FEELING SAFE IN SCHOOL*

By Stuart W. Twemlow, M.D.[1]

Peter Fonagy, Ph.D; FBA [2]

Frank C. Sacco, Ph.D.[3]

1. Director, Erik Erikson Institute for Research & Education, The Austen Riggs Center, Stockbridge, Massachusetts; Co-director of the Peaceful Schools Project, Child & Family Center, The Menninger Clinic, Topeka, Kansas; Clinical Professor of Psychiatry University of Kansas School of Medicine, Wichita, Kansas and faculty Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA. Consultant to the FBI Critical Incident Response Group on School Shootings.

2. Director, Child and Family Center and Clinical Protocols and Outcomes Center, The Menninger Clinic, Topeka, Kansas, Freud Memorial Professor of Psychoanalysis, UCL, London, England, Director of Research, The Anna Freud Centre, London, England.

3. President, Community Services Institute, Springfield, Massachusetts.

"Video meleora proboque; deteriora sequor – like all other human beings, I know what I ought to do, but I continue to do what I know I ought not to do."
<p style="text-align:right">Aldous Huxley, Eyeless In Gaza</p>

As Aldous Huxley observed, and psychoanalysts have known for a long time, if it was merely a matter of knowing what to do for most human problems, a majority of mental health workers would be out of business rather quickly. The real question is why we don't do it. Driven by the search for the quick fix, our culture has an insatiable appetite for programs that promise such " a fix," and there are plenty of them. Such programs often deceive people into thinking the task of psychological change is easy; just follow the formula. The equivalent in schools are simple curriculum add-ons that imply that it's just a matter of teaching nonviolent attitudes. The Smith College Studies in Social Work, in March 2001, published a set of papers that addressed directly the matter of safety in schools. The dilemma is highlighted in the title of the editorial, "building fortresses" or instead "opening the doors to the community." Many school programs are structured as a curriculum add-on or a set of prescriptions reinforcing security. Dealing with the underlying resistances to making antiviolence programs work, has not received much attention in the literature. Addressing such resistances and providing skills that address psychological needs that interfere with the way all people in the school relate to each other including: the children, teachers, school administrators, custodians, secretaries, lunchroom staff, paraprofessionals, teacher aids, substitute teachers, parents as teachers is a potentially useful contribution possible from those with a psychodynamic background and experience. Such learning is

mutual. A deepened understanding promotes respect and healthy interrelatedness in the community as a whole.

In fact, the whole community is an integral part of the school. In any situation where the community is cut off from the school, the school suffers greatly, for example, in the US, an unfortunate affect of busing, which was suggested as partial solution to racial integration, has in many instances inadvertently hurt the concept of the community school. There are always these paradoxes and dilemmas for administrators, and in the meantime school violence continues as a major public health menace ranking with cancer and heart disease. As we know, the future of our culture will depend on the education and health of our children.

A study of 26 industrialized nations (Bleich et al. 2000) showed that 73% of all child homicides occur in our country. Our homicide rate is ten times higher than in Western Europe and Japan and five times higher than Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. The homicide rate for 15-17 year olds is 22 times higher than in any other industrial nation. Our work with the FBI and study of school shooters has shown the most terrified of all children are the ones that feel the most unsafe, often the shooters themselves! (Twemlow, et al., in press). How can we put these pieces of the puzzle together?

After a selected review of the literature on what makes children feel safe and unsafe, we will propose a definition of what makes people feel safe both in schools, at home and the communities they live in, to make the fundamental point that feeling safe is an internal decision only loosely linked to those features of the social environment that 'engineers' of these worlds regard as critical. We will then delineate a theory of the psychodynamic roots

of this internal feeling of safety, using some of the writings derived from psychoanalysis including the following:

- Sandler's concept of the background of safety (an intrapsychic–cognitive perspective).

- The concept of containment derived from the work of Wilfred Bion (an interpersonal perspective).

- Winnicott's model of the Holding environment (a clinical psychoanalytic developmental perspective).

- The contributions of attachment research particularly the work of Bowlby and Fonagy (an experimental psychoanalytic developmental perspective).

- An open social system – group dynamic approach to school safety (an integrated – psychodynamic perspective).

We will then discuss the phenomenon of social aggression in schools. What makes schools unsafe is often a complex interaction between the parents, teachers, social influences, the school bully, and the bully's victim and the bystanding audience of children and adults whose actions can facilitate or inhibit victimization. We will then, also discuss a piece of research we have done to examine how teachers who bully students and students who bully teachers is part of the problem. We will conclude by briefly describing a program that put these ideas into practice in eleven elementary schools in the Midwest; The Peaceful Schools Project of the Menninger Clinic, Child & Family Center, and the Erikson Institute of the Austen Riggs Center. Having set this stage as an intellectual challenge, we will then briefly define a "good education" reviving the concept of a classical liberal education and in doing so, focus attention, in a quite biased way, on a return to the way the teacher is a central personal model for children, with the academic content being only equally, not more important.

<u>What the Literature Has to Say About Feeling Safe</u>

What makes children feel safe is an elusive topic in the literature. There are, however, slivers of information hinting at factors worthy of study. Feeling "attached and contained" (Haigh, 1996) is observed to be related to a person's experience of belonging and feeling safe. The quality of the child's early attachment relationship with the primary caregiver has a vital role in personality development (Bowlby, 1988) through influencing the capacity of a person to modulate affect (Fonagy, et al., in press) and to rely on internal representations of the caregiver (object constancy) to feel safe and soothed (Sroufe, 1996; Main, 1995).

People do not feel safe when they see violence on a regular basis. Overstreet and Braun (2000) asked 70 African American 10-15 year olds about neighborhood safety and learned that, as common sense might suggest, children feel less safe in their neighborhoods when they have continued exposure to violence. Feeling safe is clearly related to the effectiveness of public safety in keeping overt violence in a community low. Espelage, et al. (2000) in studying the social context of bullying found that feeling safe in a community was related to the presence of adult supervisors and the lack of negative influences. Children feel safer when they can see and feel their protectors and when their protectors are effective in combating the negative influences leading to bullying.

Exposure of children to television violence has been extensively studied. Federman (1996, 1997, 1998) found that television violence contributes to learning aggressive behavior, desensitizes children to violence, and increases fear of victimization. There have been many similar studies; for example, Joshi, et al (1998) in a study of high school students, showed

that exposure to media violence promoted PTSD like symptoms including fear of being alone, nightmares, and withdrawal from friends. Other media like videogames, Internet, and rock music have been less extensively researched. Clearly unsafe feelings can be generated by repeated violence exposure on television an effect much greater in preschoolers and no doubt aggravated when family members are similarly feeling unsafe.

Hemmings (2000) studied two Midwestern public high schools and identified the "hidden corridor" curriculum or unwritten rules that youth use when there is an institutional breakdown of social control. Feeling safe is the opposite of what is taught in this "hidden curriculum." This "hidden curriculum" teaches destructive social habits within schools. Feeling safe is thus related to the health of the institution's social control system that offers prosocial rules enforced fairly as an alternative to this hidden curriculum.

Reese, et al. (2001) and Wilson, et al. (2000) in separate studies identified the role of drugs and alcohol in the prediction of violence. Feeling safe is related to how much drug and alcohol abuse exists. The more drugs and alcohol in a community, the greater the risk of violence. It could be inferred that feeling safe is related to the absence of drugs and alcohol. Fisher and Kettl (2001) discuss the role of the media in dispersing information globally about the rare but tragic cases of school shootings. Paradoxically, students and parents alike, have become more afraid and feel less safe in relation to school despite the known reported drop in overall school crime.

Sommer (1990) interviewed Estonian adolescents and discovered that they had a high need for a secure retreat, preferably a natural setting, in order to feel safe. Feeling safe may require this escape valve or "safe haven" where children can go to feel safe and protected. This highlights the potential role of parks and recreation programs, community programs, the

Boy and Girl Scouts, and community centers as ways of assisting community members' feeling of safety. Yule (2000) studied Bosnian children during the recent turmoil and reported that children felt safe when they could rely on the routine of going to school and living in a family. Simply having a routine and a productive place to go is a key ingredient to feeling safe. Truancy and out-of-home placement would then be the big enemies to this sense of safety.

Lowry (2000) studied what made probation officers feel safe at work. Training in personal safety was found to be the strongest factor. The more confident the probation officers felt in personal safety tactics, the safer they felt at work. This points to the potential value of training children in personal safety as a way to contributing to their sense of safety.

