentiation of intervention strategies by specific ages, focussing more on prevention for the younger adolescents and more on providing choices for the older adolescents. There needs to be dual focus on resiliency and risk factors which influence adolescents' behaviours. Clearly, a reduction in violence in the entire society will be most effective in reducing exposure and thus learnt violent behaviours.

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