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Disruptive Student Behavior: The Effects on Various Constituent Groups in Large Suburban School Communities

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Abstract

Disruptive student behavior in elementary school causes problems for the student, the peers in the classroom, and the teacher. There is a lack of research and understanding as to how disruptive student behavior affects other groups in the school community. This phenomenological study examined the experiences of a total of nine elementary school administrators, psychologists, social workers, and counselors to understand how their professional roles were affected by chronic disruptive student behavior. Professional coping strategies were also shared and examined by the participants. Findings reveal that school leaders need to develop formal structures to help themselves and their staff cope with chronic disruptive student behaviors. Results from the data were used to make recommendations for policy and professional development to help constituents in school communities understand the effects of chronic disruptive student behavior and to find ways to alleviate stress caused by disruptive student events. The recommendations of this study include revised school practices to dedicate time for staff to debrief and plan after behavioral events, the inclusion of a behavioral specialist at each elementary building, and continued study of this phenomenon.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my family, friends, and cohort members who have supported me on this journey. Your encouragement and love have kept me going.

To my mother and father, I want to thank you for instilling in me a thirst for knowledge. I would not be where I am without you both. You were my angels guiding me every step of the way.

To my children, Emily and Curtis, your faith in me never wavered. You were always there to listen to me and help when I needed it most.

To my sister, Terry, and Aunt Billie, I hope that I can be as great a leader as you are teachers.

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Biographical Sketch

Christine Noeth-Abele is currently a Principal in the Webster Central School District. Ms. Noeth-Abele attended Ithaca College and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Communications in 1986. She attended Nazareth College from 1988 to 1990 and graduated with a Master of Science degree in Elementary Education. She attended the University of Virginia and completed an Education Specialist degree in Administration in 2002. Ms. Noeth-Abele came to St. John Fisher College in the spring of 2018 and began doctoral studies in the Ed.D. Program in Executive Leadership. Ms. Noeth-Abele pursued her research, "Disruptive Student Behavior: The Effects on Various Constituent Groups in Large Suburban School Communities," under the direction of Dr. C. Michael Robinson and Dr. Mary Coughlin and received the Ed.D. degree in 2020.

Abstract

Disruptive student behavior in elementary school causes problems for the student, the peers in the classroom, and the teacher. There is a lack of research and understanding as to how disruptive student behavior affects other groups in the school community. This phenomenological study examined the experiences of a total of nine elementary school administrators, psychologists, social workers, and counselors to understand how their professional roles were affected by chronic disruptive student behavior. Professional coping strategies were also shared and examined by the participants. Findings reveal that school leaders need to develop formal structures to help themselves and their staff cope with chronic disruptive student behaviors. Results from the data were used to make recommendations for policy and professional development to help constituents in school communities understand the effects of chronic disruptive student behavior and to find ways to alleviate stress caused by disruptive student events. The recommendations of this study include revised school practices to dedicate time for staff to debrief and plan after behavioral events, the inclusion of a behavioral specialist at each elementary building, and continued study of this phenomenon.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This phenomenological study examined the experiences of various constituent groups, such as school administrators, school psychologists, school social workers, and counselors, who encounter disruptive behavior in a school setting. Businesses have identified that disruptive behavior is an issue that can affect the safety of employees and customers, as well as have a negative impact on profits. Consumer-related industries have conducted research to understand the sometimes aggressive and disruptive behavior of their customers with the hope of increasing safety and customer satisfaction. The findings of these studies point to the need for the creation and enforcement of policies as well as increased training (McColl-Kennedy, Patterson, Smith, & Brady, 2009; Rhoden, Ralston, & Ineson, 2008).

Rhoden et al. (2008) examined the training of flight and cabin crews to control disruptive passenger behavior. They conducted eight, in-depth semi-structured interviews with employees whose job titles were cabin crew, flight crew, or trainer. Rhoden et al. (2008) found that the staff who had the most contact with the passengers, the cabin crew, had the least amount of training. The more the cabin crew understood about disruptive passenger behavior, the more confident they felt about their ability to effectively deal with an actual situation.

Retail and customer service industries also want to understand customer rage so that they can diffuse situations and increase customer satisfaction. Employing multiple methods, McColl-Kennedy et al. (2009) conducted three independent studies involving

656 respondents. Their study contributes to the understanding of customer rage in four ways. First, they offered insight into how customers experience emotions of anger because of service failure. Second, they identified the range of behaviors that occur after a rage episode. Third, they validated the measures of customer rage emotions, and finally, they defined the relationships between the different forms of customer rage, expressions, and behaviors. McColl-Kennedy et al. (2009) posited that retailers could use this information to identify early signs of customer rage and develop strategies to interrupt and prevent the progression of such rage.

Hospital settings, particularly emergency departments and operating rooms, also experience disruptions. Research has shown the need to understand the causes of aggressive and disruptive behavior so that education and policy can be developed to inform practices to mitigate disruptions in any setting where the behavior occurs (Angland, Dowling, & Casey, 2014; Cochran & Elder, 2015; The Joint Commission, 2008; Srisarajivakul et al., 2017; Walrath, Dang, & Nyberg, 2010; Wolf, Delao, & Perhats, 2014).

Wolf et al. (2014) concluded that disruptive, aggressive, or violent behavior in the workplace can be considered a crime that requires targeted responses from employers, law enforcement, and the community. They conducted a qualitative, descriptive exploratory study, where 46 written narratives were submitted by emergency room nurses describing the disruptive and sometimes violent experiences they had while providing care at work. Three themes emerged: environmental, personal, and cue recognition. The environmental theme describes the physical environment and the institutional culture of the emergency room. The personal theme describes the impact of the event on the nurses

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regarding job performance, coping strategies, and feelings about the aftermath. The third theme of cue recognition describes the events leading up to the violent events. Wolf et al. (2014) found that developing a clear understanding of the lived experiences of nurses provides information that may have implications for staff development, practice, and policy.

In another qualitative study of violence and aggression in emergency departments, Angland et al. (2014) interviewed 12 nurses working in an emergency department in Ireland. They defined violence and aggression as verbal and nonverbal and physical and nonphysical aggression and hostility. The goal of the study was to understand the nurses' perceptions of the factors that cause violence. The nurses identified two major causes for violence. The first cause was environmental factors, such as overcrowding and long wait times. The second cause involved communication factors, such as relationships and attitude of the staff. Even though the sample was small, Angland et al. (2013) recommended ways to improve communication and possible aggression by installing electronic boards that display wait times, videotaping a patient's journey through the emergency room visit, and employing a communications officer.

Patients are not the only individuals who display aggressive and disruptive behavior in the hospital setting. In July of 2008, The Joint Commission published a *Sentinel Event Alert* in response to the growing awareness of how disruptive behavior negatively impacts patient care. Walrath et al. (2010) conducted a qualitative study of hospital nurses' experiences with disruptive behavior. The study included 96 registered nurses who participated in focus group discussions. The four primary concepts: triggers, disruptive behaviors, responses, and impacts, were organized into a conceptual

framework to provide structure for future research. Triggers were both intrapersonal, how a person's internal state can affect a situation, and interpersonal, which involves teamwork and communication (Walrath et al., 2010). The disruptive behaviors were categorized as incivility, psychological aggression, and violence, with most behaviors being described as psychological aggression. The responses were coded as positive, negative, or none. The impact category addressed who was most directly affected by the aggression: the nurse, the patient, or the nursing unit. The focus group participants described how disruptive behavior had an emotional toll on its targets as well as those who witnessed it. Walrath et al. (2010) concluded that negative behaviors can erode the values and resources of an organization.

Srisarajivakul et al. (2017) conducted an observational study of 12, first-year gastroenterology fellows' abilities to address disruptive behavior during patient procedures. The authors also underscored the need for training regarding how to address negative behaviors. Two different scenarios were designed to assess each fellow's ability to effectively communicate, engage in teamwork, and handle disruptive behavior. A checklist was used to rate their performances. The fellows also completed a self-assessment survey. The participants rated themselves as high, when it came to communication and team leadership skills, even though they did not score well according to the checklist used by the rater. The gaps in communication skills and leadership pointed to the need for improved training (Srisarajivakul et al., 2017).

Cochran and Elder (2015) researched the effects of disruptive surgeon behavior in the perioperative setting. Effects included a shift in attention away from the patient, increased surgical mistakes, deterrence of others' interest in pursuing surgical careers,

and a diminished respect for surgeons. They conducted semi-structured interviews with 19 people having different occupations in the perioperative setting. Using a grounded theory methodology, Cochran and Elder (2015) developed a model to explain disruptive and aggressive surgeon behavior. The first theme that emerged from their research described the negative consequences, including how the interviewees were personally affected, and the second theme described the coping strategies that the participants used to navigate difficult situations while attending to their professional responsibilities. Cochran and Elder (2015) suggested that their model could be used to develop policy and practices to reduce disruptive surgeon behavior. It might be that the Cochran and Elder model has implications in other settings such as education.

Problem Statement

Consumer industries and hospitals are not the only settings that are being held increasingly accountable for safety and results. Schools are as well. The job of creating safe and effective schools for all students is a challenge for educational leaders. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), passed in 2015 requires schools to provide access to a well-rounded, safe, healthy, culturally responsive, and supportive learning environment (ESSA, 2015).

In July of 2018, the New York State Department of Education (NYSED), developed a framework for schools to support mental health well-being. The framework asserts that school climate is influenced by, and has an impact on, all people within the school environment (NYSED, 2018). The characteristics of schools and the experiences schools provide have a significant impact on student performance and behavior (Dishion & Tipsord, 2011; Thomas, Biermann, & Powers, 2011). Disruptive student behaviors

interrupt the learning process and thus can have an impact on students' academic performance and emotional well-being (Blank & Shavit, 2016; Wood, Spandagou, & Evans, 2012). The negative impact of disruptive students on peers is a stressor for students and teachers (Nash, Schlosser, & Scarr, 2016). Muratori et al. (2015) found that chronic disruptive behaviors interrupt the learning of an individual, class, and school, and it can prove dangerous to those near the aggressive behavior.

General education classrooms are being chosen more frequently as the delivery model for special education services (Duvall, Jain, & Boone, 2010). The percentage of included students, some of whom are classified with emotional and behavioral disorders, has increased. In 2005, the percentage of included students spending at least 80% of their day in a general education setting had risen to 54.2% (Duvall et al., 2010). By 2016, the number of classified students spending at least 80% of the day in a general education setting was 63% (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2018). In examining heterogeneous classrooms, a negative achievement effect was found for students who were exposed to classmates with emotional and behavioral disorders (Gottfried & Harven, 2015). Therefore, Blank and Shavit (2016) recommended leaders in education need to understand the implications of including disruptive students in the general education setting given that class disruptions tend to interfere with the learning experience. Research has shown that students with emotional and behavioral disorders tend to have a chain of disruptive behaviors, meaning that the teacher and student had numerous exchanges (Oolup, Brown, Nowicki, & Aziz, 2016). Behavior problems in the classroom often require an intervention from the teacher. This reduces instructional time for the rest of the class (Oolup et al., 2016).

Approximately one in five youth experience mental health challenges, which include externalized behavior problems or internalized problems like anxiety (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018; Ghandour et al., 2018; Powell, 2018: Weist et al., 2018). The social-emotional, behavioral, and mental health patterns of children impede academic performance for students in the classroom (Abry, Bryce, Swanson, Bradley, & Fabes, 2017; Blank & Shavit, 2016).

Other than classroom teachers affected directly by disruptive behavior, the literature does not contain an examination of the impact that children who exhibit chronic and disruptive behaviors have on the school community, including administrators and staff. To fill this gap in the research, this study conducted interviews to gather and document the degree of impact that children who exhibit chronic disruptive behaviors have on the school community. Data was gathered to understand the coping strategies that the participants employed to help alleviate the professional impact of chronic disruptive events on the constituent groups of a school community.

Theoretical Rationale

The theory of disruptive physician behavior has been studied over the past 30 years, since the 1990s (Cochran & Elder, 2015; Manderino & Berkey, 1997; Pfifferling, 1999; Rosenstein, 2002). Research regarding disruptive physician behavior began in the 1980s with nurses studying and reporting on the phenomenon. A 1985 study of nurses in Texas reported that 77% of nurses and nurse managers experienced verbal abuse, and 82% of staff nurses reported experiencing verbal abuse (Cox, 1991). A follow-up study, completed in 1989, showed that 97.1% of nurse managers and 96.7% of staff nurses experienced verbal abuse (Cox, 1991).

Manderino and Berkey (1997) added to the body of literature regarding disruptive physicians by identifying the coping strategies that nurses used when dealing with such abusive and disruptive behavior by physicians. A study by Pfifferling (1999) explored the consequences associated with disruptive physicians on groups of people who interacted with them such as other staff, peers, and administrators.

More recent studies by Rosenstein (2002), Rosenstein and O'Daniel (2006; 2008), and Bradley et al. (2015) support the findings that chronic disruptive surgeon behaviors affect members of the peri-operative team and negatively impact the quality of patient care. Using a grounded theory methodology and semi-structured interviews, Cochran and Elder (2015) used the theory of disruptive surgeon behavior to develop a conceptual model. They used the model to examine the effects of disruptive surgeon behavior. The interview question that Cochran and Elder asked participants was, "Tell about a time when you experienced disruptive surgeon behavior." Participants, in answering the question, also shared their strategies for coping even though there was no question specifically asking them to do so (A. Cochran, personal communication, February 8, 2019). Cochran and Elder (2015) suggested that the model could be used to understand the negative impact of disruptive behaviors and to counter the effects through the development of training programs to help improve the surgical environment.

Grant and Osanloo (2014) underscored the importance of having a theory to structure the foundation of a research study. The theoretical framework of disruptive surgeon behavior provides a structure and focus for researching disruptive student behavior. The research of Cochran and Elder (2015) can be replicated in the educational realm to examine the effects of disruptive student behavior on various constituent groups

in suburban school communities. This study sought to understand how the roles of school leaders, school psychologists, school social workers, and counselors were affected by disruptive events. This study also sought to identify the strategies school leaders, school psychologists, school social workers, and counselors employed to mitigate the effects that disruptive events have on their professional role.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine how students' disruptive and aggressive behavioral events affect various members of school communities. Disruptive behaviors are defined as verbal or physical aggression toward peers or adults (Duvall et al., 2010). Studies show that disruptive behaviors affect students in the classroom socially, emotionally, and academically. To date there are few, if any, studies that examine the effects that disruptive student behavior has on other constituent groups within a school community, such as school leaders, school psychologists, school social workers, and counselors (Appendix A). Drysdale and Gurr (2011) believed that effective school leaders inspire confidence in the school community through knowledge and informed practice. Using this current study to better understand how disruptive and aggressive students affect various constituent groups within school communities may help schools provide support to members of their school communities when they are confronted with disruptive and aggressive behaviors. The knowledge gained can be used to examine how school resources can best be utilized to mitigate the professional impact of chronic disruptive student behavior.

Research Questions

Given the lack of research on the effects disruptive students have on various groups of a school community, the research questions used for this study were:

1. From the perspective of elementary school administrators with at least 3 years of experience, how do disruptive student events impact their role as an administrator?

2. From the perspective of elementary school administrators identified in Research Question 1, what strategies do they employ to mitigate the impact of disruptive student events on their role as an administrator?

3. From the perspective of school psychologists, school social workers, and counselors with at least 3 years of experience, how do disruptive student events impact their role in supporting the school?

4. From the perspective of the school psychologists, school social workers, and counselors identified in Research Question 3, what strategies do they employ that mitigate the impact of disruptive student events on their role in supporting the school?

Potential Significance of the Study

This study adds to the existing literature regarding the effects that disruptive student behavior have on the school community. While there is an abundance of research regarding how disruptive student behavioral events affect the teachers, classmates, and the students themselves, there has been little focus on how this phenomenon affects school leaders and the staff who help support the mental health needs of the building occupants including school counselors, social workers, and psychologists.