Feeling safe is also related to the social climate. Caprara, et al. (2000) in a five-year study of 294 third graders found that when students engaged in altruistic behaviors such as cooperating, helping, or consoling, the academic achievement improved. Having friends and being helpful contribute to a sense of safety and success. Gilgun (1996) examined a variety of protective factors against violence and identified the role of close personal friendships and the presence of older prosocial role models in the experience of feeling safe in a community. Flaherty (2001) identifies the importance of a student's feeling "valued and respected" as a key ingredient to a safe school. Lowe's (2000) studies on low-income Denver neighborhoods identified the role of collective identity and working on common goals as a key element of feeling safe in a community.

In general terms it may be said that the literature has focused on risk factors and social factors that are correlated with or cause criminal behavior and psychiatric illness, for example, Johnson et al. (2000); factors influencing feelings of safety and an overall feeling of

well-being have been much less well researched. Inferring from available literature that the following factors might affect a young person's feeling of safety and well being in a school setting:

1. Quality of the caregiver and child relationship
2. Exposure to family and community violence
3. Presence of protective adults
4. The rules of the social system
5. The presence of drugs and alcohol
6. Media reports concerning the safety of a community
7. Media violence
8. The presence of a safe haven or retreat
9. Training in personal safety techniques
10. Good relationships with peers and friends
11. Engaging in altruistic behaviors
12. A sense of belonging to a community

What is a Safe Community?

In the mid 1960's a group of clinical psychologists gathered in Swampscott, Massachusetts (Kelly, 1990) to serve as a catalyst for a new direction in psychology now called community psychology. Directly addressing the needs of communities was a counterpoint to an academic trend in psychology. The initial tenants of community psychology (Gregory, 2001) emphasized the importance of having a long-term vision for mutual social support to prevent, as well as treat illness, and the central importance of learning from each other and the respecting of each others' differences irrespective of race, intellect, gender, age, religious, socioeconomic, education and sexual orientation. Community psychology takes for granted that collective decision making far from subjugating individuality, leads to an enhanced empowerment of the individual who by acting in concert with the group, enhances personal power and that of the whole group. A definition of community by Schaffer and Anundsen (1993) is "a dynamic whole that emerges when a group of people participate in common practices; depend upon one another;

make decisions together; identify themselves as larger than the sum of their individual relationships; and commit themselves for the long-term to their own, one another's, and the group's well being" (p.10).

There are many studies of the concept of feeling unconnected in a school environment. One such study (Bonny et al. 2000) of nearly 4,000 children in the 7th–12th grade, demonstrated that early signs of disconnection and alienation from the school environment (creating a child who feels unsafe) is indicated by the child's withdrawal from the peer group and adoption of habits that distinguish the child from his/her peers such as cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption. The 'Small Schools' movement amongst North American educationists (Wasley, et al. 2000) represents a reaction to the same phenomenon of alienation and lack of safety. Time and time again, studies have shown that as a child becomes more and more excluded from their peer groups or withdraws from these groups, the environment becomes a tinder box for violence including power struggles of a vicious nature as children are either subjected by the group and become bullying, even homicidal tyrants who aggressively try to force entry back into the group or withdraw and become depressed and even suicidal victims. Both processes reflect the complex narcissistic injury to the individual by that group exclusion explored in more detail in Twemlow (2001a).

A psychodynamically-oriented approach to school violence must insure connectedness between children, a conceptual framework and language for the problems, and must pay attention to the dynamics of groups and the role of healthy adults and peer mentors, otherwise an environment that empowers the individual within the group cannot be created and children will increasingly fragment into violent and pathological subgroups. Bion (1970) has pointed out that a healthy group is one in which the knowledge of the group as a whole,

defined as what the group has found out about itself that is of essential value for its continued existence as a cohesive group, becomes as a critical part of what binds it together and makes people feel safe and creative within it (+K). As communities become more fragmented, the knowledge becomes spoiled and destroyed as evidenced by traditions being lost and families becoming transient (-K). The stories that unite people and make them proud of their community become garbled and forgotten. In such violent communities (Twemlow & Sacco, 1999), individuals pair and form small subgroups often of a highly pathological, self-centered nature. These pathological subgroups often have as their central concern the need for individuals to feel safe through coercive power using violence and money. A 16-year old Hispanic boy, who was a peer mentor in our Peaceful Schools program, wrote an ambivalent but graphic tale about the attractions of the life of the gang member. Unfortunately, this boy was eventually claimed by the gang but not without a struggle. We were unable to meet his demands in the way that he needed them to be met. He wrote:

It all started during the summer of 1994. It was a hot day in about mid-June. The only thing on our minds was our initiation later on that night. It was me, C.C., Dirt, Monster, and Mone. These were the names given to us by the bigger homies. Then night came around and it was time for us to join the set. So after getting drunk at our first ESC [East Side Click] get-together, the big homies, Keno, C Side, and Houston, called attention to us. All of a sudden we was catching blows left and right; the only thing to do was fight back, but eventually I was knocked to the ground and beaten. After a few minutes it stopped, then we was given some love and started to celebrate again. Next was to show if we was down for the hood. So we loaded up into three cars and was headed for Slur Hood (Slur is a disrespectful term for Surenios 13,

who is the ESC's mortal enemies). When we got there, we spotted three of them standing outside a Kwik Shop. Our job was to beat down the enemey until they could no longer move. Only then could we return to the cars. So we did, and got respect from the older homies for what we did. This was the whole initiation night. This was the first work I did for the set; it wasn't the last. With my two years being with the set, I did enough dirt and earned enough respect to surpass the first three ranks and now I'm a Baby Gangsta [B.G.], only two ranks away form being an O.G. With earning the B.G. rank, I'm allowed to do things I couldn't do before; for instance, I can ball the big homie's cars, teach and tell the younger homies what to do and not to do, and sell drugs. But to break it down, there is nothing wrong with representing East Side Click, one of the many Crip sets. You get paid, known, and respect − the three things gangbangers want. But behind all of the glamour, like me, you get shot at; you shoot at. I've been jumped four times and put in the hospital for stitches once, had my house shot at, been locked up, have partners locked up, and worst of all, I lost two homies; D-Monster and Houston, both killed in Houston, Texas, for what we believe in. For some, this is all we got, so we're gonna represent to the fullest no matter the pain or cost: only to live up to every gangbanger's dream of having riches, respect and to live in a world where everyone looks up to you and have worries of watching your back 24-7. But until then, I'm gonna keep Cripping and stick to my motto, "can't stop, won't stop; East Side Click ride, till my casket drops." (Twemlow & Sacco, 1998; pp. 507-508.)

In the recent stabbing deaths of eight children in an elementary school in Osaka, Japan on June 8, 2001, a mother said as security at the school tightened, "We don't want to make schools prisons − the community as well as school staff should be watching the

children." This is the dilemma in a nutshell. Schools cannot really be safe in unsafe communities where grownups are insecure and do not know what to do.

Feeling Safe is an Internal Decision

Unfortunately, pathologically cohesive communities like street gangs, have little forgiveness, little freedom of choice, and no permeability to the outside. You're either in or you're out. It is not only children's gangs that form these structures; many dictatorships are similar. A colleague of ours from Paraguay pointed out that between 1955 and 1989 under a dictatorship, the climate was quite peaceful but there was no freedom. Singapore is another example of how a non-permeable and unforgiving community can be peaceful and safe but without the freedom of choice that our democracy demands. In the countries of the Soviet block, safety was hardly an issue through the 60s and 70s. With the awakening of democracy and personal freedom came a massive increase in violent crime, particularly mafia/gang-related criminal activity. The dilemma for Americans is how to achieve safety without overwhelming bureaucratic or tyrannical control.

It is interesting to note that one etymological root of the word "safe,"[1] means "whole." The Latin "salvus" also implies healthiness. These are dimensions of feeling safe often forgotten. In other words, a whole and healthy person feels safe both inside and outside. That feeling of safety derived from feeling whole then pervades the individual and the community. Commonly, intactness is a quality of the social system within which the individual finds himself. A colleague of ST recently visited Israel with his wife. ST asked if she felt safe there and she said, "Of course." ST asked her why. She replied with a look of some surprise, "Because I'm with my husband." Secure human relationships create a feeling of safety. Behaviorists of the 60s and 70s tried to explain this phenomenon by suggesting

---

[1] Oxford English Dictionary Volume 2, 1971. Oxford University Press.

that the attachment figure, who could make a 'dangerous' environment 'safe' for the phobic patient, represented a 'learned safety signal' (Rachman, 1984). Few would argue nowadays that attachment theory provides a far better account of the almost magical decrease of anxiety in the presence of an attachment figure (Ainsworth, 1989).