Disruptive student behavior is defined as external behavior displayed by a student, and they can include verbal or physical aggression toward peers or adults. Disruptive student behavior interferes with the learning process and can negatively impact students' academic performance and emotional well-being (Blank & Shavit, 2016; Wood et al., 2012).

The job of school leaders is to create a safe, healthy, culturally responsive, and supportive learning environment (ESSA, 2015). Effective school leaders inspire confidence in the school community through knowledge and informed practice (Drysdale & Gurr, 2011).

Definitions of Terms

Disruptive Behavior – external behaviors exhibited by a student that interfere with the learning or work environment. Disruptive behavior can include verbal or physical aggression toward peers or adults.

Emotionally and Behaviorally Disturbed – a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance:

- An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.

- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

- Emotional disturbance includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance under paragraph (c)(4)(i) of this section. Individuals With Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], 2004, Sec. 300.8 (c)(4)(1))

Chapter Summary

Disruptive and aggressive behavior is a problem for students, teachers, parents, and anyone else who is exposed to the behavior (Muratori et al., 2015). Research has been conducted to examine the impact that disruptive behavior has on the disruptive student, the classroom teacher, and the other students in the class (Basch, 2011; Pettit & Dodge, 2003). To date, there is a lack of research on the effects that disruptive and aggressive behavior have on other members of a school community such as school leaders, school psychologists, school social workers, and school counselors.

The theory of disruptive surgeon behavior, designed by Cochran and Elder (2015) and used in perioperative settings, served as a framework for examining the impact that disruptive and aggressive student behavior has on other members of a school community. This research adds to the body of knowledge that exists regarding the impact of disruptive and aggressive student behavior. The hope is that the findings from this research can be used by school leaders to develop professional learning, improve practice, and establish policy. Chapter 2 presents, analyzes, and synthesizes prior research. Research design and methodology are discussed in Chapter 3. The results of the

research are presented and discussed in Chapter 4, and Chapter 5 presents a discussion of

the findings and recommendations based on the analysis of the data.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction and Purpose

This descriptive phenomenological study examined the experiences of school administrators, school psychologists, school social workers, and school counselors who encountered disruptive behavior within the school setting. The review of the literature begins with a summary regarding how disruptive student behavior impacts relationships with peers and with teachers. Next, the literature review shows that disruptive student behavior impacts academic performance for the disruptive students and their classmates. The review of the literature sheds light on the emotional experiences of disruptive students, their peers, their caregivers, and other people. Finally, the literature review presents information regarding how school leaders impact the learning environment.

Reviews of the Literature

Disruptive behavior and school relationships. Many children enter school without the social and emotional skills to be successful (Whitted, 2011). Studies have been conducted to explain the effects of disruptive behavior on peers, teachers' perceptions of disruptive behavior, and theories regarding causes of externalizing behavior (Nash et al., 2016; van den Berg & Stoltz, 2018). Children are being suspended for disruptive behaviors as early as preschool (Bulotsky-Shearer, Dominguez, & Bell, 2012; Campbell, Speiker, Burchinal, & Poe, 2006; Gilliam, 2005). The research shows that a positive classroom environment is a strong predictor of academic success and social/emotional well-being affects the development of the student-teacher and student-

student relationships (Abry et al., 2017, Buyse, Verschueren, Doumen, Van Damme, & Maes, 2006; Duvall et al., 2010; Gottfried & Harven, 2015).

There has been a growing interest in examining peer influences in educational settings as the number of children attending public preschool programs increases (Bulotsky-Shearer et al., 2012). Using data from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), Campbell et al. (2006) tracked patterns of aggression from toddlerhood to age 9 to predict social and academic success through age 12. They used maternal ratings to track aggressive behavior in 1,195 children followed from birth to middle childhood. The analysis was based on having at least two out of six reports of aggressive behaviors by mothers with children between ages 24 months and 9 years. Between the ages of 9 and 12, outcome measures such as teacher rating scales of behavior, achievement testing, child self-reports, and classroom observations, were conducted. Campbell et al. (2006) found that even children with low levels of aggression that continued until age 9 had some social and academic difficulties in school. Children with moderate and high stable aggression trajectories had the most problems with academic achievement, social skills, and peer relations. They suggested that their data points to the need for early screening and prevention programs for toddlers who exhibit even low levels of stable aggression.

An examination of preschool classroom behavioral context and school readiness by Bulotsky-Shearer et al. (2012) looked for associations between early problem behavior and school readiness for low-income children. The three dimensions of school readiness included cognitive skills, social engagement, and coordinated movement. Existing research suggests that higher peer aggression in the classroom is associated with

increased rates of peer rejection, bullying, and risk for expulsion (Thomas, Bierman, & The Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2006). Bulotsky et al. (2012) hypothesized that both child-level and classroom-level problem behavior contributes to school readiness outcomes. The participants in the study were 3,861 Head Start children from a large urban school district located in Northeastern United States. This study used assessments to measure three child-level variables: child problem behavior, classroom behavioral context, and school readiness skills. The findings of this study suggest that overactive and underactive child-level behaviors are significantly associated with lower cognitive, social, or motor skills at the end of the year. Regarding their second research question, Bulotsky et al. (2012), again, found that classroom settings with overactive and underactive behaviors had a small but negative effect on school readiness outcomes. They suggested that future studies examine the influence of problem behavior on school readiness within specific classroom situations.

Studies show the same negative impact to be true for school-aged students. Nelson and Roberts (2000) stated that the effect of disruptive behaviors may explain why some teachers struggle with students who exhibit disruptive behaviors. Nash et al. (2016) found that there is a negative impact from disruptive students on their peers and their behavior causes stress for other students and teachers. Studies have confirmed that a child's classroom behavior is one of the strongest predictors of relationships that are formed with teachers (Buyse et al., 2008).

Research shows that teacher and peer relationships are negatively affected by disruptive behaviors (Gottfried & Harven, 2015). The Buyse et al. (2008), Dishion and Tipsord (2011), and Thomas et al. (2011) studies suggest that limiting the number of

children who exhibit aggressive and disruptive behavior in each classroom can help establish more positive teacher student interactions. Other studies suggest that strategies, such as seating arrangements, can improve peer relations and help moderate aggressive behaviors (van den Berg & Stoltz, 2018).

Buyse et al. (2008) examined how young learners with behavioral problems have a more difficult time forming positive relationships with their teacher than children without behavior problems. The researchers hypothesized that a classroom with a large percentage of students with serious behavioral issues would be damaging for the children who already exhibited high levels of negative behavior. In these cases, the teachers would have a difficult time forming positive relationships with their students because their classrooms would have multiple students with behavioral problems. The Buyse et al. (2008) study found that a teacher's rating of a child's behavior in class is a significant predictor of the relational closeness of that student with the teacher (σ^2 cons = 2.79; $p < 0.001$). Classrooms that had several students exhibiting external behaviors had the highest rate of relational conflict between the teacher and student (σ^2 cons = 0.93; $p < 0.001$). The Buyse et al. (2008) research suggests that while aggression may encourage more aggression, especially in younger children, aggressive behaviors can be reduced with positive and supportive teacher-student interactions and positive student-to-student interactions.

The relationship between a teacher and a child matters when it comes to school adjustment (Baker, 2006). Baker's study (2006) examined how the quality of the relationship between the teacher and a child contributed to school adjustment. She hypothesized that the teacher-child relationship quality would contribute to the positive

adjustment of the child to elementary school. The sample included 1,310 kindergarten through fifth grade students from a small city in the Southeastern United States. A total of 68 teachers also participated in the study. Items from the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (SRTS) were used to measure relationship quality. Behavior was measured using the Behavior Assessment System for Children-Teacher Rating Scales for Children (BASC-TRS). Two standardized assessments were used to measure student achievement in first through fifth grades. As Baker (2006) hypothesized, regression analysis of the data show that closeness in the teacher-child relationship had a low-moderate association with reading grades, positive work habits, and social skills, including externalizing behaviors. A relationship characterized by conflict showed negative correlations for those school outcomes. Having a warm, trusting relationship with teachers may help children with significant behavior issues positively adapt (Baker, Grant, & Morlock, 2008).

In a randomized controlled trial of 1,559 students, in 68 classrooms, within 28 schools, van den Berg and Stoltz (2018) studied different seating arrangements to see if children with behavioral issues could become more well-liked and better behaved. Using pretests and posttests, they examined the effect that disruptive students had on the classmates seated next to them. Students who teachers rated as displaying behavioral concerns were called *target students*. The teacher ratings showed that the behavior of the target students improved—regardless of whether they sat with an assigned student or a random student, $F(1,198) = 5.34$, $p = .02$, $n^2 = .03$) and $F(1,198) = 3.12$, $p = .08$, $n^2 = .02$, respectively. The study also found that classmates who sat next to a disruptive student did not become more aggressive, but their social status did decrease, $F(1,218) = 8.98$, $p < .01$, $n^2 = .04$ (van den Berg & Stoltz, 2018).

Preexisting high levels of aggression in children can be exacerbated by school characteristics. A study by Thomas, Bierman, Thompson, and Powers (2008), looked at the combined impact of child vulnerabilities and poor school context. Child vulnerabilities were defined as experiences of home aggression, problems with attention, and a lack of appropriate social problem-solving skills. The quality of school context was measured by rates of poverty as indicated by the percentage of children receiving free and reduced-price lunches. Classroom climate was also used to determine school context. Trained observers conducted classroom observations to examine classroom management practices, teacher involvement, and student engagement. The participants in this study were 755 children from 194 first-grade classrooms in four different geographic locations. Using descriptive statistics and preliminary correlation analysis their findings were consistent with previous research that aggressive disruptive behavior at home is predictive of aggressive disruptive behavior in first grade. The findings also suggest that aggression tends to increase if other conditions, such as inattention or poor classroom context, exist (Thomas et al. 2008).

Continuing with research on aggressive student behavior, Thomas et al. (2011) examined the placement of children with preexisting high levels of aggression in first-grade classrooms. The participants included 4,179 children in 214 first-grade classrooms. Using teacher ratings of aggression at the end of the kindergarten year, they hypothesized that first-grade teachers would find it more difficult to create a positive learning climate when faced with several incoming students with known behavioral issues. Thomas et al. (2011) found that the baseline level of aggression among incoming students significantly predicted the level of classroom aggression in first grade ($r = .26$, $p < .01$) and the quality

of the classroom climate in first grade ($r = .19$, $p < .05$). Thomas et al. (2011) suggested that students who are known to display aggressive behavior should not be placed in a classroom together to reduce the chance of having negative peer-to-peer and teacher-to-student dynamics.

The research of Dishion and Tipsord (2011) examined what they called the *peer contagion effect*. Peer contagion is defined as the mutual influence process that occurs between an individual and a peer. The researchers suggested that the characteristics of schools and the experiences that schools provide, such as behavior intervention programs, have a significant impact on what the researchers called the *rate of peer contagion*, especially for children in kindergarten and first grade. The researchers also suggested that there should be more studies conducted that examine positive peer influence to see how negative outcomes of peer influence might be decreased (Dishion & Tipsord, 2011).

Disruptive behavior and academic achievement. Like Dishion and Tipsord (2011), Neidell and Waldfogel (2010) studied cognitive and noncognitive peer effects. Cognitive effects include the ability to learn and reason. Noncognitive effects are social and behavioral skills. They examined the effects of peer enrollment in preschool on children's outcomes in kindergarten. They focused on kindergarteners because the students were new to their environment, thus reducing a bias of tracking and sorting based on performance and behavior. A fixed effect, value-added approach was used to analyze the data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, which contained information on 17,401 children (Neidell & Waldfogel, 2010). In terms of academics, the spillover effect from attending preschool had a significant positive effect on math and reading scores for the students that persisted through third

grade. The spillover effect is defined as the skills that are learned that carry over from one year to the next. Regarding noncognitive development, disruptive peer behavior in preschool did not appear to spill over to the peers' behaviors, but classroom disturbances caused by unruly students had a negative spillover impact on reading and math scores as measured in kindergarten only.

The same data set from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class of 1998-99, was used by Georges, Brook-Gunn, and Malone (2012) to examine the association between attention, aggressive behavior, and achievement at both the child and classroom level. They performed a cluster analysis using the K-means algorithm method. For each cluster solution, they used multivariate analysis variance. They found that children with both behavior and attention problems fell 7 percentile points below other students without behavior and attention problems in mathematics (effect size $= -.18$, $p <$ .0001) and 6 percentile points below in reading (effect size $= -.16$, $p < .0001$). The achievement gap for children who just exhibit behavior problems was not as large as those with both behavior and attention problems. The gap was 2 percentile points in mathematics (effect size $= -.06$, $p < .0001$) and 3 percentile points in reading (effect size $= -.07$, $p < .0001$). At the kindergarten classroom level, Georges et al. (2012) analysis showed that a child's test scores were unaffected by the presence of a disruptive peer. They suggested that this finding may only be true for kindergarten and that children in later grades may be more affected as class size and academic demands increase.

Significant empirical evidence exists that shows a negative correlation between disruptive classrooms and student achievement (Blank & Shavit, 2016). A quantitative study by Blank and Shavit (2016) concluded that reports of disruptive behavior had a

negative impact on test scores of students when controlling for other classroom and student characteristics. The study examined the standardized achievement tests of 2,422 students in Grades 5-9 in Israeli middle schools. In the study, the dependent variable was student achievement as measured by standardized tests. The main independent variable in the Blank and Shavit (2016) study was student reports of disruptive behavior in the classroom. Using a 5-point scale, the researchers had students answer questions that asked about the behavior in their classroom. Using multilevel regression analysis, they found that students' reports of classmates' disruptive behavior correlated negatively and significantly with test scores (–3.357, $p < .001$). Blank and Shavit (2012) suggested the importance of an orderly classroom learning environment because a disruptive climate can hinder learning and lower the achievement of an entire class.

Gottfried and Harven (2015) explored classroom composition to see if gender had a moderating effect on the academic consequences of having a classmate with an emotional and behavioral disorder. The goal of their study was to advance strategies that might support the achievement gains of all students in inclusive settings. Citing previous studies on the supportive nature of girls in early schooling years, Gottfried and Harvin (2015) hypothesized that the protective nature of girls would weaken the negative effect of having a student with an emotional and behavioral disorder and the academic achievement of other students. Using a longitudinal data set from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) that consisted of 12,980 complete observations of students in kindergarten and first grade, Gottfried and Harvin (2015) compared classroom gender composition and teacher reports of disruptive classmates to achievement in reading and mathematics. Their findings support that having a classroom that is at least 50% female

can minimize the effects that one student with an emotional and behavioral disorder can have on reading achievement. They found that a classroom that is at least 55% female can offset the negative effects that one emotionally and behaviorally disruptive student can have on math achievement (Gottfried & Harvin, 2015).

Duvall et al. (2010) conducted an observational case study of academic engagement and inappropriate behaviors of four typical students under three conditions: (a) when a disruptive student was in a classroom with an aide, (b) when a disruptive student was in a classroom without an aide, and (c) when both the disruptive student and the aide were absent from the classroom. Duvall et al. found that when a disruptive student was in the room with no paraprofessional (aide), the academic responses, the ability to engage and answer questions, were the lowest for all students. When an aide was in the room with a disruptive student, the academic responses increased, and the highest level of academic response occurred when both the aide and the disruptive student were absent from the room (factors of 1.5 and 2.0, respectively). This finding is important because appropriate academic responses correlate with academic gains. Duvall et al. (2010) also found that inappropriate behaviors decreased when just the disruptive student was out of the room, and when the disruptive student and aide were out of the classroom inappropriate behaviors also decreased (factors of .41 and .49, respectively).

Classroom climate and school safety have a direct impact on teaching and learning (Cahu & Quota, 2019). Cahu and Quota's (2019) quantitative study examined the impact of poor school safety and classroom disciplinary climate on student performance in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Using data from the Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study (PIRLS), the Trends in

Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and the Program for International Student

Assessment (PISA), Cahu and Quota (2019) found a correlation between students'

reports of disruption and their academic achievement. The more disruptions, the lower

the scores. These findings support the researchers' assertion that school safety and

classroom climate have a direct effect on teachers' ability to teach and students' ability to

learn (Cahu & Quota, 2019).

The relationship between aggressive behavior and achievement is complex. Stipek

and Miles (2008) conducted a longitudinal study that examined different explanations for

negative associations between aggression and academic achievement. They tested three

hypotheses with growth curve analysis using hierarchical linear modeling. The first

hypothesis was that changes in achievement predict changes in aggression. The second

hypothesis was that changes in aggression predict changes in achievement. The third

hypothesis was that the effect of aggression on achievement is mediated by the teacher-

student relationship. Data was collected from 403 low-income children in kindergarten

and first grade. The children were followed through the fifth grade.

Stipek and Miles (2008) found that change over time in achievement was a

marginally significant predictor of change in aggression ($\beta = -.01$, $p \leq .10$). An increase

in achievement was associated with a decrease in aggression. When examining if

aggression has an effect on achievement, their results show that an average increase in

aggression was significantly associated with a decrease in achievement ($\beta = -.09$,

$p \leq .05$).

Stipek and Miles (2008) divided the examination of the teacher-child relationship

into three parts. The first part indicated that an increase in child aggression was

significantly associated with an increase in conflict ($\beta = .31$, $p \leq .001$). When conflict increased engagement decreased ($\beta = -.07$, $p \leq .001$). There was a significant association between increased engagement and increased achievement ($\beta = .19$, $p \leq .001$). The Stipek and Miles (2008) findings were consistent with their hypothesis that the teacher-child relationship can help mediate the effects of aggression on achievement.

The research suggests that behavior matters when it comes to forming relationships with teachers and peers (Abry et al., 2017; Blank & Shavit, 2016; Busye et al., 2006). The research also shows that relationships are important when it comes to academic achievement (Duvall et al., 2010, Gottfried & Harven, 2015; Stipek & Miles 2008). Studies suggest that there are some benefits to classroom and school wide programs aimed at improving behavior (Nelson & Roberts, 2000; Pillay, Dunbar-Krieg, & Mostert, 2013; Oolup et al., 2016).

School and classroom behavior programs. While Duvall et al. (2010) examined specific classroom conditions, Veerman, Luman, and Oosterlaan (2018) examined the combined effect size of classroom behavioral programs. Their meta-analysis of 19 randomized controlled trials of behavioral classroom programs found that such programs have small beneficial effects on disruptive behavior ($d = -0.20$), and on-task behavior ($d = 0.39$). The Veerman et al. (2018) meta-regression analysis showed that programs were effective for a wide range of students—regardless of age or gender. Results also showed small effects on three samples of severity of behavior: at risk (six studies, $d = -0.26$, p < 0.01), clinical (seven studies, $d = -0.19$, $p = 0.010$), and community (four studies, $d = -0.15$, $p = 0.04$). Programs that were shorter in duration were shown to be more effective than longer programs. The findings confirm that whole-class behavior

intervention programs can help reduce disruptive behavior and increase on-task behavior (Veerman et al., 2018). The research shows there is evidence that school-wide and classroom behavior programs can help alleviate some disruptive behaviors, but for the most extreme behavior cases, other supports are needed (Abry et al., 2017; Nash et al., 2016).

Nash et al. (2106) conducted two studies to understand teachers' perceptions of disruptive behavior; their familiarity with attachment theory, which is the ability to develop relationships; and its implications for effective behavior management. While their work agrees with the Veerman et al. (2018) meta-analysis and the need for behavior intervention programs, Nash et al. (2016) also suggested the need for a more intensive program for the most troubled and disruptive students. In study one, a 12-item postal questionnaire was sent to 460 primary and secondary schools in the United Kingdom. Of the 460 postal questionnaires, 104 surveys were completed and returned. Nash et al. found that most respondents had not received training in attachment theory, nor did they regard it as relevant. The second study also used a postal questionnaire. Nash et al. (2016) asked respondents if they thought that the students were in control of their behavior. Almost 86% of primary teachers and 88.9% of secondary teachers responded that students were *mostly* or *totally* in control of their behavior. Nash et al. (2016) argued that while clear and consistent behavior management programs have benefits for most children, the programs do not meet the needs of the most complex behavioral students. They recommended that key staff be trained in therapeutic approaches to assist such students and the teachers who worked with them (Nash et al., 2016).

Benner, Nelson, Sanders, and Ralston (2012) conducted a randomized-controlled trial to assess the effectiveness of a primary-level behavior intervention program aimed at reducing externalizing behavior. Externalizing behaviors were defined as those that distract others such as tantrums, noise making, aggression, and refusals. There were seven treatment schools ($n = 44$ children) and six control schools ($n = 26$ children) selected. All students in the 13 schools, kindergarten through third grade, were screened using the Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders. Teachers in the treatment schools were trained to use a five-component behavior intervention program. Holding all other events constant, results of the program showed significantly lower levels of problem behavior in the treatment schools, averaging 5.10 fewer problem behaviors at final observation compared to the control schools (Benner et al., 2012). Of note, is the positive effects of the intervention were smaller in schools serving a higher portion of students with a low socioeconomic status and for students who had higher levels of baseline aggression.

Basch (2011) conducted a review of the literature pertaining to aggression, violence, and the achievement gap of urban youth. He stated that the review of the literature shows that disruptive behavior both in and out of the classroom affects teaching and learning for all students. The Basch (2011) recommendation is that schools have policies and programs that are aimed at addressing and reducing aggressive behaviors. These programs include establishing an environment that promotes safety and prevents violence, implementing a curriculum that helps students learn and apply healthy choices, providing counseling and mental health support, and working to build and integrate community partnerships (Basch, 2011).

Research shows that classroom behavior programs have been shown to reduce the effects of aggressive behavior (Benner et al., 2102; Veerman et al., 2018). Program effectiveness depends on a variety of factors including the level of poverty, level of baseline externalizing behaviors, duration of the program, and fidelity of implementation (Benner et al., 2102; Veerman et al., 2018).

Perceptions and emotions of children and caregivers. Classmates and teachers are not the only ones affected by disruptive students. The disruptive students and their caregivers are also impacted by negative behaviors. Studies of students' perceptions of aggressive and disruptive behavior helps educators understand the language and emotions of students (Oolup et al., 2016). Research also shows that for disruptive students to be successful, they must learn the appropriate social skills, and they must be supported in the classroom setting (Pillay et al., 2013; Poulou, 2014). Understanding the perspective of families and how they are affected by their child's behaviors can help build positive communication and partnerships (Parker at al., 2016).

Oolup et al. (2016) examined children's experiences and the understanding of anger from the child's perspective. Five themes emerged from semi-structured interviews of 10 focus group sessions: (a) a child's understanding of anger, (b) origins of anger, (c) consequences of anger, (d) regulation and resolution of anger, and (e) relations with others. The conclusion that Oolup et al. reached is that adults need to use a more child centered approach when discussing and guiding children through their expressions of anger. Understanding and using the language that a child would use is a helpful tool to address the effects of experienced and expressed anger. If a child is frustrated

academically, he or she may become angry or aggressive. The expression of anger could lead to social isolation that may cause further aggression (Oolup et al., 2016).

Parents' and caregivers' perspectives are often unheard when it comes to excluding their children from school when they display disruptive or aggressive behavior. Parker, Paget, Ford, and Gwernan-Jones (2016) conducted semi-structured interviews with 35 parents of 37 children ages 5 to 12, from Southwest England. Their research discovered three main themes when it came to excluding children from an activity, from the classroom, or from the school for behavior: (a) the complex journey of exclusion, (b) the continuum of coping, and (c) wider implications. Parker et al. (2016) explained the complex journey as representing difficult times for the families and the child, because parents felt they had little to no control over the situation. Some of the exclusions were formal in nature such as suspension. Others were informal such as being left out of an activity. The continuum of coping described how the parents viewed their child's ability to deal with the exclusion. Many parents felt that their child could not control their behavior and the schools were unable to identify why their child was struggling (Parker et al., 2016). Finally, wider implications examined parental emotions and implications for the future, as well as practical and financial tolls. Parents reported feeling helpless and stressed because they did not know how to help their own child. The stress of leaving work to pick their child up unexpectedly was another burden (Parker et al., 2016).

Garrick-Duhaney and Salend (2000) conducted a literature review of parental perceptions of inclusive educational placements. The articles selected for inclusion had a sample of family members of children with or without disabilities, and the researchers had data relating to the attitudes, reactions, experiences, or perceptions of the families to

inclusive educational settings. The findings of the studies they reviewed showed that the attitudes and perceptions of parents of children with and without disabilities, regarding an inclusive education, varied. A majority of parents of children without disabilities overcame their initial doubts that their children would emulate poor behaviors and receive less teacher time. Parents of children with disabilities shared the same initial concerns. The majority supported inclusion because they believed it promoted peer acceptance and would help their children socially, emotionally, and academically (Garrick-Duhaney & Salend, 2000).

Environment can play a major role in determining a child's behavior (Poulou, 2014). In a mixed-methods study, Poulou (2014) used Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model and combined three theoretical approaches to examine teacher-student interactions, students' social skills, classroom context, and students' emotional and behavioral difficulties to see which, if any of the factors, were the most important in determining a student' emotional and behavioral struggles. The Poulou study included 962 participants from a Greek elementary school in the students' fifth and sixth year of schooling. The study replicated the advantages of positive teacher-student interactions in students with emotional and behavioral disorders. However, the most robust finding was that it was important for students to possess social skills to deal with their emotional and behavioral difficulties (Poulou, 2014).

Pillay, Dunbar-Krige, and Mostert (2013) conducted a study that also discusses the importance of making sure that students possess social skills and feel supported when reintegrating into a mainstream setting. Their study on the reintegration of learners with behavioral, emotional, and social difficulties identified three main themes: (a) emotional

experiences, (b) relationship experiences, and (c) the reintegration process. Students

(N = 13) identified with behavioral, emotional, and social difficulties were asked to write

a life essay about their reintegration experiences, and they were asked to participate in

unstructured interviews. Each of the three themes the researchers identified had a

promotive side and a risk side to the reintegration experiences. An example of a

promotive factor is the feeling of pride for being able to be reintegrated. Feelings of

anxiety and loneliness are examples of the risk side of the reintegration process.

Reintegration of students often fails due to a lack of support for the student during the

process. The results of the study were used to develop a proposal of policy and practice

of reintegration into the mainstream setting (Pillay et al., 2013).

Helping children develop an understanding of the psychological problems of

peers can help build positive relationships and assist with integration (Hennessy, Swords,

& Heary, 2007). Their review of the literature found that children with behavioral

difficulties are often excluded by their peers especially if peers view the behavior as

deliberate. Hennessy et al. (2007) suggest the need for further research on children's

understanding of psychological problems and mental health,

There are few qualitative studies that examine the academic impact of students

who display disruptive behavior (Oolup et al., 2016; Parker et al., 2016; Pillay et al.,

2013; Poulou, 2014). Most of the studies discuss the phenomenon of disruptive behavior

and they examine the perceptions of people affected by disruptive behavior (Pillay et al.,

2013, Oolup et al., 2016). The studies discuss the importance of understanding

expressions of anger and providing support for children who display disruptive behavior

(Pillay et al., 2013, Oolup et al., 2016). Family support is also suggested (Parker et al., 2016).

School leaders and accountability. School principals are an important influence on the environments they lead (Holden, 2018). Yet, given the complex nature of the role of the principal, it is unclear as to what factors of leadership in schools are associated with improved student outcomes. The data available for identifying important skills that a principal should possess are scarce and it is difficult to separate the effect of a principal from the effects of other school characteristics (Grissom & Loeb, 2011).

In an overview of the literature concerning successful school leadership, Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008) outlined seven claims that are supported by empirical evidence. The first claim is that school leadership has the second-most influence on student learning, behind classroom teaching. This assertion is based on evidence gathered from qualitative and quantitative studies that leadership acts as a catalyst for building capacity that exists in an organization. The second claim is that almost all successful leaders build vision, understand and develop people, build collaborative cultures, and provide support for teachers. The third claim is that successful leaders are sensitive and responsive regarding how they apply their leadership practices. The fourth assertion is that school leaders influence their staff by developing supportive working conditions that increase motivation and commitment. The fifth claim is that when leadership is distributed and shared, students make the most gains. Some methods of distributing leadership are more effective than others is the sixth claim. Finally, Leithwood et al. (2008) found that research supports that a leaders' personal traits, such

as confidence and efficacy, have an indirect but significant influence on student learning and achievement.

There are many tasks in a school leader's day that can impede a principal from being a strong instructional leader. Horng, Klasik, and Loeb (2010) researched the connection between how principals spend their time and their schools' effectiveness. A team of researchers followed 65 elementary, middle, and high school principals in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools and collected detailed information on the use of their time at 5-minute intervals. The 43 tasks they observed were broken into six categories:

1. administration,

2. organization management,

3. day-to-day instruction,

4. instructional program,

5. internal relations, and

6. external relations.

They found that the principals spent most time, 30% of the school day, on administrative tasks, such as managing school schedules, managing student services, and managing student discipline. They spent about a fifth of the day on organizational tasks such as managing budgets and staff. The least amount of time for the principals was dedicated to instruction-related activities. When comparing schools with low accountability grades, as assigned by the state of Florida, Horng et al. (2010) found that principals in the lowest performing schools spent more time on administrative tasks. The principals in schools with higher accountability grades spent more time on day-to-day instruction tasks than those in schools with lower grades.

Horng et al. (2010) then used information from staff and parent surveys to assess perceptions of school satisfaction and safety. When this information was correlated with the time-on-task information, it was found that the schools where principals spent more time on organization management as opposed to administrative tasks, had greater gains in test performance over the 3 years of the study. Also, staff were more likely to rate the climate as positive and improving, and parents were more likely to perceive the school as safe and secure when principals spent more time on organization management. Horng et al. (2010) found that time spent on organizational management activities is associated with positive school outcomes.

Hallinger and Murphy (2012), in their review of the evolution of instructional leadership as a practice, examined the barriers that principals face when it comes to being instructional leaders. The researchers' definition of a successful instructional leader is someone who identifies a direction for the school, motivates staff, and coordinates school and classroom programs and strategies aimed at improving teaching and learning. The day-to-day job of managing a school can distract from the focus of being an instructional leader (Horng et al. 2010; Leithwood et al. 2008). Principals make approximately 1,200 decisions every day. A principal, to be an effective instructional leader, must be intentional and find ways to use those decisions to promote teaching and learning (Hallinger & Murphy, 2012).

Examining how principals view their effectiveness of the tasks they perform on a day-to-day basis, as opposed to the frequency of tasks a principal performs, was the focus of a quantitative study conducted by Grissom and Loeb (2011). A survey using a 4-point scale was given to 314 principals in the Miami-Dade Public School District. The same

survey was also given to assistant principals to rank the effectiveness of the principal. Grissom and Loeb found that the self-assessed effectiveness in organizational management was positively correlated to school performance. Organizational management included items such as developing a safe school environment, dealing with concerns from staff, hiring personnel, managing resources, and maintaining facilities. The study concluded that traditional instructional leaders are unlikely to experience school improvement unless they increase their organizational management skills (Grissom & Loeb, 2011).

A case study conducted by Hoppey and McLeskey (2013) followed Tom Smith, who, at the time of their study, was a successful school principal in rural Florida. In the era of high-stakes accountability, an effective school leader is someone who nurtures their staff members and shields them from external pressures (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013). Approximately 18% of the students in the Hoppey and McLeskey (2013) study were classified with a disability. Given that principal Tom Smith had been at the helm, the school had been consistently ranked as a high-achieving school by the state of Florida. Students with disabilities who met proficiency standards exceeded state and district averages in reading and math scores across grade levels (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013).