The obvious perhaps needs no comment; that **feeling** safe and **being** safe are not synonymous. Psychopathological conditions including mania and other grandiose psychotic states may cause the individual to omnipotently deny potential danger. Dependant and avoidant character pathology may create a spurious feeling of safety for different reasons. Absent such pathology, and being able to control fearfulness, allows a much more creative and resilient cognitive set, to enhance efforts to make the environment safe, as we have explored in detail elsewhere (Twemlow, 1995a; 1995b). Feeling safe obviously also requires awareness of danger including adequate self defense and negotiation skills, especially in the contemporary U.S. climate of free availability of weapons reinforced by strong political support for continued availability of handguns.

The Background of Safety

Over 40 years ago, Joseph Sandler wrote about what he called the background of safety (Sandler, 1960). He pointed out that perception itself is an act of mastery by which the ego copes with unorganized input and organizes and integrates it resulting in, he feels, definite feelings of safety that we usually take for granted. Sandler (1987) pointed out that this is a great deal more than what he calls " a simple absence of comfort or anxiety but instead is a very definite feeling quality within the ego" (p. 2). He traced the experience of safety to a sense of well being, comfort and warmth that the infant might experience following breastfeeding. He postulates the existence of safety signals just as we have anxiety

signals, and, that the ego acts to monitor this feeling of safety and does everything possible to maintain a minimum level of safe feeling including acknowledging the presence of reassuring caregivers and of familiar things as factors that are integrated into the feeling of safety and well being. The concept placed the operating principle of ego in a positive framework of trying to maximize safety or security rather than to avoid anxiety. Although Sandler recognized the inverse complementarity of anxiety and safety, he was able to show that the pursuit of safety is an overarching construct, compatible with instinct theory that has the capacity to organize defenses, perceptions, and fantasy. In addition, Sandler reaffirmed the status of instinctual drives as "prime motivators of behaviour' (p. 365). Nevertheless, this concept provided a motivational framework far better articulated within the interpersonal object relations tradition than as a simple drive theory model.[2] This apparently simple concept has proved essential not only to Sandler's elaboration of object relations theory but also to other areas. The concept of safety has an affinity with Hermann's (1923) clinging instinct and Bowlby's (1973) secure base notion. For these authors, safety was a biological force, whereas for Sandler it was distinct and lacked the excitement normally associated with drive gratification. In fact, Sandler (1989), opposed the two, demonstrating that the urge to gain feelings of well-being and safety must be stronger than instinctual gratification in order to keep a check on the latter when its expression implies danger. Pathological states including addictions and psychosis are according to Sandler, sick attempts to maintain a feeling of safety within the ego but which do not work very well. From Sandler's perspective, to improve the capacity of the ego to integrate perceptions and to provide

---

[2] The clinical application of the concept was illustrated in Sandler's (1959) report on Mrs. B, which showed how the feeling of safety overrides displeasure in terms of pain and suffering. This 'stress' can become 'reassurance'. Patterns of perception can represent safety, so success can be perceived as a threat and failure can become linked to feelings of familiarity and safety.

alternatives to pathological compromises, a school safety program would need to provide cognitive (ego integrating) skills to assist children and staff. These could include specific skills training to cope with power struggles in schools – including bully-victim-bystander prevention programs, drug and alcohol abuse education, and other primary, prevention physical and mental health education programs.

The Concept of Containment

Wilfred Bion (1959) chose a "container/contained" model that captures the feeling of safety in a somewhat different way by highlighting the interpersonal aspect of feeling safe. His idea was based on the capacity of the individual or group (the container) to make another individual feel safe by being able to absorb, hold, and process their positive and negative thoughts and feelings (projections). The negative thoughts often create feelings of unsafeness. The container/contained model is a most intimate one, where the container and contained are seen as a unit, for example, statements like "the kettle boils," illustrates that container and the contained are not functionally separate, the kettle is equated with what is in it; the water that boils. Bion in his container/contained metaphor and in his other writings on groups (Bion, 1961) was saying that the group and its members are a single functional unit that cannot be genuinely studied in isolation. The group, mostly through the medium of its leader, is endowed in the unconscious phantasy of its members with containment functions.

Bion points this out with zoological analogies: **Symbiotic Containment** creates a pathological passive dependency when the individual feels that he or she only has to have faith in an omnipotently powerful container (leader) to receive protection. This behavior is perhaps often actualized often in the schools that have the fantasy that security guards, metal detectors, and surveillance equipment are all that is necessary to ensure school safety. Bion's

Parasitic Containment is a much sicker form in which the group or individual feels hurt by the unpleasantness projected into him/her by others and thus, reacts in destructive ways. We see this phenomenon in schools with scapegoating climates where social aggression leads to unexpected outbreaks of violence and where teachers bully students and visa versa. The projective indentificatory processes are, of course, deeply embedded in each other and ultimately it is hard to see where the process originated. A teacher consulted ST as a patient after she had several experiences at school where she felt crazy and acted in ways out of character for her. For example, she slapped a student who had bitten her. Discussion revealed that she was ill prepared for a class of very disturbed children who bombarded her with demands she could not meet. A parent of one child blamed her threateningly for not having enough control in the classroom. She became depressed, had homicidal and suicidal thoughts, and then acted them out in the slapping incident. Brief therapy and a child development course at a local university helped her deal with the pathological attitudes projected into her.

A healthy **Commensal Containment** allows a natural give and take without dependency or destructiveness. Offering psychoanalysis to staff and students is neither desirable nor possible, the pieces of this complex puzzle can be integrated in a commensal containment by healthy teacher models, open communication, self-awareness, and training in relevant and appropriate skills. It is the open communication that insures a commensal container/contained relationship. The teacher, who can contain, is capable of using alpha function (logical thinking) to process the beta-elements (fragmented thinking) of the 21st Century classroom experience; and must not be blamed for failing to live up to the idealization created by a needy society. We must recognize that it is 'society' that expels its

unmetabolized (or unmetabolizable) experiences of racial hatred, poverty, social exclusion, inequality, family breakdown, and domestic violence into the classroom. While the classroom cannot contain more than a fraction of these tensions, undoubtedly the container-teacher would be immediately helped by understanding how to cope with his/her own personal reactions to different types of demands from students and situations. This form of insight can assist teachers in achieving control of the situation by understanding the psychology of the child and child development. One example of this type of program is that of Phyllis Cath, M.D., preschool teacher training.[3]

The Holding Environment

A related line of thinking was initiated by Donald Winnicott, an English pediatrician and psychoanalyst, who talked about the holding environment from a developmental perspective. Central to his ideas is the radical claim (Winnicott, 1962) that the strength or weakness of the child's ego is a function of the caregiver's capacity to respond appropriately to his initially absolute dependence. The baby's ego can only master and integrate the drives in so far as the mother can perceive and act on his rudimentary needs and intentions. Winnicott thus sees the stability and power of the infant's ego, prior to the separation of the mother from the self, as directly determined by the reflective function of the caregiver. "Good-enough mothering" ensures that the infant's ego becomes autonomous from the mother's ego support and that there is an inevitable detachment from the mother as part of the establishment of a separate personal self (Winnicott, 1960a; Winnicott, 1960b).

Homeostatic dysregulation, such as distressed crying, is an indication of momentary discontinuity of being but is also a creative gesture of the ego. The integration of ego nuclei is through good-enough mothering which the "holding" and "handling" environments entail

---

[3] Personal communication from Phyllis Cath, M.D., 2416 Webster Street, San Francisco, CA 94115

(Winnicott, 1962). The holding environment provides the setting for the fusion of aggression and love, allowing toleration of ambivalence and the emergence of concern, both of which contribute to the acceptance of responsibility (Winnicott, 1963). These ideas have clear implications for our experience of U.S. schools and for the creation of an environment with the potential to enable children to integrate aggression and love while retaining the creative gestures of the ego. It is precisely the lack of holding for natural aggression that can be so destructive of the child's capacity to learn. The school, traumatized by media images of violence, is unable to judge socially acceptable and unacceptable levels of frustration. Through harsh discipline, the environment communicates its incapacity to tolerate aggression, yet leaves the child with intense feelings of dissatisfaction, permitted to flow freely along school corridors and playgrounds.