Principal Smith saw that his primary role was to remove obstacles and lubricate the human machinery. Hoppey and McLeskey (2013) identified three characteristics of Smith's leadership. The first characteristic was that Smith cared for his staff. Smith listened to and trusted his teachers. The second characteristic was that Smith acted as a buffer from the external pressures of state scores and worked with his staff to develop an

accountability system that better fit the needs of the school. The staff used data to define their goals and standards, and they worked collaboratively to achieve their goals. The third characteristic Smith believed in was teacher leadership and growth. Principal Smith viewed his role as a coach and mentor and believed in helping people to grow. Hoppey and McLeskey (2013) posited that in an era of high-stakes accountability, an effective school leader is someone who nurtures his or her staff and shields them from external pressures.

Leadership, systems, and teams. It is the job of a leader to create a sustainable system by building relationships. A leader needs to understand the complexities of human relationships and be able to lead people to see over the horizon. In an effective system, most of the work is made at the point of service. The point of service is where strategy and work come together. A leader needs to ensure that the purpose of the system is in line with the needs of the community it serves (Porter-O'Grady & Malloch, 2018). Leaders of service systems need to enable decision-making to happen as close to the point of service as possible.

In health care mortality and morbidity meetings are an example of a point of service and teamwork practice. The aim of theses meetings is to improve patient care by allowing for open discussion about decision-making and technical aspects of surgery in a safe, supportive environment. The surgeons are the people responsible for what happens at the point of service. Therefore, it is critical for them to take part in these meetings. (Sinitsky, Gowda, Dawas, & Fernando, 2019).

Just as in health care, school leaders need to provide safe environments to examine practices that impact student behaviors and academics at the point of service.

Rafoth and Foriska (2006) examined how an administrator can organize a school that promotes leadership among the faculty by creating an environment that supports and involves staff in decision-making while protecting them from outside risks. Administrative support of problem-solving teams, such as an instructional support team (IST), is an example of a system that supports teacher leadership. IST is an example of a point of service system where teachers, administrators, and mental health staff work collaboratively in a safe environment to plan for the delivery of service for students that need extra support academically or behaviorally (Kovaleski & Glew, 2006).

Northouse (2019), describes transformational leadership as a leader's ability to develop and motivate followers to act in ways that support the greater good. Transformational leaders are effective at working to build trust and foster collaboration. They create a vision and act as role models to support teams that contribute to the growth of the organization.

School psychologists, social workers, and counselors. School mental health programs have been shown to improve academic performance and social and emotional outcomes for students. Working together, school psychologists, counselors, and social workers play a pivotal role in the delivery of school-based mental health services (Spleet, Fowler, Weist, McDaniel, & Dvorsky, 2013). Traditionally, the role of the school psychologist has consisted of heavy psychological assessment caseload (Hosp & Reschly, 2002). However, school psychologists possess the knowledge and skills to help deliver school-wide, tiered mental health programs if given the time and support by building leaders (Spleet et al., 2013).

Social workers are another group of professionals that possess the skills to deliver response to intervention (RTI) mental health services (Avant, 2014). Such interventions are designed to minimize social and academic concerns. The job of the social worker has evolved from providing a link between the home, the school, and the community, to one of deliverer of mental health instruction at all levels of intervention. Trends show that social workers provide counseling, conduct family and community consultations, provide staff and administrative support, and facilitate in the delivery of life skills and character education programs. Combining RTI responsibilities with the traditional roles can create a work imbalance (Avant, 2014). Building leadership needs to create an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a school social worker to effectively utilize their skill set and create a balanced approach to the delivery of mental health services (Allen-Meares, 2006).

Historically, defining the role of school counselors has been unclear because of a lack of consensus on the part of the members of the American School Counselors Association (ASCA) as to what their priorities should be (Dekruyf, Auger, & Trice-Black, 2013). Since 2010, ASCA has worked to make it the objective of school counselors to help students overcome barriers to learning (ASCA, 2012b, p. xi). Out of concern for the growing number of mental health needs of K-12 students, ASCA developed a model identifying the role of school counselor as both educational leader and mental health professional. School counselors have been shown to make a difference in students' lives especially when they have a manageable caseload (Reback, 2010; Carey & Dimmit, 2013). School counselors and administrators, working together, can develop a plan that is most appropriate to support students' needs (Dekruyf et al., 2013).

Chapter Summary

This phenomenological study examined the experiences of school administrators, school psychologists, school social workers, and school counselors who encounter disruptive behavior in the school setting. The review of the literature began with a summary of how disruptive student behavior negatively impacts relationships with peers and relationships with teachers. Disruptive student behavior also negatively impacts academic performance for the disruptive students and their classmates. Evidence exists that suggests positive teacher-child relationships help to moderate the effects of disruptive behavior**.** There is also evidence that school-wide and classroom behavior programs can help alleviate some disruptive behaviors, but for the most extreme behavior cases, other supports are needed. A review of the literature shed light on the emotional experiences of disruptive students, their peers, and their caregivers. To date, there are few, if any, studies that examine the effects that disruptive student behavior has on other groups in the school community such as administrators, school psychologists, social workers, and counselors.

Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Introduction

The job of creating safe and effective schools for all students is a challenge for educational leaders. The characteristics of schools and the experiences schools provide have a significant impact on student performance and behavior (Dishion & Tipsord, 2011; Thomas et al., 2011). The negative impact of disruptive students on peers is a stressor for students and teachers (Nash et al., 2016). Chronic disruptive behaviors interrupt the learning of the individual, the class, and the school, and it can prove dangerous to those near the aggressive behavior (Muratori et al., 2015).

Disruptive behaviors are defined as verbal or physical aggression toward peers or adults (Duvall et al., 2010). Studies show that disruptive behaviors affect students in the classroom socially, emotionally, and academically. To date, there are few, if any, studies that examine the effects that disruptive student behavior has on other groups in the school community such as administrators, school psychologists, social workers, and counselors. Having a better understanding of how disruptive and aggressive students affect various constituent groups in the school community may help school leaders provide support to members of the school community when confronted with disruptive and aggressive behaviors.

Currently, the literature does not contain an examination of the impact these children who exhibit chronic and disruptive behaviors have on the school community (Appendix A). The research design for this study was a qualitative descriptive

phenomenological analysis. The phenomenological approach sought to describe how an individual describes, remembers, and talks about an experience. The assumption is that there is an essence to the experience that is shared with others who have had the same experience (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Descriptive phenomenology was selected as the methodology so that the data gathered from the interviews could be used to tell how the participants in the study made sense of their experiences with chronic disruptive student behavior. Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) stated that the analytic process begins with each case but then shifts to examine the similarities and differences to account for patterns of meaning. The goal of phenomenological interviewing was to get as precise a description as possible of what participant experienced (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). The research questions used in this current study:

1. From the perspective of elementary school administrators with at least 3 years of experience, how do disruptive student events impact their role as an administrator?

2. From the perspective of elementary school administrators identified in Research Question 1, what strategies do they employ to mitigate the impact of disruptive student events on their role as an administrator?

3. From the perspective of school psychologists, school social workers, and counselors with at least 3 years of experience, how do disruptive student events impact their role in supporting the school?

4. From the perspective of the school psychologists, school social workers, and counselors identified in Research Question 3, what strategies do they employ that mitigate the impact of disruptive student events on their role in supporting the school?

Research Context

The research was conducted in two large suburban school districts in the Finger Lakes region of New York that, at the time of the study, had at least four elementary schools. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2017), the profile of the districts was predominantly White (89-91%) with enrollments ranging from approximately 4,600 to 6,100 students. Graduation rates were 94% or higher. In 2017, the median household income was approximately $80,000 a year, and these districts were labeled as *average needs* by New York State (NYSED, 2018).

The schools in this study had student enrollments ranging from 470-650 elementary students. The number of full-time teachers in the schools ranged from 41 to 48. Student-to-teacher ratios ranged from 11:1 to 15:1. Every school had a principal, at least one school psychologist, and a social worker. Some schools had assistant principals, counselors, and behavioral specialists.

Suburban schools were selected because the The New York State Education Department's Uniform Violent and Disruptive Incident Reporting System, known as VADIR (2019) shows that urban schools in the Finger Lakes area reported a consistently higher rate of violent and disruptive behavior for the years including 2015 to 2017. Increases ranged from two to 10 times as many reported disruptions. The VADIR data

also suggest an increasing trend of violent and disruptive behavior in suburban districts from the 2015-2016 school year to the 2016-2017 school year. (NYSED, 2019).

Research Participants

The phenomenological approach of this study sought to illustrate how an individual describes, remembers, and talks about an experience. The assumption is that there is an essence to the experience that is shared with others who have had the same experience (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The VADIR (2019) provided data that suggest there are several suburban schools in the Finger Lakes area that qualified as potential research sites where school administrators, psychologists, social workers, and counselors experienced disruptive student behavior. The two districts that were selected reported an increase in the number of minor altercations, offenses involving threats, and other disruptive behaviors.

For this research study, the sample was selected purposively so that the research questions were meaningful to the participants. The participants for this study included elementary school administrators, school psychologists, school social workers, and counselors in two large suburban school districts in Finger Lakes region where there was an increase in the occurrence of chronic disruptive events. These two school districts reported an increase in disruptive behaviors on the VADIR from the 2015-2016 school year compared to the 2016-2017 school year.

The participants had to have at least 3 years of experience in their role at the time of the study. The minimum number of 3 years' experience was selected so that the participants had time to adjust to their roles. A participant's adjustment to the professional role was desired so that the participant did not feel overwhelmed by the

newness of their job. Three years of job experience also provided the participants with a basis of comparison for the phenomenon being researched. Participants were contacted via email or phone to determine if they were interested in participating in the research study. Participants were also asked if they had experience with disruptive student behavior.

A challenge of phenomenological research is selecting participants who have experienced the phenomenon being researched (Creswell, 2007). Mertens and Wilson (2019) recommended a sample size of at least six participants when conducting a phenomenological study. Interviewing approximately two individuals from each of the various constituent groups of school administrators, school psychologists, school social workers, and counselors provided enough information for the researcher to reflect on the experiences they related to chronic disruptive student behavior (Wertz et al., 2011). The participants received a $10 gift card to Barnes & Noble.

Preliminary permission to conduct research was granted by the superintendents of the two selected districts (Appendices B and C). Formal letters were sent to the superintendents of the districts once the Institutional Review Board (IRB) granted approval (Appendices D and E). Emails explaining the topic and purpose of the study were sent to possible participants who fit the selection criteria for elementary school administrators, school psychologists, school social workers, and counselors. Informed consent was obtained from the participants who agreed to be interviewed (Appendix F). The participants were informed that their identities would remain confidential. The interviews referenced in this study do not contain any personal identifying information.

Instruments Used in Data Collection

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews offer an opportunity to construct knowledge (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Interviewers should have superb listening skills and the ability to probe for elaboration. The purpose of the interviews was to describe the meaning of the phenomenon that these individuals shared. Semi-structured interviews allowed for data to be gathered quickly. Follow-up and clarifying questions were asked immediately (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Interview questions (Appendix H) were asked to understand how the participants' professional roles had been affected by chronic disruptive behavior. The interview questions were piloted to see if they would elicit information that could be used to answer the research questions. The questions were piloted with two elementary principals, an assistant principal, a social worker, and a school psychologist, participants not in this current study.

Prior to interviewing, the researcher wrote about her own experiences with the phenomenon to gain clarity of her own preconceptions (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Those who conduct qualitative research are a part of the process and product. Researchers need to be reflective about their experiences and what they have learned from others (Wertz et al., 2011). Interviewers need to allow the interviewee time to recall specific memories in a detailed narrative. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) described this type of interviewer as a miner waiting to uncover knowledge from the subject's experiences. The researcher let the participants describe events as freely as possible so that the themes of the lived, daily experiences of the participants could be understood from their perspective.

Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

Phenomenological interviewing is made up of in-depth interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The interviews focused on the individuals' past and present experiences with the phenomenon. The interviews also sought to understand if chronic disruptive student behavior had affected the participants' professional roles. Another area for questioning was what coping strategies had the participants being interviewed employed.

Once the participants agreed to be a part of the study, interviews were scheduled. The interviews lasted approximately 1 hour. The interviews took place at a time that was convenient for the interviewee. The interviewee had the option of selecting a virtual or phone interview. Before beginning with the interview questions, icebreaker questions were asked to help put the interviewee at ease and to establish a rapport. Follow-up or probing questions were asked based on the interviewee's responses to the interview questions. The interviews were recorded to ensure accuracy of the information. Immediately following each interview, the researcher reflected and wrote down initial impressions (Saldaña, 2016). Each transcript was uploaded using a professional transcription service within 24 hours of the interview.

Analysis is a cyclical process that takes hours. Reading, rereading, and listening to the transcripts was the first step. The next step was to reflect upon and reduce the information gathered to get at the essence of the phenomenon that was being studied (Wertz et al., 2011). The research questions were epistemological in nature, seeking to understand *how* the subjects were affected by disruptive student behavior. Therefore, a descriptive coding method was used during the first cycle of coding (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Descriptive coding is an appropriate method for beginning qualitative

researchers. Analysis and coding of the interviews continued until all possible meanings had been explored and the phenomenon was able to be described (Saldaña, 2016). For this study, data from the participants was examined for common themes among experiences and coping strategies. An examination of the comments helped the researcher see if there were any emergent themes from the participants interviewed (Smith et al., 2009).

The audio recordings of the interviews were listened to multiple times. The first time the interviews were just listened to. Next, they were compared to the transcript for accuracy. The interviews were then listened to again to begin focusing on meaning. Initial notes were made as categories emerged. This process was followed for each interview. As interviews were completed and reviewed, they were then compared for commonalities among categories and themes. The notes, categories, and themes that emerged were peer reviewed. Field notes were taken immediately following each interview. They were reviewed as well.

All electronic materials relating to the study are being maintained in a private, password-protected computer. Electronic files are encrypted with identity codes. All other materials are securely stored in unmarked boxes that are being kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home. All materials will be kept for a period of 3 years after publication of this work. After 3 years, the paper files will be shredded by a professional company, and the electronic files will be purged from the hard drive.

Summary

Phenomenological interviewing is a qualitative approach that seeks to investigate and understand what and how something is experienced (Wertz et al., 2011). Descriptive

phenomenological analysis was selected for this study because the researcher wanted to explore and understand the effects of chronic disruptive behavior on various constituent groups in suburban school communities. The focus was on the meanings that the events had for people, and how they used those meanings to guide future actions (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Chapters 4 provides the findings of this study based on the interviews and analysis. Chapter 5 makes recommendations for professional practice as well as it discusses areas for further research.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological study was to examine the perception of the impact that disruptive student behavior had on the roles of various constituent groups in suburban school settings. The study also examined the coping methods that the various groups employed to help mitigate the impact on their roles. The results addressed the studies research questions:

1. From the perspective of elementary school administrators with at least 3 years of experience, how do disruptive student events impact their role as an administrator?

2. From the perspective of elementary school administrators identified in Research Question 1, what strategies do they employ to mitigate the impact of disruptive student events on their role as an administrator?

3. From the perspective of school psychologists, counselors, and social workers, with at least 3 years of experience, how do disruptive student events impact their role in supporting the school?

4. From the perspective of the school psychologists, counselors, and social workers identified in Research Question 3, what strategies do they employ that mitigate the impact of disruptive student events on their role in supporting the school?

The interview questions (Appendix G) were asked to understand the perspectives of school employees who directly dealt with and whose roles were impacted by disruptive students' behaviors. The questions were also designed to understand how the various school professionals coped with the impact of the behaviors. This chapter presents the findings of each research question by the categories and themes that emerged from the experiences and perceptions of the participants. The chapter concludes with a summary of the results.

The research was conducted in two large suburban school districts in Finger Lakes region that, at the time of the study, had at least four elementary schools with enrollments ranging from approximately 4,600 to 6,100 students. These districts were labeled as *average needs* by New York State (NYSED, 2018). These two school districts reported an increase in disruptive behaviors on the VADIR from the 2015-2016 school year compared to the 2016-2017 school year. The individual schools in this study had student enrollments ranging from 470-650 elementary students.

This study included nine participants in total, and the sample consisted of two principals, two assistant principals, two social workers, two counselors, and one psychologist. The participants represented five different elementary schools. All the participants met the inclusion criteria of having at least 3 years of experience in their role at the time of the study and having had experience in dealing with disruptive student behaviors.

The interviews were conducted either using the virtual platform, Zoom, or by telephone. All the interviews were recorded, professionally transcribed, and reviewed for

accuracy. Field notes were made and reviewed by the researcher. The findings were peer

reviewed by a fellow cohort member.

Data Analysis and Findings

The findings from this study are organized by the categories and themes that arose

from the administrative participants regarding Research Questions 1 and 2. Next, the

categories and themes that came from the mental health staff of school social workers,

counselors, and a school psychologist regarding Research Questions 3 and 4 are

presented. The first part of interviews was designed to seek information about the

experiences the participants had with disruptive student behavior and how they felt those

experiences affected their role. Table 4.1 records the years of experience of the

administrators in their roles at the time of the study, and it identifies the grade levels and

enrollments of the participants' school buildings.

Table 4.1

Administrative Participant Summary

Participant Pseudonym Role Gender	Years of Experience in Education Years in Current Role	Grade Level Enrollment
P1 Principal Male	28 years 11 years	K-5 500-600 students
P2 Principal Male	29 years 20 years	K-5 400-500 students
AP1 Assistant Principal Male	18 years 3 years	3-5 600-700 students
AP2 Assistant Principal Male	15 years 6 years	K-2 600-700 students

Research Question 1. The data collected for Research Question 1 establishes one category: effect on professional life. In this first category, two themes emerged: disruption of responsibilities and routines, and managing frustrations (Table 4.2). In the second category, professional practices, three themes emerged: using formal team structures, partnerships with outside agencies and parents, and relationships with students and staff (Table 4.2).

Category 1, effect on professional life, describes the participants' perceptions that disruptive student behavior had on their role as a school leader. The first common theme the participants described is that disruptive student behavior impacts the time they can spend to complete their daily work, which was a part of running an elementary school. The second theme the participants described is that they had to manage the frustrations of staff members who were affected by the disruptive student behavior.

Table 4.2

Summary of Categories and Themes of Administrators from Research Questions 1 and 2

Categories	Themes
Effect on Professional Life	Disruption to Responsibilities and Routines
	Managing Frustrations
Professional Practices	Using Formal Team Structures
	Partnerships with Outside Agencies and Parents
	Relationships with Students and Staff

Assistant Principal 2 (AP2) felt that he must manage everything. He described his time as a teacher and how his mother, also a former teacher, reminded him not to forget

what it was like to be in the classroom. When it came to interacting with disruptive

students and the effect it had on his role as assistant principal he stated,

> Obviously, the first thing that comes to mind, to be honest with you, is that it
>
> [disruptive behavior] certainly takes myself away from the other components of
>
> building leadership. You know, the visibility piece. The having time to reschedule
>
> observations or conversations, or meetings. So, obviously, that is probably the top
>
> one that happens. Sometimes that response to support can last from a couple of
>
> minutes to, you know, a whole day or days. So, I think that is the impact it
>
> [disruptive behavior] has is on visibility and support of all those other components
>
> of quality-building leadership.

Principal 1 (P1), described the struggle of managing his day. He seemed

overwhelmed by all that he must accomplish on his own:

> Being the only administrator in the building, doing upwards of 60 observations a
>
> year, then preconference and the post conference on each of them. Then take the
>
> time to write it up. So, it is a juggling match. It is a matter of "okay, I have got to
>
> deal with this kid for the next hour," so there is an hour worth of stuff I have got
>
> to take home. I am spending between 2 and 6 hours a week with these kids. It
>
> might not seem like a lot, but it is definitely at least double what it used to be.

Past experiences seemed to influence how P2 viewed the severity of disruptive

behaviors. "I don't think that the behaviors have increased. In the city, I would be taking

knives off of third graders." He did concede that the time it takes to manage disruptive

behaviors is an issue that takes away from the day-to-day work.

The regular day stops. A severe behavior is a crisis. So, whatever your intended

agenda was for the day, everything has to stop, and you have to attend to the

crisis. So, what I find is that it takes you away from what you were trying to do. I

find it goes in the debit column and, you know, you have to make that up

someplace else, and do that later in the day, the week, or later in the month, but it

does not go away. It just gets pushed back to another time.

Assistant Principal 1 (AP1) noted that while his days seemed calmer this year,

compared to last year, he still dealt with disruptive students every day. "There seems to

be a shift in intensity. Everything goes from slow to 1,000 miles per hour in less than a

second." He reported that there are little things that happen on a daily basis, which he

viewed as a part of the job of assistant principal, but "When it is a bigger disruption, now

your whole day is gone." When describing his experiences with disruptive student

behavior, he used the word shift several times during the interview, suggesting a

difference than what he had been faced with in the past.

The second theme that arose from the conversations with the leaders was how

they had to managed the frustration of others who were also affected by disruptive

student behavior including students, staff, and parents. AP1 stated,

It gets really hard when everybody knows it is not the right setting for the child,

and there is nothing you can do about it. You have to go through the whole

process. That is when it is tough and really, really draining on everybody.

He also shared that there had been grievances filed by the teachers' union on

behalf of the teachers who felt that disruptive student behavior was impacting not only

their ability to teach but their safety as well as the safety of the other students.

Three out of four administrative participants noted an increase in frequency and intensity of the behaviors. P1 expressed that he was seeing more and more disruptive behaviors, especially at the primary level, than ever before. AP2 felt that the frequency and duration of disruptive behaviors had increased over the course of the years. These outbursts were stressful for the students and staff who witnessed them.

> It is a daily call, well multiple daily calls, to respond to students who are having trouble self-regulating whether it is in the classroom, the cafeteria, on the playground, or in the hallway. It is a daily part of my job. It can go from lower level things like tapping pencils to higher levels such as tipping over chairs and fleeing the classroom. It can lead to the highest level, which is the full destruction of the classroom and physical interactions toward staff members.

P1 discussed the frustration he saw when students were disruptive. He described the stress that his staff was feeling. He also mentioned the frustration of parents who had a child in class with the student who was displaying disruptive behaviors.

> I see and manage teacher frustration. Teachers feel that with these students the other kids are getting cheated. I think, more and more, we are seeing parents of other children being vocal and communicating their displeasure about a particular child to the teacher, which further stresses the teacher out.

School settings can also exacerbate the frustrating effects of disruptive behaviors. P2, the administrator in an open school where there are no walls separating classrooms, stated,

Behaviors can lead to a whole bunch of things. We are an open school, so

behaviors do not just affect the classroom. So, I think kids screaming at the top of

their lungs is going to be seen and heard by potentially 100 other kids.

The administrative participants described how disruptive student behaviors had

impacted their role as building leaders, including completing required aspects of the job,

such as observations. Managing the frustrations of others who witness and are affected by

disruptive student behaviors has been added to their list of job duties. None of the

administrators had suggestions regarding how to increase the time they had available to

complete their regular job duties.

Research Question 2. Research Question 2 sought to understand what

professional coping strategies school administrators are using to help mitigate the impact

of disruptive student behavior. The data collected from Research Question 2 established

the category of professional practices. Three themes emerged from this category: using

formal team structures, partnerships with outside agencies and parents, and relationships

with students and staff (Table 4.2). The theme of using formal team structures refers to

how building leaders accessed already existing teams to help develop plans to support

students who are displaying disruptive behaviors. The second theme, partnerships with

outside agencies and parents focused on using resources that the districts had available to

support building teams. Relationships with students and staff was the third theme. All of

the participants shared their perceptions of the importance of having supportive

colleagues.

The first theme from Research Question 2 was using formal team structures. AP1

discussed how his building's mental health and support teams changed their RTI and

Instructional Support Team (IST) process. "When we see these behaviors over and over again, we plan our faculty meetings around the common themes so teachers can talk about how they are handling the disruptive behaviors from the minimal ones to the bigger ones." AP1 described how the staff feels better when they talk about what is happening and feel that they are being heard.

Relying on a team approach to work with a disruptive student was the way that P2 coped professionally. "I try to have a team approach, using mental health staff, counselors, psychologists, and social workers. Not just for dealing with the unsafe behaviors, but [we are] starting to use the mental health staff to build those replacement behaviors." Having teams in place to teach social-emotional learning lessons and develop plans for students and staff is helpful.

AP2 discussed how the addition of a behavioral specialist has helped the team proactively teach self-regulation strategies to all students. When disruptive behaviors do occur, his team uses a tiered approach when responding. If the classroom teacher needs assistance, they call the psychologist, social worker, or behavioral specialist. If further support is needed, then an administrator is called. After an incident, the team supporting the student comes together. "Professionally, we make sure we are bringing everyone back together. We are having opportunities to debrief. We are having opportunities for people to be open and honest. Then we are making sure to acknowledge that."

The team approach to carefully placing students helps alleviate some of the problems associated with disruptive student behavior. AP1 discussed how he and his principal team together and spend a lot of time on class placement so some of the behaviors can be separated. He and his principal were responsible for all student

placements. As an administrative team, they sat with each teacher to gather information on each child. They then use a tool called, *Class Creator,* to code student information and develop profiles to assist with placement. Careful class placement can help mitigate the impact of disruptive students.

Partnering with outside providers and parents is the second theme under professional practices that was perceived to help mitigate impact. Both districts had partnerships with outside behavioral health agencies. These agencies work with the schools to provide support to staff, students, and families. P1 shared how his staff had been working with an outside agency to help staff understand stress and trauma in children.

> We have been working with the Children's Institute at all levels. You can see it
>
> more and more in primary students. The stress level and how they give up on a
>
> task or show frustrations. So social and emotional learning practices are
>
> paramount in allowing kids to succeed and thrive.

The teachers have been trained to provide direct instruction on social-emotional learning to all students.

AP1 discussed how having a partnership with an outside behavioral agency sometimes made the work easier. "They come in and help with functional behavioral assessments and behavior intervention plans." Outside agencies also provide another perspective and opinion to the parents. Partnering with families and outside agencies to put supports in place for children is another part of the job for P2.

> There seems to be a cycle. You know, which kids are going to require your
>
> attention very early in the school year. They are generally the kids that are sent to

the office pretty quickly. You try and work with the parents, document, and move

to more formalized supports, which could be special education or a 504 [plan for

a person with a disability] down the road.

He felt that the time it takes to build relationships with families and various

providers is worth the effort when it makes a difference for the child. Working with

families and outside agencies is an important component when trying to ensure that

students are getting the support that they need, even if it means placement in a more

restrictive environment.

AP2 shared his experience with a structured debriefing process with the help of an

outside agency. He was skeptical about asking his staff to take even more time to work

through the difficulties they experienced with a student who displayed a high degree of

disruptive behaviors. However, he found that the time spent helped his staff heal.

We had a really awesome process after a really difficult situation with a particular

student. We brought in an outside counselor and we did six, 1-hour sessions to

deal with the impact that supporting that student had on the individuals on the

team. We really went through trauma therapy.

The third theme, relationships with students and staff, is another avenue that the

administrators used to professionally cope. The administrative participants all shared that

they took the time to build positive, trusting relationships with staff and students. They

reported having strong relationships with staff that they can rely on helps during a time of

crisis. Building relationships with students can help minimize the duration of disruptive

behaviors.

Trusting relationships with colleagues was perceived to be key to dealing with disruptive student behavior before, during, and after the crisis. AP2 felt that teamwork is an important part of being able to cope with disruptive student behavior. "What I do to cope professionally is to find ways, as a team, to surround and support that child, and come back together and talk and debrief. Honesty was also an important factor in a relationship for AP2.

People need to be open and honest. If you are emotionally drained, and you need to tap out, your job is to tell us, and we will find a way to respond. Making sure that people know that we are here to support that child, but within that process, there are times when we need to ask for a break.

P1 shared that he relied on his colleagues to be sounding boards. "Luckily, we have a tight-knit crew of colleagues. We are very open and share. I have colleagues that I can vent to in a professional and personal way. I seek feedback about what we can do to lessen the stress." He relied on his staff for support.

Daily debriefing with his principal is how AP1 coped:

I have a really nice relationship with the principal. We talk things out and make sure we are in a good place for the night. The following day, we have a plan moving forward if there are some of those more significant behaviors.

Visibility was important to AP2.

It is tough being a teacher. I see myself as a teacher first. My number one goal is visibility. I do not like to only be seen when an issue arises. My goal is to be seen more often when things are going well in the school.

AP2 wanted to build positive relationships with students and staff during the calm times. P1 believed in taking the time to build a personal relationship with disruptive kids. Spending time talking and eating lunch together was a part of his strategy.

> I think it is taking the time to get down to a more personal level with kids instead of going the punitive route. I have tried to, over time, really get to know them as a person and try to find out what the root of the problem is and trying to figure out what it is that is making them act like this. Is there some need not being fulfilled? It does take away from other things I need to do, but I feel like I am making a true direct personal connection with that kid.

P1 enjoyed the feeling of satisfaction that he got when a student returned several years later to thank him for taking the time to get to know them.

All the administrative participants described how their roles had been impacted by disruptive behaviors. The biggest impact was the disruption to their regular job duties and routines. They also felt the impact of the time that it takes to work with disruptive students and the teams of people working to support them.

The participants also described strategies and structures they have used to cope professionally with varying degrees of success. Relying on already existing teams to help mitigate the effect of disruptive students was one consistent theme. Cultivating strong, trusting professional relationships with staff, students, and outside agencies was the second consistent theme. However, none of the participants was able to identify a professional coping strategy that increased the amount of time they could spend working on their regular responsibilities such as observations.

Research Question 3. Research Question 3 sought to understand the impact that disruptive student behavior had on the roles of social workers, counselors, and psychologists in supporting the school. Table 4.3 records the roles and years of experiences of the participants. It also records the grade levels and enrollments of their buildings. The participants all responded that they perceived that disruptive student behaviors have increased in frequency, intensity, duration, or a combination of all three. The participants described disruptive behaviors ranging from minor things, like refusing to complete work and difficulty transitioning from one activity to another, to major disruptive behaviors such as elopement, self-harm, destruction of a classroom, and aggressive behavior toward staff. Some of the participants referred to disruptive behavioral events as a crisis.

Table 4.3

Support Staff Participant Summary

Participant Pseudonym Role Gender	Years of Experience in Education Years in Current Role	Grade Level Enrollment
C1 Counselor Female	25 years 23 years	K-5 500-600 students
C2 Counselor Female	14 years 13 years	K-5 400-500 students
SW1 Social Worker Female	13 years 11 years	3-5 600-700 students
SW2 Social Worker Female	35 years 32 years	K-2 600-700 students
SP1 School Psychologist Female	20 years 3 years	3-5 600-700 students

The data collected for Research Question 3 established the category, impact on work day (Table 4.4). Two themes emerged: disruption to schedule and routines and, amount of time and effort (Table 4.4). Disruption to schedules and routines describes the way the participants perceived disruptive student behaviors impact their day. The theme of time and effort describes the participants feelings of being overwhelmed by the amount of time and work that a behaviorally disruptive child required.

Table 4.4

Summary of Categories and Themes of Constituent Groups for Research Questions 3 and 4

Categories	Themes
Impact on Work Day	Disruption to Schedule and Routines Amount of Time and Effort
Structures and Strategies	Relationships, Teamwork, and Debriefing Acknowledgement and Permission

The social workers, counselors, and psychologist all reported that disruptive behaviors had impacted their role in supporting the building, especially when it came to their regular job duties. Regular routines and schedules had been disrupted and their roles having changed was a common theme (Table 4.4). Counselor 1 (C1), described how her role had been impacted. "Dealing with disruptive behaviors interferes with planned proactive school guidance activities like individual and small group counseling sessions as well as participation in meetings." There was a feeling that it is hard to get ahead of the curve.

Social Worker 1 (SW1) left her jobs at two different intensive educational environments to work in a suburban school setting. These were not the kinds of behaviors that SW1 expected to encounter. She described the impact it had on her and her role.