Elsewhere, Winnicott highlighted how the holding environment serves to shield the infant from unbearable mental experience, unthinkable, primitive or archaic anxiety in the vulnerable process of moving from an unintegrated to an integrated state (Winnicott, 1962). The experience of continuity of being is thus seen as dependent on three interfacing factors: a) a sense of safety associated with experiencing the inner world, b) an ability to limit concern with external events, and c) the generation of spontaneous creative gestures. The true self can only evolve in the presence of an unobtrusive other who will not interrupt the continuity of experience of oneself. Here, Winnicott's view has much in common with Hegel's (1807) assertion that the self in its formation both loses itself in the other and also "supersedes" the other for it does not see the other as an essential being but in the other sees its own self" (Hegel, 1807, p. 111). A natural evolution of the self occurs when the person (the teacher) looking after the child does not unnecessarily impinge on him, by substituting

her own impulses while curtailing or redirecting the child's creative gestures. The adult needs to maintain her own sense of well being to act as a tension regulator for the child. The lack of "good-enough teaching" distorts the ego's functioning, forestalling the establishment of an internal environment that could become the essence of the self.

An "active and adaptive" handling environment contributes to the integration of bodily mental states establishing personalization. The handling of the baby is adaptive when he neither feels overwhelmed, nor experiences himself as a mere collection of organs and limbs surmounted by a wobbling head. The mother's sensitivity to the infant's affective state (mood) is critical, as is the coherence lent to him by the goal-orientedness of his physical being (activity as opposed to passivity). Winnicott considered sucking one's thumb or smiling after a good feed to be creative gestures, because they were within the infant's control. If handled satisfactorily, the baby looks at the mother's face rather than breast, his concerns with mind and meaning come to override his preoccupation with his physical needs. Similar considerations apply if the school environment is to maintain its capacity to promote learning and creativity. Physical safety of the child is paramount. Discipline must be there to ensure that "handling" is neither oppressive and inhibiting of creativity nor so lax as to generate overwhelming anxiety. Winnicott's recommendations are in the direction of empowering the child to exercise increasing control over this social context.

This developmental perspective was further elaborated by Ogden (1986), who showed how the role of the (mother) must engage the child in a delicate dance and dialectical ritual over the period of the child's growth to enable the child, by this holding function to grow up into a healthy individual who can relate to others as whole objects. At first the mother protects the child completely from the terrifying awareness of its smallness and lack

of capacity to function, which Ogden calls the knowledge of its separateness. In some ways the mother provides an illusion that the outside world and the inside world are one and the same thing (i.e., within her). Over time, as the brain grows and the body enlarges, the external mother is internalized as an image in the baby who can soothe himself/herself with the thought of that mother. Ogden calls this developmental achievement, "playing alone in the presence of the absent mother and in the absence of the present mother" (p. 200). Finally, the mother has to allow the child to come to terms with the unrealistic aspects of this all powerful, phantasized internalized mother in favor of the real mother with her defects as well as strengths.

These ideas can be translated into the developmental tasks of the growing child in the school environment. Thus, a psychodynamically safe school must take into account the child's developmental tasks. From a practical, although simplified, point of view it seems that there are at least three stages in the complex development of children that need to be taken into account by school staff:

 K-3 children develop parental relationships with the teachers and the child functions often to attract his/her teacher's attention. In the Peaceful Schools project, we make use of a PE program called The Gentle Warrior Program to address this need since children of this age often deal with anxiety about their biological smallness in part by hyperactivity and they often learn better while moving. The safe school environment in K-3 allows a child to play and grow in an illusory space where the child is protected by the teacher/mother from fully realizing his/her helplessness, thus optimizing the academic climate.

Grades 4-7 children begin to develop their own peer groups and peer leaders and instead, do not turn as much to parental figures for reassurance. Thus, the holding

environment has to deal with the developmental task of giving up the image of this protective mother and becoming instead, aware of the power of peer individual and group relationships in the real world. In the 6th and 7th grades, physical bullying is often prominent and the teaching environment is most stressful for both parents and school staff. Power struggles between children in the early stages can often be contained by adults who are good at holding in Winnicott's sense. In the 4-7th grade, the Oedipal competitiveness represents a phase of weaning from the caregiver with the child developing knowledge of his/her strengths and limitations, i.e., not everybody is a perfect parent and not all relationships work out. To feel safe children must have a realistic grasp of their own strengths and weaknesses and also be able to perceive them in others. A healthy school environment perhaps using the medium of sports and academic challenge can foster a healthy growth of competition in children and increasing feelings of personal competence, but a school with pathological power struggles and tyrannical coaches can have a very deleterious effect on the children's sense of safety.

In the **8th-12th grades**, when there is clear evidence of the development of verbal and more abstract forms of reasoning, children tend to sublimate psychological tasks in more intellectual ways and appear more independent of the holding functions of the school and parent although not ever completely so. Through the vicissitudes of identity formation and the risks of premature identity foreclosure (Erikson, 1974), young adults including many boys involved in the school shootings, are in danger of adopting extreme identities of a pathological nature as they grow out of and through the weaning process including the incredibly psychologically frightening separation from a supportive family and community. The fears of separating and being on one's own i.e., developing the capacity to be alone (Winnicott 1958), is not an easily achieved developmental task.

Thus, a good school environment needs to provide the opportunities for the tasks and challenges that encourage independence and separation of the child. Good schools do this using many creative approaches including extensive and sometimes very challenging field trips and projects and by giving children more and more responsibility for their own learning. Such schools in our experience are ones where the teachers are very much aware of their holding and containing functions and of the developmental tasks of children.

The School as a Securely Attached Family

A rather quaint early definition of the school (Chessick, 1999; p. 77) was that it was a theatre for self-improvement of the young. As old fashioned as this 18th century concept seems, it is in many ways ahead of its time, if psychology is an integral part of the process. Pathologically unsafe school environments in many ways mimic poor quality parenting. Attachment researchers over recent years have highlighted the importance of affect modulation as the primary task of the caregiver-infant relationship (Ainsworth, et al. 1978; Sroufe, 1996; and Fonagy, 2001). The child's signals are understood and responded to by the caregiver and the signals gradually acquire meaning and, through internalization, become part of a process of self-regulation. Ultimately, the expectation is acquired that arousal no longer leads to disorganization. Security is an expectation of safety.

In the context of the dyadic affect regulatory system of child and caregiver, it is the child's expectation of being comforted, soothed, and made to feel safe, in the context of fear generated by internal of external conditions (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980), which creates an internal feeling of safety and security. The securely attached child explores a strange environment readily in the presence of the attachment figure, becomes anxious in the

presence of novelty in the absence of the object, and actively seeks contact with the caregiver upon a reunion that followed a brief separation.

The burgeoning field of attachment research has described a variety of patterns of attachments that create pathological outcomes later on in life (Lyons-Ruth and Jacobitz, 1999; Main and Morgan, 1996; Main, 1995; and Dozier, Stovall and Albus, 1999). Schools clearly have a role in continuing the process of internalization leading to affect regulation. The school has a role in modulating the affect of children, to create the expectation of control by its staff, which is a central factor in children feeling safe. Schools, as systems, may be characterized in terms of the manner in which they deal with fear. The attachment system has as its primary function the down regulation of fear in the presence of conditions that biologically provoke it. A secure system accurately recognizes the emotional state of those within its ambit and creates the well-founded expectation that distress will reliably be met by comforting. Confidence in this belief leads to a system that may be characterized as secure, where the systemic strategies for regulating affect would enable the school and any or all of its sub-systems to restore homeostatic emotional balance relatively rapidly once emotion has been aroused. The characteristics of this system will only be revealed when dysregulation has occurred – when the school has been challenged by some external or internal event (e.g., lack of discipline, community violence, etc.). A secure school would regularly adopt a tolerant open strategy dealing with dysregulation by well-structured interactions, a flexibly applied wide range of communications patterns that permit individual expression and responds meaningfully to it. The signs of dysregulation are neither exaggerated nor minimized. Language is respectful and participatory. Communications are clearly acknowledged and individual contributions are expanded by other participants rather than

ignored, denied, or dramatized. Evaluative comments are taken seriously and there is a sense

of coherence in communication patterns that implies collaborativeness

Such systems must be contrasted with insecure systems. These schools may carry the

appearance of well-regulated organizations but this appearance collapses under the pressure

of a dysregulating event. Behind the apparently harmonious picture presented to a visitor are

significant imbalances in communication, where there is limited self-expression for the

members of the group with the aim of avoiding tensions. A dismissive attachment pattern

can develop in a school environment where there is little interest in children and where

parents and teachers are preoccupied with their own problems and overwhelmed by matters

like feeling unsafe, an unresponsive administration, conditions of employment, low salaries,

etc. As these schools fail to provide a sense of safety in relation to threat both in children and

adults, there is no sense of belonging on the part of those who participate in these systems.