> You are always behind in your work and you are cancelling a lot of regular appointments or meetings with other students. I will say the struggle with that is for the Individualized Education Plan kids, they are mandated. So, I am legally mandated to see them, so I have to find the time. I have to cancel something else or cancel a student who is a general education student. You can never get your paperwork done.

C2 felt that dealing with disruptive behavior is a part of her job but that more help is needed.

> I see crisis as a big part of my role. I also kind of see myself as a Tier I instructional person. We are a Title I school, and we are understaffed. So, we advocated for another .6 social worker. We have more bodies to help now. In the past, I have missed a bunch of things with other students.

The feeling that reinforcements were needed to help support proactive work was evident.

> As things change over time, roles evolve. Social Worker 2 (SW2) explained what her role used to look like and what had shifted, given an increase in disruptive student behavior.

> Well, the first part of my career, I would do social histories and work with parents to get their child in an optimal special education program. Help folks with tangible things like community referrals, holiday assistance, food, and of course doing group and individual counseling. Now, we divide up classrooms and go in

and teach "Star Skills." In the past, push-in services were not needed. Now, I am

perpetually on call. I could have a day planned and have to put everything aside

because someone or several *someones* [emphasis added] are having a meltdown.

SW2 reported that in the past few years, her role and how things work in her

school have changed due to the increase in disruptive student behavior.

This is the fourth year where we have to have a walkie talkie to use at all times.

Myself, the school psychologist, the behavior therapist and of course the school

administrators have theirs on at all times. Each of us has a primary day where you

are the first person to respond. If have several students having disruptive episodes

simultaneously, then you need back up.

Even though the increase in intensity and frequency of behaviors impacted the

role of School Phycologist (SP), SP felt the change had been positive for her. SP was a

problem solver, who relished a challenge. However, she did acknowledge that disruptive

behaviors made it more difficult to get the work done.

We have gotten more creative and flexible in supporting kids in a general

education setting. I think the school psychologist is an important component.

Behaviors have allowed me to become more involved and use the skills that I

learned instead of just testing kids. It has broadened my role but also made it more

challenging to do some of the other aspects of my job, like getting paperwork and

testing done, or getting to see some of my other counseling kids.

The other theme that comprised the category, impact on the work day, was the

amount of time and effort that was spent dealing with disruptive student behavior

(Table 4.4). All the participants wanted to do their best to support the building, but they

struggled with not having enough time to get everything done because they were spending so much time and effort dealing with disruptive student behaviors.

SW1 described some of the recent behaviors that she had been called to assist with and how it had impacted her time.

Last year was the toughest year in the 11 years that I have been at the school. I had quite a few disruptive students. The behavior was different for each one. Sometimes things had been thrown, or papers were ripped up. Sometimes someone was crawling on the floor under desks and looked outwardly aggressive and noncompliant. I have been called when it looks like the student is going to self-harm stabbing themselves with paperclips or scissors. Sometimes, by the time I get there, the student had already left the classroom. I feel like the amount of behaviors and the number of students exhibiting those behaviors has increased. . . . The behavioral ones can sometimes take up most of your day.

SW1 then shared feelings of frustration, hopelessness, and being behind in work when dealing with disruptive student behavior. At first, she deflected from a personal response and, instead, described how disruptive student behavior impacted a colleague. Then she switched gears and described how she felt.

I guess I would say that with some of these kids, now, no matter how much time and effort you put into them, they are not responding. So, that is different for me. In the past, I have been able to create relationships. It has affected me personally. It is very stressful. You kind of feel hopeless, and I feel very ineffective. You feel like you should be able to support the students or the teacher of the classroom and you are always second guessing what you are doing. You can feel very confident,

yet nothing is working. Overall, working with disruptive students is just stressful and hard because it is very time consuming.

Counselor 2 (C2) felt that while the behaviors, themselves, had not changed, the intensity and frequency had.

I think the intensity has changed and the number of instances has changed. I mean the school that I work at, I am the full-time counselor. We have a full-time psychologist, and a part-time social worker. We are kind of maxed out. I mean, one of us is usually available to handle a crisis.

When asked about the amount of time she spent dealing with disruptive student behavior, C2 had a hard time quantifying it.

It is not every day, but there have been times that I have been with a student for 3 or more hours a day. Recently, our incoming kindergarteners go between three mental health staff. It seems to be the norm in the past 5 years.

Counselor 1 (C1) stated:

Where I used to spend 1 to 2 hours a month dealing with disruptive students, I now spend 1 to 2 hours a day dealing with them. That is probably an average because some days it is zero and some days it is more than 2 hours."

She reported that she did not have the time to process and think because she was too busy and just moves on to the next thing.

Arriving early and staying late is part of SW2's routine. She liked to have time in the building when no students were there, so she could get things done without being interrupted. She felt that she was perpetually on call.

I spend 10-20% of my day, and that is more than it used to be. I mean, either

getting the radio call, going to intervene, or filling out a behavioral referral. Then

following up with a parent, teacher, or other staff member about behaviors.

When asked to describe her experiences with disruptive student behavior, the SP laughed.

Okay. That is a tough question. I am thinking of the range of kids from the ones

with emotional needs, versus mental health needs, versus autism spectrum with

more co-morbidity there and anxiety. I have been involved in creating the

behavior plans and the crisis response. You know, restraints unfortunately, like

those kinds of things. So, you are dealing with the students directly, dealing with

the teachers, parents, and connecting them to other resources. The challenging

part, besides the time that it takes to deal with the crisis, is the real time that it

takes to create a collaboration to put things in place for the student. There is a

huge increase in the amount of time being spent on that.

That same sentiment about the amount of time and effort it took to work with disruptive

children was echoed by SW1.

It takes time to figure out how to create an effective, positive reinforcement or

behavior plan; to get them connected to community supports, and then fill out a

referral. So, a lot of people are putting a lot of time in.

The school counselors, social workers, and the school psychologist all reported

that their roles in supporting the school building had been impacted because of dealing

with disruptive students' behavior. All the participants felt that there had been an increase

in the frequency, intensity, and duration of the behaviors. Strategies for coping with the

impact of the disruptive behaviors and supporting those affected by the behaviors were also shared.

Research Question 4. Research Question 4 sought to understand what professional coping strategies the school counselors, social workers, and psychologist were using to help mitigate the impact of disruptive student behavior. The responses created the second category: strategies and structures (Table 4.4). The themes in this category include relationships, teamwork, and debriefing; and acknowledgement and permission (Table 4.4). *Structures* refers to the way that the building team came together to support the student or students who displayed disruptive behavior. Debriefing is an example of a structure. Acknowledgement and permission refer to the participants perceptions of the collegial and administrative support. All but one of the participants discussed professional strategies. The strategies they shared helped to minimize the emotional impact of disruptive student behavior for themselves and their colleagues. However, the strategies did not address how to decrease the impact on time spent dealing with behaviors.

SW2 highlighted the importance of fostering positive, strong professional relationships with her colleagues.

> We have a great building with great people. We have relationships where there is mutual trust. If you are calling me, I know that it is legitimate. I know that you have done everything you can do to help that child and you need me to help the child now.

C2 said, "I talk to my colleagues. We are kind of all there for each other, which is helpful." She shared that sometimes teachers just need a break, so being able to take the disruptive child for a walk is the least she can do.

Debriefing with their team was a structural coping strategy that many of the research participants felt was an important experience to have. SW1 expressed the need to find the time to debrief.

> I am one of those people that find it helpful and necessary after the crisis or when the day is over, to find the staff that were involved and just debrief. It is a way for all of us to come together, talk about what happened, and what we could try to do differently.

C2 felt the need for more time to debrief. "I do not take enough time to fully debrief. I think we are kind of on to the next thing, and it just wears on you after a while." She was thankful for her colleagues.

The second theme, acknowledgement and permission (Table 4.4), describes the experiences and perceptions of support from colleagues and administrators. SP relied on and appreciated the support that she received from her administration.

> I spend a lot of time with my assistant principal and principal. We just go through what is happening with each kid. I feel valued. It starts when they specifically acknowledge something, they appreciate about you . . . acknowledging that what you do matters.

SW1 appreciated her administrator. "My principal is approachable and present. To be in an environment where mistakes are allowed, gives teachers permission to screw up. To be human and have a growth mindset."

A supportive principal and assistant principal helped to make the difference for SW2. "Fostering really positive relationships with administrators and mental health staff, you know, we have a great building with great people." They took turns responding to and working with disruptive students. If she had the time to work with a student, she would. She also knew that there was support for her if she must leave to teach a class or just take a break.

The experience of having coworkers that they can rely on and trust to support before, during, and after a disruptive behavioral event was a consistent theme. While having a supportive administration and colleagues was helpful, finding the time to debrief and work collaboratively was an issue. Other structures that had been perceived as helpful in coping with the impact of disruptive students' behavior are the addition of behavioral specialists to the staff, rotating days for staff to be the first responder, and providing a safe space for the student in crisis. The participants also shared a variety of personal coping strategies including practicing yoga, mindfulness, exercise, eating chocolate, consuming alcohol, and venting to family.

Unanticipated Findings

Of the nine participants, seven offered their opinion as to why they felt there is an increase in disruptive student behavior. All seven felt that the behaviors are stemming from unmet social and emotional needs as opposed to academic needs. None of the participants suggested how to change the perceived causes and pressures that kids face.

P1, who worked in a K-5 setting, also felt that there are more of the behaviors at the K-2 level than at Grades 3-5 than ever before. "Nowadays, it is stemming from more of a social-emotional reaction to circumstances and upbringing." P1 felt that, "we have to

minimize the flood of stress that is coming into our children's lives at a younger and younger age. They do not have the coping strategies to navigate all that is flooding them emotionally."

AP2 saw a deficit in self-regulation skills. He reported receiving multiple calls every day in his K-2 building to respond to students having difficulty. He reflected on his past experiences teaching in an inclusive classroom.

Typically, the students who were disruptive were already identified as being special education students. Right now, I am thinking about the students that I am responding to, and it is more often general education students. Even when we took all the academic pieces away, that high level of anxiety and behavior still manifested. As an assistant principal in a K-2 building, self-regulation is a skill that is a deficit for many as they are maturing.

P2 felt that while kids have always had problems, today's students are faced with pressures from social media. In P2's opinion,

The kids are calling for attention, and they do it in different ways. I have seen the whole gamut over 20 years. I have seen triggers change, definitely the advent of social media and the pressures associated with that piece.

A lack of social skills and stamina is what AP1 saw as the problem.

Kids do not have the stamina. They cannot sit for quite as long as they used to. I do not know if it from watching different TV shows or games, getting instant gratification. Kids are not put into social situations enough. It is harder for them to deal with any kind of controversy.

He admitted that he has been guilty of trying to pacify his own son by distracting him with an iPad or smart phone when he was cranky or uncomfortable. SW2 shared her opinion as to why disruptive behaviors have increased.

> I think society, in general, is more stressed. Parents are more stressed. Poverty levels in our district have increased. So, I think that kids are bringing issues to school. What I have experienced firsthand was, in the past, these kids would have been referred when they first started showing disruptive behaviors. They would be put in more specialized programs. Within the last decade or so, there has been a movement to keep kids in general education classrooms.

As for things that the participants felt would help students, SW2, shared her opinion.

> My perspective is that there are three things that work best for these kinds of kids. One, good old-fashioned maturity and developmental growth. Some of these kids do not turn 5 until November 30th or December 1st. Their ability to manage and regulate themselves has to catch up. The second thing, quite honestly, is getting on the right medication. The third thing is placement. Sometimes they need a structured teacher, and sometimes they need to have someone whose expectations are open to interpretation.

> Another unexpected finding was learning that someone might like the way that disruptive student behavior has impacted their role in supporting the school. SP had been enjoying using skills that she had not had the chance to use when students were not being as disruptive.

P and AP1 both shared that while disruptive student behavior is tough, they find that they form the best relationships with these kids due to the amount of time they spend with them and getting to know and understand where the behaviors are coming from.

Notes taken right after the interviews revealed that while all the participants were more than willing to share and discuss their experiences with chronic disruptive behavior, one in particular, C2, was very eager. The interview seemed to be therapeutic for her. She shared that if I had been asking her the questions 2 weeks prior she would have been in tears. One month after her interview, she sent an unsolicited email. In it she stated,

> I thought of you and your research the other day. I think I have realized how much of an impact chronic behaviors have on me, after having been home and not dealing with them for so long. School counseling from home is, of course, very different than it is face-to-face and in person. I am feeling less stress daily, which makes me believe that my baseline stress level at school is significantly higher than it is right now. It is different stress, living during a pandemic, but there are so many things that are NOT stressful right now. I am not worried each day about whether or not I will be pulled from a classroom lesson to "go get a kid," and I am not worried about who is going to have a problem at recess or coming in from recess. I am not on "high alert" that I may be called at any moment because a student is running away or being unsafe in the classroom. I did not even know that I had those worries and was on alert until I was not. I am sure I am not alone in realizing that educators live with so much stress, often primarily because of chronic behavior problems, that we do not even realize it until it is lessened in some significant way (like a global "pause").

Some level of stress was evident during all of the participants' interviews.

Summary

All the participants in this study identified that they had seen an increase in the frequency, intensity, and duration of disruptive student behaviors. Some referred to disruptive behaviors as a crisis. The participants also identified that the disruptive behaviors impacted their role primarily when it came to the time that they spend either with the child or problem solving with their teams.

Interestingly, while time spent with the team debriefing and collaborating was perceived to the most helpful coping strategies, finding the time needed to accomplish this was a barrier. The participants described how relying on teamwork and having trusting relationships were important ways to cope with the effects of disruptive student behavior.

According to the participants, chronic disruptive student behaviors have an impact on their roles in supporting the school on a day-to-day basis. The participants shared their experiences with what helped them cope in a crisis. School leaders need to examine how their roles and those of their staff are affected by disruptive behaviors. Effective coping strategies and proactive structures also need to be examined. Recommendations and implications of this study are discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

In recent years, suburban elementary schools in the Finger Lakes region of New York have experienced an increase in disruptive student behaviors, as documented in the VADIRs (NYSED, 2019). Disruptive student behavior affects the child, their peers, and their teachers. Disruptive student behavior also hinders school leaders, psychologists, counselors, and social workers' ability to complete the daily tasks that are considered essential to their role.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine how chronic disruptive and aggressive student behavioral events affected the roles of various members of school communities. The interviews provided information on how school administrators, psychologists, social workers, and counselors perceived their roles have been affected by chronic disruptive student behaviors. The participants also shared professional coping strategies that helped to mitigate the effect of the behaviors on their role.

This study was approved by the St. John Fisher College IRB. Participation in the study was voluntary and informed consent was obtained. Data collected during the semi-structured interviews addressed the following research questions:

1. From the perspective of elementary school administrators with at least 3 years of experience, how do disruptive student events impact their role as an administrator?

2. From the perspective of elementary school administrators identified in Research Question 1, what strategies do they employ to mitigate the impact of disruptive student events on their role as an administrator?

3. From the perspective of school psychologists, school social workers, and counselors with at least 3 years of experience, how do disruptive student events impact their role in supporting the school?

4. From the perspective of the school psychologists, school social workers, and counselors identified in Research Question 3, what strategies do they employ that mitigate the impact of disruptive student events on their role in supporting the school?

Data analysis followed a cyclical process. First, the interviews were read, reread, and listened to multiple times. Next, the information was reflected upon and reduced to gather the essence of the phenomenon. Descriptive coding was used for the first cycle of coding. Analysis and coding of the interviews continued until all meanings were explored and the phenomenon could be described.

This chapter discusses the research findings and implications for school leaders. Recommendations are made and limitations of the study are also included. The conclusion summarizes the study.

Implications of Findings

This phenomenological study explored the experiences that school administrators, psychologists, social workers, and counselors have with disruptive student behavior. The participants described how disruptive student behavior affected their roles in supporting

the whole school. The participants also described how they coped with the impact of disruptive student behavior.

Effect on professional life. The category that arose from Research Question 1 was effect on professional life. This category consisted of two themes: disruption to responsibilities and routines and managing frustrations. This category and subsequent themes represent the challenges that the school principals and assistant principals faced when they experienced disruptive student behavior.

Disruption to responsibilities and routines. The administrative participants were asked to describe their experiences with disruptive student behavior. When asked how they felt disruptive behaviors affected their role, they discussed that the greatest impact was on their ability to find time to complete the required components of a school administrators' job such as observations and other administrative and organizational tasks that are part of being an instructional leader. Grissom and Loeb (2011) described organizational management as the ability to develop a safe school, deal with concerns from staff, hire personnel, manage resources, and maintain facilities.

The implications of this finding are in line with Grissom and Loeb's (2011) research. Their study concluded that schools are not likely to experience school improvement unless leaders can increase their organizational management skills. The administrative participants identified disruptive student behavior to be an inconvenience as it impacted the time, they had allotted for completion of necessary organizational management tasks.

A school leader's ability to manage instructional and organization tasks matter for school performance. Improving management skills is difficult when interruptions happen

daily due to disruptive student behavior. School leaders need to find a way to protect the time that they must perform instructional and operational tasks.

Managing frustrations. Another role that administrators had is to manage the needs of staff. Hoppey and McLeskey (2013) found that effective school leaders are individuals who nurture their staff and shields them from outside pressures. The participants reported that staff members could become stressed and frustrated when dealing with disruptive student behaviors. They said it takes time and effort to build relationships with students as well as to meet their social, emotional, and academic needs. Staff needs to feel supported in their efforts. The administrative participants in this study agreed that building strong, trusting relationships with staff is an important part of managing frustrations.

School leaders need to have the time to provide their staff with the necessary support so that they feel capable of meeting the needs of their students. They also need to have the time to plan for and create a culture that works collaboratively and develops teacher leaders. Managing disruptive student behaviors takes a leader's focus away from being able to build and maintain a supportive environment. As P2 described it, things go into the "debit column".

Professional practices. The category that arose from the interviews regarding Research Question 2 was professional practices. The interview questions asked participants if they had any professional coping strategies to help minimize the impact that managing disruptive student behavior had on their role. This category included the themes: using formal team structures, partnerships with outside agencies and parents, and relationships with students and staff.

Using formal team structures. The findings reveal that all the administrative participants used the teams that were already in place in their building to support staff and students. They used their RTI and IST teams to help manage the impact that disruptive student behavior had on their role and the roles of their staff. P2 described how he relied on a team approach, "I try to have a team approach, using mental health staff, counselors, psychologists, and social workers. Not just for dealing with the unsafe behaviors but starting to use the mental health staff to build those replacement behaviors." Porter-O'Grady and Malloch (2018) describe collaborative problem-solving teams as an example of an organizational structure that allow staff to act in a way that supports the needs of the system and the community. This type of team is an example of a point of service team, where strategy and work come together, and decisions are made by those who are closest to the delivery of the service. These teams provided a formal structure where staff discussed students' needs and work with other professionals to develop plans that guide the staff in their work in supporting students.

Partnerships with outside agencies and parents. Working with other agencies and parents was a common theme when trying to minimize the impact of disruptive student behavior. The outside agencies helped share the responsibilities of completing evaluations and developing plans to support students. This alleviates some of the stress of finding time to complete these necessary tasks.

Partnering with parents was also a theme that was consistent in the interviews. Parker et al. (2016) found that parents often feel unheard when it comes to their child's behavior in school. The parents reported feeling stressed and helpless because they did not know how to help their own child. AP1, reported that some of the best relationships

he had were with parents of students with behavioral needs. AP1 has stayed in regular communication with both the parents and the child. P2 discussed partnering with parents because they are the ultimate decision makers when it comes to their child's education.

Relationships with students and staff. The third theme in the category professional practices centered around the importance of having positive relationships with colleagues and the students who display challenging disruptive behaviors. All the administrative participants reported that having positive, trusting relationships with staff played a role in helping to mitigate the effects of disruptive student behavior. P1 felt that he had staff members that he could vent to both professionally and personally. P1 also felt that his ability to build relationships with students who displayed disruptive behaviors was a strength for him. He believed that strong relationships make a difference for the child both now and in the future. AP 1 relied on the relationship he had with his principal. They spent time talking about the disruptive events that had occurred and made plans for the days ahead. Having supportive colleagues is perceived to have a strong impact on mitigating the effects of disruptive student behaviors.

Impact on work day. The roles of school psychologists, social workers, and counselors are also impacted by disruptive student behavior. Research Question 3 sought to uncover their perceptions of how their roles have been impacted. The category, impact on work day, consisted of two themes: disruption to schedule and routines and amount of time and effort.

Disruption to schedule and routines. The impact the participants described on their roles seemed to be greater than the impact that the administrators described. The psychologist, social workers, and counselor all described feeling a certain amount of

stress in not being able to keep to their schedules and fulfill their professional obligations.

They did not get to deliver Tier I social-emotional learning lessons, and they often had to

cancel small group counseling. Stress and feelings of inadequacy were apparent in most

of the interviews, especially for the participants with fewer years of experience. SW1 felt

that she was always behind. She reported that she felt the work she does with students is

not making a difference. Disruptive student behaviors impacted the schedules of all the

participants. The disruption to the schedules of school psychologists, social workers, and

counselors effects the whole building as they possess the skills to deliver Tier I social-

emotional learning lessons. Such interventions are designed to minimize social and

academic concerns (Avant, 2014).

Amount of time and effort. The second theme was present in all interviews. The

participants kept coming back to how much time it takes to work with disruptive

students. They all reported that they spent a lot of time—not only with the students who

display disruptive behaviors—but with teams planning for the student. They also spent

time talking to parents, coordinating with outside providers, and working with the

classroom teacher. As SW2 put it, "The challenging part, besides the time it takes to deal

with the crisis, is the real time it takes to create collaboration to put things in place for the

student."

Structures and strategies. Research Question 4 explored the professional coping

strategies that school psychologists, social workers, and the counselor employed to

mitigate the effect the chronic disruptive behavior had on their role in supporting the

school. The category, structures and strategies, consisted of two themes: relationships,

teamwork, and debriefing; and acknowledgement and permission. All participants

described the importance of having positive professional and personal relationships with their coworkers.

   Relationships, teamwork, and debriefing. This theme came out in all the interviews. All the participants were appreciative of the relationships that they have with their colleagues. They perceived that everyone was working at full capacity to help deal with disruptive student behaviors and the aftermath. While all participants expressed that relationships, teamwork, and debriefing were making a difference, it was evident that some buildings were faring better emotionally than others. While building teams are employing similar coping strategies, some are perceived to be more purposeful and proactive as opposed to reactive.

   Acknowledgement and permission. All participants felt that they were supported by their administrators and colleagues. Specific acknowledgement of the work they did was comforting to them. The participants also appreciated when they were given permission to be human and to make mistakes. Having a growth mindset when it comes to planning for and dealing with disruptive student behaviors was also viewed as a positive coping strategy.

Limitations

   While all the participants met the study's inclusion criteria, all the administrative participants were male, and all the mental health support staff were female. Female administrative leaders may have different perceptions than male leaders, while male mental health staff may have different perceptions than female mental health staff. In this study, the males seemed to internalize the effects of disruptive student behaviors less, and

often they were not the first to respond to the crisis. The female participants tended to be the first responders, and they had more emotional responses.

All the interviews were conducted after the schools closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This may have affected how the participants described the effect that chronic disruptive student behavior had on their roles as the participants were removed from their regular work routine. Time away from work and students may have influenced the participants' perceptions of how disruptive student behaviors impact their role.

Student behaviors may manifest in different ways and for different reasons given the COVID-19 pandemic. School structures and schedules will change for students. Many of them will be in school of shorter amounts of time so behaviors might take longer to present themselves. Some students may need more behavioral support to curb disruptive behaviors. School leaders need to anticipate and be ready to help their teams respond to and support the needs of the school community.

Recommendations

The job of creating safe and effective schools for all students is a challenge for educational leaders. ESSA (2015), requires schools to provide access to a well-rounded, safe, healthy, culturally responsive, and supportive learning environment (ESSA, 2015). Leithwood et al., (2008) described seven claims that are supported by empirical evidence. The first claim is that leadership has the second most influence on student learning, behind classroom teaching. The second claim is that successful leaders build collaborative cultures and provide support for teachers. The third claim is that successful leaders are thoughtful in how they apply their practices. The fourth claim is that school leaders develop supportive working conditions that increase motivation and commitment.

The fifth claim is that students make the most gains when leadership is distributed and shared. The sixth claim is that some methods of distributing leadership are more effective than others. The seventh and last claim is that a leader's confidence and efficacy have an indirect but significant influence on student achievement. Disruptive student behaviors interfere with the learning experience (Blank & Shavit, 2016). School leaders that understand the effect that disruptive student behaviors have on their roles and the roles of various members of the school community can use the information to aide in developing professional learning, improving practices, updating district policy, and embarking on future research.

Transformational leaders are effective at working to build trust and fostering collaboration and supporting teams that contribute to act in ways that support the greater good. They create a vision and act as role models to support teams that contribute to the growth of the organization (Northouse, 2019).

Recommendations for professional learning. The results of this study lead to recommendations to make changes to teacher training programs and professional learning. Classroom teachers are the first ones to feel the effects of disruptive student behaviors, yet they tend to have the least amount of training. Most are not certified behavioral specialists, social workers, psychologists, or counselors. Like consumer industries that have studied and understand customer rage and disruptive behaviors and have successfully developed and used staff trainings to help mitigate the impact of disruptive customer behaviors, colleges and universities with teacher certification programs should develop courses to help teachers identify and mitigate disruptive behavior. These courses should include how to: identify early warning signs of

behavioral issues, identify triggers, provide strategies for how to interrupt disruptive behaviors, and collaborate with mental health teams to provide support to the child. School districts should provide similar professional development for staff who already hold teaching positions as many may not have had that type of training in the programs they attended. Training teachers to identify triggers and causes of behavior could help decrease the frequency and intensity of behaviors. A decrease in frequency and intensity of behaviors would allow for administrators and mental health staff to spend time focusing on other aspects of their job.

Recommendations for improving practices. The findings of this study indicate the need for recommendations for improved practice. School mental health programs have been shown to increase academic achievement and social and emotional outcomes for students. Psychologists, social workers, and counselors play an important role in the delivery of school based mental health programs and services. All the participants shared that their ability to deliver curriculum that supports students social and emotional well-being was impacted by disruptive student behavior. Lessons were either interrupted or cancelled.

Leaders need to protect the time that psychologists, social workers, and counselors have scheduled for lessons. An example of a plan could be to have dedicated first-responder days. On a day when a staff member is a first responder, they would not schedule observations, classroom lessons, or groups. Such a plan was recently and successfully implemented in the building where SW2 works. She described a system of having assigned days to be the primary responder.

Leaders also need to preserve time to complete their role. This type of first responder plan would allow for a leader to have uninterrupted time to complete the necessary instructional and operational tasks.

Another practice that school leaders should consider is to have dedicated time to debrief. This time should be a part of the contractual day. An established time to collaborate with team members either to debrief after the disruptive event, review and tweak a behavior plan, or communicate with parents or outside providers would alleviate some of the stress of the experience and of finding time to fit everything into one day.

District leaders should consider developing partnerships with outside mental health agencies. The agencies could provide counseling and mental health supports and assist with the development of plans for children with behavioral issues. The services that outside agencies provide could alleviate some of the time constraints that school psychologists, social workers, and counselors experience because of dealing with disruptive student behavior.

Districts should consider adding a behavioral assessment as a part of their preschool and kindergarten screening process. This would allow for careful class placement. Research shows that limiting the number of children who exhibit disruptive behaviors has social, emotional, and academic benefits for everyone in the class (Buyse et al. 2008; Dishion & Tipsord, 2011; Thomas et al., 2011). Careful class placement is a strategy that AP1 and his principal have used to help mitigate the effects of disruptive student behavior. A tool, such as *Class Creator*, could be used to help track academic and behavioral data to make placement decisions.

Recommendations for policy. It is recommended that school districts develop a consistent policy for managing disruptive student events. This policy should include guidelines for documentation as well as how to access internal and external resources. It is also recommended that each elementary building should add a full-time behavioral specialist to their mental health team. The administrative and mental health staff from one of the districts in this study reported that the addition of a behavioral specialist has helped mitigate the impact of disruptive student behavior by providing proactive teaching to classes. They also help by being an additional first responder to disruptive events.

Recommendations for future research. There are also implications for future research on the effects of disruptive student behavior. This study examined the impact on the roles of administrators, psychologists, social workers, and counselors. The study could be extended to include other groups of the school community such as non-classroom teachers, custodians, and bus drivers.

Given that this study included only male administrators and female mental health staff, there is an opportunity for a comparison of how different genders cope with the impact of the same phenomenon. Future research could examine the impact of disruptive student behaviors as perceived by female administrators and male mental health staff.

Focus groups could also be used to add to the richness of the data. Focus groups usually consist of six to 10 participants led by a moderator. The purpose of focus groups is to bring out different viewpoints on an issue or common experience (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). A group discussion regarding personal experiences with disruptive student behavior could add another level of detail as the participants could discuss the similarities and differences as to haw disruptive behavior effects their role.

Future research could examine the experiences of administrators and mental health staff who serve rural and urban school districts. Their experiences with disruptive student behavior may be differ from that of their suburban counterparts. They may also employ different coping strategies.

In addition, quantitative studies that examine the impact of disruptive student behavior on an administrator's role should also be conducted. Quantitative studies could also examine the effectiveness of coping strategies that are employed to mitigate the impact of disruptive student behavior. A quantitative examination of behavioral referrals could also yield information that teams could use in the decision-making process to support students and staff.

Conclusion

Businesses, consumer industries have studied aggressive and disruptive behavior of their customers to find ways to mitigate the behaviors. The findings of these studies point to the need for the creation and enforcement of policies as well as increased training (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2009; Rhoden et al., 2008). The goal is to increase safety, customer satisfaction, and profits.

Hospital settings particularly emergency departments and operating rooms often experience disruptive behavior. Research has shown the need to understand the causes of aggressive and disruptive behavior so that education and policy can be developed to inform practices to mitigate disruptions in any setting where the behavior occurs (Angland et al., 2014; Cochran & Elder, 2015; The Joint Commission, 2008; Srisarajivakul et al., 2017; Walrath et al., 2010; Wolf et al., 2014).

This phenomenological study examined the perspectives of school administrators, psychologists, social workers, and counselors who encounter disruptive behavior in an elementary school setting. Disruptive behaviors are defined as verbal or physical aggression toward peers or adults (Duvall et al., 2010). Studies show that disruptive behaviors affect students in the classroom socially, emotionally, and academically.

The following research questions were addressed:

1. From the perspective of elementary school administrators with at least 3 years of experience, how do disruptive student events impact their role as an administrator?

2. From the perspective of school administrators identified in Research Question 1, what strategies do they employ to mitigate the impact of disruptive student events on their role as an administrator?

3. From the perspective of school psychologists, school social workers, and counselors with at least 3 years of experience, how do disruptive student events impact their role in supporting the school?

4. From the perspective of the school psychologists, school social workers, and counselors identified in Research Question 3, what strategies do they employ that mitigate the impact of disruptive student events on their role in supporting the school?

The purpose of this study was to add to the existing literature that examines how student disruptive and aggressive behavioral events affect other various members of school communities. Developing an understanding of how disruptive student behavior

impacts the role of administrators, psychologists, social workers, and counselors can lead to the development of policy and practices to mitigate the impact.

Cochran and Elder (2015) examined the effects of disruptive surgeon behavior. They suggested that the model they developed could be used to understand the negative impact of disruptive behaviors so that the effects could be countered through the development of training programs. The work of Cochran and Elder (2015) was replicated in the educational setting to examine the effects of disruptive student behavior on various constituent groups of suburban school communities.