Separation is not an obstacle. Truancy rates on the part of the students and abscenteeism

rates on the part of the staff are expected to be high. The emotional character of relationships

is avoided in communications between students and teachers and between teachers

themselves. There is a denial of anxiety and a devaluing of the importance of human

relationships in meeting the challenges that life presents. There may be a false bravado and

denial of all problems ("there is no bullying in our school") and an idealization of the school

environment. The atmosphere is marked by the absence of a tendency for members of the

group to seek each other out at times of stress. As the avoidance infant in the strange

situation does not seek the caregiver upon reunion, children in avoidant/dismissive schools

deny the importance of interpersonal relationships; they feel neither known or wish to know

others in the school. The school thus divides or fractionates and small sub-systems within

the school exist without reference to or concern for each other. The child feels unknown and therefore able to perform acts where a feeling of belonging might be expected to serve a powerful inhibitory function. Avoidant/dismissive patterns may be present in some of the schools where there have been shootings although further research and study is needed.

In other schools, the anxious resistant pattern appears to apply. These patterns are like those characterized by infants who fail to be comforted by the parent following separation. At the systemic level these tend to be "anxious" systems that upregulate problems, readily panic in the face of challenges, and are most likely to call in consultants to assist with the difficulties they face but are least likely to be able to successfully implement any recommendations that such consultants might make. There are no clear lines of communications in these schools. The school is likely to have its well studied often considered history of problems. There is likely to be an absence of a clear hierarchical structure, or if such structure exists the participants mostly undermine it. There is confusion about most relationship issues and domains of discipline are often confused with other domains, e.g. relationships, safety, etc. The absence of clarity creates an environment where high levels of affect are often evident and teachers frequently show anger to students and to each other.

Modern theories of school functioning give an important place to involvement by parents. This is an almost impossible task in inner city schools and ironically, as well in the affluent schools where there is often too much parental involvement; with involved parents being more interested in their own children getting a fair deal than in the school as a community. Thus, parental involvement can be very much a double-edged sword. Lack of parental involvement should, however, not discourage the school consultant who can

influence staff even without parental participation, to become sensitive to the child as an independent sentient being with a mind and unique thoughts and feelings. With this psychodyamically informed support, a process called mentalizing (Fonagy, et al., in press) will develop more normally; the child's capacity to see himself/herself in others, to perceive others as separate, and to feel comfortable in expressing these thoughts.

In summary then, a school environment to be safe psychodynamically, must engage and enable the egos of all of its participants to develop a background of safety by helping the ego perceive a cohesive, understandable whole. At first, this atmosphere is provided by the mother/teacher who must be sensitive to the developmental tasks of the child and allows for a gradual weaning process as the child grows up into a peer related more external focus in high school. Group dynamics, power dynamics, competitive schools and verbal and symbolic capacities can enhance or inhibit the child's capacities to both crystallize and identify and deal with the frightening aspects of separation from that home environment. It is inevitable that the school functions as an important piece of the child's psychological matrix. The structure of the school both physical and psychologically can create a connectedness between children that is healthy or pathological. Attachment research suggests that schools that do not develop a feeling of involvement with the teaching staff (dismissive patterns) may well be setting the scene for violence. Social factors vastly impact how a school functions including: pressures towards violence from media; abusive and neglectful childrearing practices; and catastrophes like the destruction of the nuclear family, the climbing divorce rate, and increasing mobility of families -- all mitigating against the possibility of a safe, stable school and community. A number of schools have created even further feelings of a lack of safety by the ways in which they are grouped. For example, it is not uncommon for

middle schools to have only two grades like 6th and 7th or 7th and 8th grades with an inevitable more than 50% turnover every year. In such a setting it would be impossible to develop a cohesive connectedness between the children.

Social Aggression in Schools:

The complex social context of the school and its group and power dynamics have a potent influence on the individual's feeling of being safe. A concept from the Tavistock model of group relations is helpful. Authorization**,** i.e., being able to act within a role determined by the task that you have is one example. A well-functioning social system authorizes tasks that create a feeling of safety and connectedness. In pathologically authorized systems there are internal pressures created by administration, politics, power struggles, media, pathological child rearing fads and other cultural factors that can create what one writer, Saul Bellow called a "moronic inferno" Chessick (p. 76, 1999). Anyone connected with the functioning of the school, must feel authorized to act in role according to a defined healthy task. The way schools are created, funded, and administered by politicians is an important part of this feeling of safety. Media and Internet influence, violent movies and fads, and fashions are all potential contributors to the dynamics of the social climate in schools. Alan Bloom (1988), in his sleeper best seller, The Closing of the American Mind, indicts higher education for the degradation of a quality educational environment by teaching to a degraded oversimplified "democratic" concept of equality that encourages conformity to a weak and insipid norm. The punishment/surveillance philosophy of our culture encourages paranoia concretized in metal detectors and video surveillance equipment. In some inner city schools (Devine 1996), the first one or two periods are spent running children through metal detectors rather than through any academic learning process. In these schools visitors are not

encouraged to come on Mondays and Fridays since children generally observe a three-day school week!

In other research (Twemlow and Sacco, 1996; Twemlow and Sacco, 1997; and Twemlow, 2001b; in press) we have documented that a pervasive and untrammeled attitude of competitiveness at all costs can lead to an individual violent mindset reflected later in community philosophies that are unforgiving materialistic and envious. Such mindsets can lead to a downgrading of the quality life in communities, which we have described as violent communities (Twemlow & Sacco, 1999). Such communities have an unforgiving attitude towards the poor and the weak and value economic successes far more highly than compassion. Since, to paraphrase the anonymous African proverb, "it takes a whole village to educate a child," it is no surprise that such socially aggressive attitudes are reflected in the children in schools and the atmosphere within schools. We have hypothesized at length that there is a social power dynamic between the victimizer, the victim and the bystander audience to this sick drama. These co-created roles are by definition dependent for their viciousness upon the intensity and sadism of the power struggles, and we have described a theory for lethal violence in schools based on an understanding of this dynamic (Twemlow, 2000).

A helpful addition to these speculations is the notion of a chronic failure of mentalization in violent environments. A partial failure of mentalization creates for the witness to the power struggle (the bystander) an avenue to the pleasure of sadism. In order for the child to be able to enjoy being witness to the suffering of an other, he must be able to distance himself from the internal world of the other at the same time as benefiting from using the other as a vehicle for unwanted (usually frightened and disavowed) parts of their

own self projected into the victim. Bystanders do not lack empathy, because it is precisely through projective identification with the victim (and or the bully) that the child is able to experience himself as more coherent and complete. Thus, affect inconsistent with a coherent sense of self is then seen as belonging to the victim of the vicious power dynamic. The child's mentalizing is however limited by the environment in that the suffering and pain of the victim need never be represented as mental states in their consciousness. The fault is not in the child. Mentalizing is a fragile developmental function that is not acquired fully until early adulthood (if then). In most social contexts, it needs environmental support and requires a social system to scaffold it and ensure that reflection on the mental states of self and other is relatively comprehensive and covers painful as well as neutral mental states.

How pervasive is this social aggression? We examined 10,131 children and adolescents from 3-11 grades in a West Coast city as part of a violence audit of the school system. In this midsize community of public schools, the children were predominately lower income with 73% of the school community being non-white. Four broad areas were measured: victimization of self, aggression towards others, perceived responses to victimizations, and attitudes towards aggression. The findings to be reported elsewhere (Vernberg, et al., in preparation) showed that somewhere between 10 and 20% of all children in all grades received a vicarious thrill and were not hesitant to express pleasure at seeing other children bullied. The middle grades (7, 8 and 9) were lowest in empathy for the victim and highest in aggression towards others. In the whole sample there was worrying evidence of a slow social conditioning towards seeing violence as positive, feeling less distress for victims, and increasingly avoiding any involvement with victims of aggression. In some

schools in that system where this tendency was not present, clearly some quality had created a climate of safety in the school.

The school is a unique culture and is the main stage for the development of a social identity in children. As we have discussed adolescents are especially sensitive to peer pressures, and are psychologically more responsive to their peers than to adults especially when immersed in an "identify diffusion", including conflicts around authority that appear to be part of normal adolescent development (Erikson 1974). Adolescents are secretive about emerging new roles and identities that often collide with the ideals of their parents. Thus a child may experiment with many faces, a number of which come into direct clash with the important social attitudes of parents. Eric Erikson described negative identity as a reaction formation identity for a child; for example, the minister's daughter who becomes a prostitute or a marine officer's son who becomes a hippy. These and other complex role shifts are sometimes part of the normal extremes of adolescence and require considerable understanding and tolerance of teachers, school staff, and parents. It is clear that parents have certain incorrect assumptions about schoolteachers including that:

- Teachers know what is happening at school

- Children know how to relate to each other, instinctively.

- Children grow out of their problems quite quickly

- Power struggles between children are not the parents business, and children should be left to solve their own power struggles.

- Popularity of children is a passing phase and is harmless.

- All or most of the problems at school are caused by crazy or L.D. children.

These assumptions are from a psychodynamic view, often wish fulfilling and enable the parent to avoid responsibility for what is going on both with their children and in the climate of the school. In turn, parents and teachers over react to:

- Academic success (overvalued)

- Attendance at school

- Prowess at sport

- Self-disciplined activities including homework

- Participation in school activities and clubs

- Peer affiliation

- Children who cause no problems and ask few questions (no problem children)

- Obedience

- Evidence of misconduct

In other words, parents and teachers value the sort of wishes they may have had for themselves when at school, but which most likely, if they were honest with themselves, rarely achieved, at least consistently. Such a stereotype also ignores the fact that obedient, high-performing children are not necessarily healthy.

One factor that sets up a climate for social aggression is when parents and teachers are not good examples or models for children by virtue of their own behavior. For example, adults often participate in dominant social groups that humiliate others. (Twemlow, 2000). We have pointed to institutionalized social rituals such as:

- Hazing in colleges

- Excommunication in churches

- Black listings in unions

- Racial discrimination in country clubs

These bullying exclusion rituals are practiced by the very adults who expect their children to be non violent and affiliated with each other without power struggles.

In a study of teacher's perceptions of other teachers who bully students (Twemlow, et al submitted) we surveyed the attitude of 116 teachers from 7 US urban elementary schools and found that teachers who experienced bullying when they were students in school, are more likely to bully students and to experience bullying by students both in classrooms and outside the classrooms. Teachers perceived two types of bullying teachers, a sadistic bully who is envious and mean to children and the bully victim type of teacher who looses control of the classroom by being passive and then scream and bully in an attempt to achieve control. These types in fact are no different than our clinical types of bullying children we have observed (Twemlow, 2000).

Social aggression in schools is not likely to ameliorate until the aggressiveness of adults both teachers and parents is also admitted and dealt with. In children, such social aggression, can be physical and often is especially with children in middle schools but later becomes less physical and more focused indirectly in rumors, scapegoating exclusionary games, and loyalty, battles, teasing, public humiliation, nasty tricks, feuds and backbiting. Parents and teachers often confront children caught in the cycle of social aggression with an impossible task: children who have been beaten down by this aggression or grandiosely enhanced by it, do not have the mindset to achieve the type of assertiveness that adults including teachers wish for them. Such highly valued social aggressiveness involves:

- Being goal focused

- Active upward social positioning

- Destroying obstacles to success

- Performing for approval

- An intensive competitive spirit.

- Developing an us vs. them mentality

Ideally there needs to be a parent-school team where parents, even if not present at school, support schools in a program to develop a collaborate attitude toward social aggression as follows:

- Social aggression viewed as a school and a home problem. (Neither expects the other to solve the problem alone).

- Needs to be dealt with immediately it appears.

- Needs to be dealt with in a non-blaming collaborative way, with a group rather than an individual focus.

- Needs to be an ongoing assessment of the climate of the school with the enhancement of prevention programming.

Ethological research especially into complex primates like chimpanzees, as models of human behavior (DeWaal, 1989) suggest, that chimpanzees are capable of terminating serious and violent conflict for the greater good of the social structure. Chimpanzees embrace and kiss after fights and other non-human primates engage in similar reconciliation. It is as if primates believe that when survival depends on mutual assistance with the expression of aggression is constrained by the need to maintain beneficial relationships. DeWaal comments that it is only when social relationships are valued that one can expect the full compliment of natural checks and balances. Here in lies the main problem and paradox. With the large size and complexity of the human brain, we seem to be able to override these survival related checks and balances to display instead a cruelty and sadism of untrammeled vision and horror, without a single survival benefit.

Creating a Peaceful School-Learning Environment. (C.A.P.S.L.E.)

Approaches to school violence can be classified in many ways; some programs focus on identifying at risk and disturbed children and placing them in mental health treatment and remedial programs. Another set of programs address aspects of the social climate of schools including power struggles, drug and alcohol abuse education, peer relationships, and intense parental involvement. Yet another set of approaches address health-promoting activities encouraging preventive health related actions in schools. Different schools make different uses of all or some of these approaches and research shows that individualizing the approach to the school is likely the best approach. In our own approach to the application of psychodynamic concepts to schools, we begin with a detailed assessment through a violence audit of power struggles in schools. This violence audit includes an anonymous questionnaire given to children in grades 3-12. It provides assessment of bullying of self by others, bullying of others by self, responses to bullying and attitudes towards aggression. In addition, dangerous behaviors and injuries are surveyed including the use of weapons, gangs and delinquency and physical injury. Harassment, ostracism and intolerance, are assessed with items covering; in groups and out casts, ethnic tensions, sexualized harassment and sexual orientation. Teachers are surveyed to tap their attitudes towards the positiveness or the negativeness of the school learning environment and how safe they feel in school themselves. Together with demographic information on the school district, an individual violence profile can be developed for each school which helps to assess individual school needs, and school district trends.

One such program being extensively researched is called The Peaceful Schools Project (Twemlow, et al 2001). This project is currently two thirds of the way completed in a

randomized trial involving nine elementary schools in the Midwest. The project involves an experimental intervention focused on reducing power dynamics and power struggles in schools with two control conditions one involving traditional medical consultation and referral by a child psychiatrist and a no treatment control group:

The Peaceful Schools approach has found that to be useful and practical an intervention must:

- Have a high level of teacher and administrators buy in and thus be focused on acutely felt need in the school instead of being purely administratively mandated.

- Should not pathologize for children for a number of reasons; not only social stigmatization but also expensive referral to the medical care system. Of course children that need psychiatric care and other individual treatment interventions would receive it. The program should focus on the climate as a whole and not only on problem children alone.

- The intervention should not interrupt the educational process and especially should not be an add on to an already overloaded curriculum. Programs of this nature need to be psychologically comprehensive and be in place for at least three years.

- The program needs to be low in cost and were possible able to be run by volunteers. Our program can be run by volunteers at very low cost provided that a significant amount of time is available for a "point person" in the school usually the school counselor or social worker. Minimum initial training models with ongoing supervision reduces the time consuming and expensive process of heavy initial training which is often the preferred approach in teacher training.

- The goal for the program needs to be realistic, that is not overloaded with research based assessment and needs to be developed with much input from teachers as to the individual needs of the school and where possible instituted by either teachers, other school personnel or teacher controlled volunteers.

Peaceful Schools Program Elements:

There were three core and two support components of this intervention. **Positive climate campaign** included a campaign to emphasize the learning of social skills by all staff including children, teachers, administrative staff, volunteers etc. in the school, not merely a

process for children to learn.   The roles of bullying, bystanders, and being a victim are identified in whatever ways is most effective in the schools, including the use of posters, competitions, magnets, buttons and regular classroom discussion group.   A family power struggles work shop we entitled, "Six People One Bathroom" illustrates the way power struggles can occur in home as well as in school and regularly offered, in part to enlist the help of parents.   Peace banner and classroom banners are used to celebrate fighting free days. Gradually, the language that children use in schools to cope with power struggles changes as their coping skills improve.