A review of the literature showed how disruptive student behavior impacts the relationships that students develop with their peers and teachers. Research shows that a positive classroom environment is a strong predictor of academic success and social/emotional well-being of students (Abry et al., 2017, Buyse et al., 2006; Duvall et al., 2010; Gottfried & Harven, 2015). Significant empirical evidence exists that shows a negative correlation between disruptive classrooms and academic achievement (Blank & Shavit, 2012).

In a review of the literature Basch (2011) found that disruptive behavior affects teaching and learning for all students. He recommends that schools have policies and programs that are aimed at reducing aggressive behaviors. While behavior management programs benefit most children, a more therapeutic approach is recommended for students with complex behavioral needs. (Nash et al., 2016).

Research shows that school leaders matter. School principals are an important influence on the environments they lead (Holden, 2018). Hallinger and Murphy (2012), define a successful leader as someone as someone who identifies a direction for the

school, motivates staff, and coordinates school and classroom programs that improve teaching and learning.

Mental health teams are also an integral part of the school community. School psychologists, social workers, and counselors possess the skills to deliver programs aimed at improving social and emotional outcomes and academic performance for students. There is evidence that school wide and classroom behavior programs can help alleviate disruptive behavior.

This study conducted interviews to gather, document, and analyze the degree of impact that children who exhibit chronic disruptive behaviors have on various constituent groups in the school community. Data was also gathered and analyzed to understand the coping strategies that the participants employed to help alleviate the professional impact of chronic disruptive events on the constituent groups of a school community.

The research was conducted in two large suburban school communities in Upstate New York. The schools in this study had student enrollments ranging from 470-650 elementary students. These schools were selected because they reported an increase in violent and disruptive behavior as reported to New York State in the VADIR reports for the years 2015-2017 (NYSED, 2019).

The participants for this study included elementary school administrators, school psychologists, school social workers, and school counselors with at least three years of experience. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to understand the participants' perspectives on how their roles in leading or supporting the school have been affected, The interviews also examined the coping strategies the participants used to mitigate the impact that disruptive student behavior has on their roles.

The findings from this study indicate that disruptive student behavior negatively impacts the roles of school administrators, psychologists, social workers, and counselors. All participants described an increase in the frequency, intensity, and duration of chronic disruptive behaviors in the past few years. They also describe how they cannot complete the required tasks of their job because of the increased amount of time they spend dealing with disruptive student events. Time is needed to work with disruptive students, collaborate and develop support plans, as well as to debrief with the student, the team, parents, and outside providers. Observations, lessons, small group counseling, and testing is pushed to the wayside to deal with student behavioral events that some of the participants referred to as crisis.

The participants identified coping strategies that help to mitigate the impact of disruptive student behavior. These strategies include teamwork, having trusting relationships with colleagues, time to plan and debrief, and forming partnerships with parents and outside agencies.

The limitations of the study related to the gender of the participants in specific roles and the timing and format of the interviews due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The recommendations are based on expanding the strategies that are currently meeting with success in schools. Opportunities for future research include varying the gender of the participants, examining the effect of disruptive behavior has on other groups in the school community, and conducting research in other educational settings. Recommendations are also made for changes in teacher training programs, professional practice, and policy.

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Appendix A

Literature Search Methods

Articles were selected for review using the following procedures: a search of online data bases (ERIC, EBSCO, PsychNet, ProQuest, Sage, Taylor & Francis) identifying key journal sources, and an examination of reference sections in the relevant literature. The Web of Science was also used to look for citations that could lead to other studies.

Search terms included variations and combinations of the following terms: disruptive student behavior, externalizing behavior, mental health, emotional behavioral disorders, conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, elementary school, primary school, classroom composition, and peer influence. Most of the articles were quantitative. In order to examine the effects of disruptive through a qualitative lens, research was expanded to areas other than education such as, healthcare and customer service industries.

Most of the articles appeared in the following disciplines, psychology, education, educational leadership, social work, behavioral education, and economics. Meetings were scheduled with the research librarian when searches felt repetitive, or stale. Studies included were English language, peer reviewed articles with most being published from 2008-present.

Appendix B

District Approval

From: Christine Noeth-Abele _____@_____.org
Sent: Monday, _____, 2020 9:31 AM
To: _____,_____ _____@_____.edu>
Subject: research

<div style="background:blue;color:white;text-align:center">

ATTENTION: This email originated from a sender that is outside of the _____ District.

</div>

Good Morning Dr. _____,

I am writing to request permission to contact the elementary principals, school psychologists, social workers, and counselors for the purpose of interviewing them for my dissertation. The topic of my research is, the effects of chronic disruptive student behavior on various constituent groups of a large suburban school community.

At this point I just need to let my committee know that I will have access to the people that I need to interview. I will be sending a formal written request after I receive approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Saint John Fisher College.

Interviews would take place before or after school so as not to disrupt professional time. They may or may not occur on school property. All information gathered from the interviews will remain confidential. Your district would not be identified in anyway.

I would be happy to share the findings of my research with you after I complete my dissertation.

Please let me know if this would be possible. Should you have any questions, I can be contacted via email or cell ___-___-____. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christine Noeth-Abele
Principal, State Road Elementary

_____, _____   ___._____, 2020, 9:22 AM

to me

Hi Christine,

You have my permission as long as interviews do not interfere with the school day and data remains confidential. Good luck with the dissertation… I am so happy mine is far behind me!

I will keep an eye out for the IRB approval form.

Tom

_____, Ed.D.
Superintendent
_____ District
(___) ___-____
www._____.edu

Appendix C

Approval

Re: dissertation research
Inbox x
On Thu, Jan 16, 2020 at 8:45 PM Christine Noeth-Abele <_____@_____.org>
wrote:
Hello _____,

I hope you are well. I am writing to request permission to contact the elementary principals, school psychologists, social workers, and counselors for the purpose of interviewing them for my dissertation. The topic of my research is the effects of chronic disruptive student behavior on various constituent groups of a suburban school community.

At this point I just need to let my committee know that I will have access to the people that I need to interview. I will be sending a formal written request after I receive approval from the institutional review board at Saint John Fisher College.

Interviews would take place before or after school so as not to disrupt professional time. They may or may not take place on school property. All information gathered from the interviews will remain confidential. Your district would not be identified in any way.

I would be happy to share the findings of my research with you after I complete my dissertation.

Please let me know if this would be possible. Should you have any questions I can be contacted via email or cell at ___-___-____. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christine Noeth-Abele
Principal, _____
--

_____ <_____@_____.org>   Fri, _____, 7:35 AM

to me

Hi Christine, your research sounds very interesting and certainly relevant. Our team should be able to provide valuable insights for your research.

Best wishes and thank you for circling me.

_____

_____

Appendix D

Permission Request to Conduct Research

_____, 2020

Dr. _____
Superintendent of _____Schools
P.O. Box_____
_____, New York _____

RE: Permission to Conduct Research

Dear Dr. _____:

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study in the _____
School District. I am currently enrolled in the Executive Leadership Doctoral Program at
Saint John Fisher College and am in the process of writing my dissertation. The study is
entitled, Disruptive Student Behavior: The Effect on Various Constituent Groups in
Large Suburban School Communities.

I hope to recruit and interview principals, assistant principals, school psychologists, and
social workers from the elementary schools to confidentially answer the following
research questions: From your perspective as an elementary school principal, assistant
principal, school psychologist, social worker, or counselor, how do disruptive student
events impact your role? What strategies do you employ to mitigate the impact of chronic
disruptive student events on your professional role? Interested participants will be given a
consent form to be signed and returned to the primary researcher

If approval is granted, participants will complete the interview at a place and time that are
convenient to them and will not occur during work hours. The interview process should
take no longer than 60 minutes. The information gathered from the interviews will be
coded for a doctoral dissertation and individual results of this study will remain
absolutely confidential. Should this study be published, only pooled results will be
documented. No costs will be incurred by either your school or the individual
participants.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. I will follow up with a telephone call next week and would be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have at that time. You may contact me at my email address: _____@sjfc.edu.

If you agree, kindly submit an electronically signed letter of permission on your institution's letterhead acknowledging your consent and permission for me to conduct this study at your institution. Feel free to copy and paste the following paragraphs.

I grant permission to, Christine Noeth-Abele, to contact elementary principals, assistant principals, school psychologists, social workers, and counselors in the _____ School District for the purpose of conducting interviews for a doctoral dissertation.

I understand that participation in the study is voluntary. I also understand that information gained from the interviews will remain confidential and that neither the participants nor the district will not be identified in anyway.

Sincerely,

Christine Noeth-Abele

Appendix E

Permission to Conduct Research

_____, 2020

Mr. _____
Superintendent of _____ Schools

_____
_____, New York _____

RE: Permission to Conduct Research

Dear Mr. _____:

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study in the_____
School District. I am currently enrolled in the Executive Leadership Doctoral Program at
Saint John Fisher College and am in the process of writing my dissertation. The study is
entitled, Disruptive Student Behavior: The Effect on Various Constituent Groups in
Large Suburban School Communities.

I hope to recruit and interview principals, assistant principals, school psychologists, and
social workers from the elementary schools to confidentially answer the following
research questions: From your perspective as an elementary school principal, assistant
principal, school psychologist, social worker, or counselor, how do disruptive student
events impact your role? What strategies do you employ to mitigate the impact of chronic
disruptive student events on your professional role? Interested participants will be given a
consent form to be signed and returned to the primary researcher.

If approval is granted, participants will complete the interview at a place and time that are
convenient to them and will not occur during work hours. The interview process should
take no longer than 60 minutes. The information gathered from the interviews will be
coded for a doctoral dissertation and individual results of this study will remain
absolutely confidential. Should this study be published, only pooled results will be
documented. No costs will be incurred by either your school district or the individual
participants.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. I will follow up with a telephone call next week and would be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have at that time. You may contact me at my email address: _____@sjfc.edu.

If you agree, kindly submit an electronically signed letter of permission on your institution's letterhead acknowledging your consent for me to conduct this study at your institution. Feel free to copy and paste the following paragraphs.

I grant permission to, Christine Noeth-Abele, to contact elementary principals, assistant principals, school psychologists, social workers, and counselors in the _____ School District for the purpose of conducting interviews for a doctoral dissertation.

I understand that participation in the study is voluntary. I also understand that information gained from the interviews will remain confidential and that neither the participants nor the district will not be identified in anyway.

Sincerely,

Christine Noeth-Abele

Enclosures

Participant Informed Consent Form

St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board

Statement of Informed Consent for Adult Participants

The Effect of Chronic Disruptive Student Behavior on Various Constituent Groups in Large Suburban School Communities

SUMMARY OF KEY INFORMATION:

- You are being asked to be in a research study of the effects of chronic disruptive student behavior. As with all research studies, participation is voluntary.
- The purpose of this study is to understand the effect the disruptive student's behavior has on various members of the school community such as administrators, school psychologists, social workers, and school counselors.
- Approximately 9 people will take part in this study. The results will be used for completion of a doctoral dissertation. The results can also be used to make recommendations for professional learning on how to mitigate the effects that disruptive behavior has on the various groups mentioned above.
- If you agree to take part in this study, you will be involved in this study approximately one hour of time. You may be contacted after the initial interview to clarify responses that were given.
- If you choose to participate, you will be asked to respond to a series of questions. The interview will last for approximately one hour and will take place at a time and location convenient for you. More detail will be included in the body of the consent form.
- We believe this study has no more than minimal risk. An inconvenience is the amount of time spent during the interview process.
- The benefits of this study will extend to leaders of schools who are seeking ways to mitigate the effects that chronic disruptive behaviors have on themselves and other members of their school community.

DETAILED STUDY INFORMATION

You are being asked to be in a research study of the effects of chronic disruptive student behavior. This study is being conducted at Saint John Fisher College, Rochester, New York. This study is being conducted by: Christine Noeth-Abele, and overseen by Dr. C. Michael Robinson, in the Doctoral program in Executive Leadership program at St. John Fisher College.

You were selected as a possible participant because you hold the title of principal, assistant principal, school psychologist, social worker, or counselor in a suburban school district in Upstate New York.

Please read this consent form and ask any questions you have before agreeing to be in the study.

PROCEDURES:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following:
You will be asked to answer a series of interview questions describing if and how your role as a school administrator, school psychologist, social worker, or counselor is effected by chronic disruptive student behavior. You will also be asked to describe any coping strategies you have employed when dealing with the effects of disruptive student behavior. The interview is expected to last for approximately one hour and will take place at a time and location that are convenient for you. A phone or virtual interview are also available options. A follow up interview or contact may be necessary to clarify information gathered during the interview process.
Interviews will be recorded to ensure accuracy of the information. They will later be transcribed so that the information can be examined and coded to see what themes emerge.

The interviews will be audio recorded. If you choose not to be recorded, you may not participate in this study.

COMPENSATION/INCENTIVES:

You will receive a $10 gift card to Barnes & Noble at the conclusion of the interview. If you choose a phone or electronic interview the gift card will be mailed to an address you provide.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

The records of this study will be kept private and your confidentiality will be protected. In any sort of report the researcher(s) might publish, no identifying information will be included.

Identifiable research records will be stored securely and only the researcher(s) will have access to the records. All data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home office as well as on a password-protected laptop. All study records with identifiable

information, including approved IRB documents, tapes, transcripts, and consent forms, will be destroyed by shredding and/or deleting after 3 years.

Interviews will be recorded. Should you agree to being recorded, you will be assigned a number to identify you. Recordings will be sent to Rev.com for transcription. No personal identifying information will be sent to the transcription company. Transcripts from recorded information be kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home. Actual recordings will be stored on an external drive that will also be stored in a locked file cabinet. Both paper transcripts and electronic recordings will be destroyed after three years.

The data collected in this study as well as the results of the research can be used for scientific purposes and may be published (in ways that will not reveal who I am). An anonymized version of the data from this study may be made publicly accessible, for example via the Open Science Framework (osf.io), without obtaining additional written consent. The anonymized data can be used for re-analysis but also for additional analyses, by the same or other researchers. The purpose and scope of this secondary use is not foreseeable. Any personal information that could directly identify an individual will be removed before data and results are made public. Personal information will be protected closely so no one will be able to connect individual responses and any other information that identifies an individual. All personally identifying information collected about an individual will be stored separately from all other data.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY:
Participation in this study is voluntary and requires your informed consent. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with St. John Fisher College. If you decide to participate, you are free to skip any question that is asked. You may also withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

CONTACTS, REFERRALS AND QUESTIONS:
The researchers(s) conducting this study: Christine Noeth-Abele. If you have questions, **you are encouraged** to contact the researcher(s) at _____@sjfc.edu or ___-___-____. The chairperson overseeing the research is Dr. C. Michael Robinson at _____@sjfc.edu.

The Institutional Review Board of St. John Fisher College has reviewed this project. For any concerns regarding this study/or if you feel that your rights as a participant (or the rights of another participant) have been violated or caused you undue distress (physical or emotional distress), please contact the SJFC IRB administrator by phone during normal business hours at (___) ___-____ or irb@sjfc.edu.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT:

I am 18 years of age or older. I have read and understood the above information. I consent to voluntarily participate in the study.

Signature:_____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator:_____ Date: _____

Retain this section only if applicable:
I agree to be audio recorded/transcribed _____ *Yes* _____*No* *If no, I understand that I cannot take part in this study.*

Signature:_____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator:_____ Date: _____

Please keep a copy of this informed consent for your records.

Appendix G

Interview Questions

The following interview questions were asked of the participants to understand the lived experiences that the participants had with chronic disruptive behavior:

1. Describe your experiences with chronic disruptive student behavior.

2. Have the disruptive behaviors that you have witnessed or been involved with changed over the years? If so, please describe how. Have the behaviors and events become more frequent? Have the behaviors and events become more intense?

3. How have your experiences with chronic disruptive behavior and events affected your role as an administrator, school psychologist, school social worker, or counselor?

4. Approximately how much of your time has been spent dealing with disruptive behaviors and events? Is this more, less, or about the same amount of time spent as in the past?

5. What coping strategies have you employed during and after a disruptive student event?

6. Is there anything else related to disruptive student behavior that you would like to share?