Classroom Management Plan.   Teachers are trained to discipline using more rewards than consequences and to focus on how each incident reflects the whole classroom climate rather than merely punishing one child.   Thus each class identifies and participates in the disciplinary event.   An example will illustrate this approach: If a teacher is hit by a spitball on the back of the head while writing on the blackboard she turns in anger, identifies the child and sends him to the principal.   In the Peaceful Schools approach, the teacher would take a break from teaching and ask the class to identify the roles; the bully being the child who throws the spitball, the victim being the teacher and the by standing audience being all of the children who laughed at the teachers angry response thus vicariously participating in the bullying incident.   If the behavior is repeated, she next reinforces this insight with a power struggle referral alert form (PSRA).   The PSRA lists the bully victim or bystanding behaviors involved with options to change being discussed.   The school counselor rather than the principal is in the referral loop, to turn the DR incident into a learning experience for the child sometimes even involving parents.   Evidence shows that this reduces the number of

disciplinary referrals to the principal and the number of incidents that a classroom teacher is unable to handle (Twemlow, Fonagy et al 2001).

The Gentle Warrior Program is a PE program that usually meets the standards for elementary schools physical education requirements and is easily learned by Physical Education teachers. Modules in the program are derived from defensive martial arts emphasize relaxation, self control, the importance of self respect and respect for others, stretching and strengthening exercises, defensive positioning, balancing and falling safely, and blocking and release techniques. Children enjoy role-playing, the bully, and victim bystander roles and learn a variety of ways for non-violent management of such behavior. The work of the class is reinforced by Tips for Parents circulated in the school folders each week.

These core programs are easily learned and enjoyed by teachers and students and can be supported by **Adult mentorship.** The function of adult mentors is to provide containment and a holding environment necessary to a child's development. **A peer mentorship** program takes advantage of the intense way children learn from each other. Nearby high schools to which eventually elementary students may go, are often sources of such mentors. We have used problem high school students in this role with a mutually beneficial effect.

Result of this program will be reported when the study is finished but preliminary findings point in the direction of the hypothesis: What is most striking about the intervention in schools when compared to the medical consultation and no treatment control groups is the marked increase in helping behavior in children towards each other, representing the enhancement of bystanders role to intervene in the bullying process. For schools in this project, it is quite common for teachers to have little to do during recess fights. Children

intervene themselves and resolve the conflicts using the language and techniques of the program without much involvement or supervision by teachers at all.

In summary then, the project uses a psychodynamic framework embodied in the various components: The important role of noncoercive adult authority is epitomized in an insighted and reward-based classroom management plan and by the holding and containing function of adult and peer mentors. Such interventions allow children the reflective space to develop and grow and play in a way not so inhibited by conflict, since the play of children is a necessary psychosocial moratorium to allow normal growth. The PE Gentle Warrior Program enhances sublimentary defenses and intensifies empathic non-dismissive attachment patterns with teachers. The positive climate campaign provides a medium for learning a unique language and social skills as part of the cognitive enhancement of ego functions.

It is not an uncommon experience that in schools where the intervention has been successful, the changes in children stimulate the interest of conflicted parents who then become more involved with the school out of curiosity. On more than one occasion a child in achieving a modicum of peacefulness in a securely attached school, facilitated the treatment of parents who the child knows are in need of help.

Fig.1 is a diagram used to train teachers and counselors to connect the concepts of power struggles and power dynamics with social skills and values. Definitions of these sub groupings of bystander, bully and victim roles are available elsewhere (Twemlow et al 1996, Twemlow, 2000).

(Fig. 1 about here)

What is a Good Education?: A Challenge for the Future

The role of the teacher as a model rather than the teacher as a conveyor of academic knowledge, bears examination.   Bertrand Russell (1969) describes his views on what later became known as his "unpopular essay" on teaching. He says, " So far as knowledge is concerned, a man should be aware of the minuteness of himself and his immediate environment in relation to the world in time and space. He should see his own country not *only* as home, but also as one among the countries of the world, all with an equal right to live and think and feel. He should see his own age in relation to the past and the future, and be aware that its own controversies will seem as strange to future ages as those in the past seem to us now. On the side of the emotions, a very similar enlargement from the purely personal is needed if a man is to be truly civilized…. The civilized man, where he cannot admire will aim rather at understanding than at reprobating. He will seek rather to discover and remove the impersonal causes of evil then to hate the man who is in its grip. All this should be in the mind and the heart of the teacher, and if it is in his mind and heart he will convey it in his teaching to the young who are in his care" (p. 117-118). What more needs to be said? Why should this be an impossible ideal in our technologically advanced and sophisticated society? Our forefathers had a similar idea. An "academical village," was Thomas Jefferson's idea of an academic utopia in a university. His idea is exemplified in the layout of the University of Virginia.   Jefferson built and designed this campus centered a round a lawn, where the faculty, students and teaching classrooms and Library are together in a circle of buildings connected to each other. In Jefferson's view, faculty and students would live together, and thus learn from each other in personal as well as academic ways with intensity and devotion to learning being brought about by a personal as well as an academic relationship. If our

schools are to become safe havens again, some version of Russell and Jefferson's vision will most likely be necessary.

Figure 1

CHANGING SOCIAL ROLES AND VALUES IN THE CAPSLE SCHOOLS

Role		Changing the Power Dynamic	Resulting in Social Skill/Value
Bully:	Sadistic Bully	If you stop forcing people to do things your way	you will have more friends
	Bully-Victim	If you stop bullying, then complaining about people bullying you	then you may be seen as more stable & more self-reliant
Bystander:	Avoidant BS	If you acknowledge a problem with Bully-Victim-Bystander relationships	then you have the chance to be more honest with yourself in other situations
	Bully BS	If you stop looking like you are enjoying other people's pain	you may be seen as more gentle and considerate of others
	Ambivalent BS	In making a decision to help others	you will show people your courage and kindness
	Victim BS	In saying no to the bully	you will show self-respect and your assertiveness to others
Victims:	Submissive Victim	If you stop giving in and giving up	others will respect you and you will respect yourself more
	Martyr	If you stop showing self pity	you will have more friends
	Rescuer	If you stop letting others take advantage of you	you will show others your assertiveness and self control

IF YOU DON'T, YOU WILL ⬇ **IF YOU DO, YOU WILL** ⬇
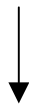
BE an angry, whiny, often complaining, threatening student with very few friends
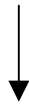
BECOME a respectful, reliable, honest, kind, assertive student with lots of friends

⬇ ⬇

AN UNHAPPY CAMPER ☹ **A GENTLE WARRIOR** ☺

References

Ainsworth, M. (1989). Attachments beyond infancy. *American Psychologist*, 44, 709-716.

Ainsworth, M., Blehar, M., Waters, E., & Wall, S. (1978). *Patterns of attachment: A psychological study of the strange situation*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Bion, W. (1959). Attacks on linking. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 40, 308-315.

Bion, W. (1961). *Experiences in groups*. London: Tavistock.

Bion, W. (1970). *Attention and interpretation*. London: Heinemann.

Bleich, J., Ingersoll, S., & Devine, J. (2000). *National campaign against youth violence Academic Advisory Council report*. Boston, MA: John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

Bloom, A. (1988). *The closing of the American mind*. New York: Touchstone Books.

Bonny, A., Britto, M., Klosterman, B., Hornuny, R., & Slap, G. (2000). School disconnectedness: Identifying adolescents at risk. *Pediatrics,* 106(5), 1017-1021.

Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and loss, Vol. 1: Attachment*. London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis.

Bowlby, J. (1973). *Attachment and loss, Vol 2: Separation: Anxiety and anger*. London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis.

 Bowlby, J. (1980). *Attachment and loss, Vol 3: Loss: Sadness and depression*. London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis.

Bowlby, J. (1988). The role of attachment in personality development. In J. Bowlby, (Ed.), *Parent child attachment and human health development*. London: Routledge.

Caprara, G., Barbanelli, C., Pastorelli, C., Bandura, A., & Zimbardo, P. (2000). Prosocial foundations of children's academic achievement. *Psychological Science*, 11(4), 302-306.

Chessick, R. (1999). *Emotional illness and creativity: A psychoanalytic and phenomenologic study*. Madison, CT: International Universities Press, Inc.

Devine, J. (1996). *Maximum security: The culture of violence in inner-city schools*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

DeWaal, F. (1989). Peacemaking among primates. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Dozier, M., Stovall, K., & Albus, K. (1999). Attachment and psychopathology in adulthood. In J. Cassidy & P.R. Shaver, (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research and clinical applications* (pp. 497-519). New York: Guilford.

Erikson, E. (1974). *Dimensions of a new identity*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

Espelage, D., Bosworth, K., & Simon, T. (2000). Examining the social context of bullying behaviors in early adolescence. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 78(3), 326-333.

Federman, J. (1996). National television violence study I. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Federman, J. (1997). National television violence study II. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Federman, J. (1998). National television violence study III. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fisher, K. & Kettl, P. (2001). Trends in school violence: Are our schools safe? In M. Shafi & S. Shaffi, (Eds.), *School violence: Assessment, mangement, prevention* (pp. 73-83). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc.

Flaherty, L. (2001). School violence and the school environment. In M. Shafii & S. Shafii (Eds.), *School violence: Assessment, management, prevention* (pp. 25-51)*.* Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc.

Fonagy, P. (2001). *Atachment theory and psychoanalysis*. New York: Other Press.

Fonagy, P., Gergely, G., Jurist, E., & Target, M. (in press). *Affect regulation and mentalization: Developmental, clinical and theoretical perspectives*. New York: Other Press.

Gilgun, J. (1996). Human development and adversity in ecological perspective, part 2: Three patterns. *Families in society*, 77(8), 459-476.

Gregory, R. (2001). Parallel themes: Community psychology and Maori culture in Aotearoa. *Journal of Community Psychology,* 29(1), 19-27.

Haigh, R. (1996). The matrix in milieu: The ghost in the machine. In J. Georgas & M. Manthouli, et al. (Eds.), *Contemporary psychology in Europe: Theory, research, and applications* (pp. 288-302). Kirkland, WA: Hogrefe & Huber Publishers.

Hegel, G. (1807). *The phenomenology of the spirit*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hemmings, A. (2000). The 'hidden' corridor curriculum. *High School Journal*, 83(2), 1-10.

Hermann, I. (1923). Zur psychologie der chimpanzen. *Internationale Zeitschrift fur Psychoanalyse,* 9, 80-87.

Johnson, J., Cohen, P., Smailes, E., Kasen, S., Oldham, J., Skodol, A., & Brooks, J. (2000). Adolescent personality disorders associated with violence and criminal behavior during adolescence and early adulthood. *American Journal of Psychiatry,* 157, 1406-1412.

Joshi, PT., Kaschak, DG. (1998). Exposure to violence and trauma: questionnaire for adolescents. *Int. Rev Psychiatry* 10: 28 – 215.

Kelly, J. (1990). Changing contexts and the field of community psychology. *American journal of community psychology,* 18(6), 769-792.

Liska, A. & Baccaglini, W. (1990). Feeling safe by comparison: Crime in the newspapers. *Social Problems*, 37(3), 360-374.

Lowe, S. (2000). Creating community: Art for community development. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 29(3), 357-386.

Lowry, K. (2000). United States probation/pretrial officers' concerns about victimization and officer safety training. *Federal Probation,* 64(1), 51-55.

Lyons-Ruth, K. & Jacobovitz, D. (1999). Attachment disorganization: Unresolved loss, relational violence and lapses in behavioral and attentional strategies. In J. Cassidy & P. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment theory and research* (pp.520-554). New York: Guilford.

Main, M. (1995). Recent studies in attachment: Overview with selected implications for clinical work. In S. Goldberg, R. Muir, & J. Kerr (Eds.), *Attachment theory: Social, developmental, and clinical perspectives* (pp. 407-474). Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press, Inc.

Main, M. & Morgan, H. (1996). Disorganization and disorientation in infant strange situation behavior: Phenotypic resemblance to dissociative states. In L. Michelson & W. Ray (Eds.), *Handbook of dissociation: Theoretical, empirical, and clinical perspectives* (pp. 107-138). New York, NY: Plenum Press.

Ogden, T. (1986). *The matrix of the mind: Object relations and the psychoanalytic dialogue.* Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc.

Overstreet, S. & Braun, S. (2000). Exposure to community violence and post-traumatic stress symptoms: Mediating factors. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 70(2), 263-271.

Rachman, S. (1984). Agoraphobia – a safety-signal perspective. *Behavioral Research and Therapy*, 22, 59-70.

Reese, L., Vera, E., & Thompson, K. (2001). A qualitative investigation of perceptions of violence risk factors in low-income African American children. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology,* 30(2), pp. 161-171.

Russell, B. (1969). Unpopular essays. New York: Simon & Shuster.

Sacco, F. & Twemlow, S. (1997). School violence reduction: A model Jamaican secondary school program. *Community Health Journal,* 33(3), 229-234.

Sandler, J. (1959). On the repetition of early childhood relationships in late psychosomatic disorder. In *Society for psychosomatic research: The nature of stress disorder* (pp. 187-195). London: Hutchinson.

Sandler, J. (1960). The background of safety. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 41, 191-198.

Sandler, J. (1987). *From safety to the superego: Selected papers of Joseph Sandler.* New York: Guilford Press.

Sandler, J. (1989). *Dimensions of psychoanalysis.* London: Karnac Books and Madison, CT: International Universities Press.

Sandler, J. (1989). Toward a reconsideration of the psychoanalytic theory. In A. Cooper, O. Kernberg, & E. Person (Eds.), *Psychoanalysis: Toward the second century (pp. 91-110),* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Schaffer, C. & Anundsen, K. (1993). *Creating community anywhere: Finding support and connection in a fragmented world.* New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Perigee Books.

Sommer, B. (1990). Favorite places of Estonian adolescents. *Children's Environments Quarterly*. 7(4), 32-36.

Sroufe, L. (1996). *Emotional development: The organization of emotional life in the early years*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Twemlow, S. (1995a). The psychoanalytic foundations of a dialectical approach to the victim/victimizer relationship. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis,* 23(4), 545-561.

Twemlow, S. (1995b). The psychoanalytic foundations of a dialectical approach to the victim/victimizer relationship. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis,* 23(4), 563-580.

Twemlow, S. & Sacco, F. (1998). The application of traditional martial arts practice and theory in the treatment of violent adolescents. *Adolescence*, 33(131), 505-518.

Twemlow, S. (2000). The roots of violence: Converging psychoanalytic explanatory models for power struggles and violence in schools. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, LXIX(4), 741-785.

Twemlow, S. (2001a). A crucible for murder: The social context of violent children. Submitted for publication.

Twemlow, S. (2001b). Modifying violent communities by enhancing altruism: A vision of possibilities. In press, *Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies.*

Twemlow, S., Fonagy, P., & Sacco, F. (2001a). An innovative psychodynamically influenced intervention to reduce school violence. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 40(3), 377-379.

Twemlow, S.W., Fonagy, P., Sacco, F., Brethour, J. Teacher's perceptions of other teachers who bully students. MS submitted for publication.

Twemlow, S., Fonagy, P., & Sacco, F. (2001b). A social systems-power dynamic approach to preventing school violence. In M. Shafii & S. Shafii (Eds.), *School violence: Assessment, management, prevention* (pp. 273-289). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc.

Twemlow, S., Fonagy, P., Sacco, F., Gies, M., Evans, R., & Ewbank, R. (2001). Creating a peaceful school learning environment: A controlled study of an elementary school intervention to reduce violence. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 158(5), 808-810.

Twemlow, S., Fonagy, P., Sacco, F., O'Toole, M.E., & Vernberg, E. Premeditated mass shootings in schools: Threat assessment. In press, *Journal of American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry.*

Twemlow, S. & Sacco, F. (1999). A multi level conceptual framework for understanding the violent community. In H. Hall & L. Whitaker (Eds.), *Collective violence: Effective strategies for assessing and intervening in fatal group and institutional aggression*. New York: CRC Press.

Twemlow, S. & Sacco, F. (1996). Peacekeeping and peacemaking: The conceptual foundations of a plan to reduce violence and improve the quality of life in a midsized community in Jamaica. *Psychiatry,* 59, 156-174.

Vernberg, E., Jacobs, A., Twemlow, S., Sacco, F., & Fonagy, P. Developmental patterns in aggression, victimization and violence related cognitions. In preparation.

Wasley, M., Gladden, N., Holland, S., King, E., & Powell, L. (2000). *Small schools: Great strides: A study of new small schools in Chicago.* New York: Bank Street College of Education.

Williams, K. (2001). Frontin' it: Schooling, violence and relationships in the `hood. In J. Burstyn, G. Bender, et al. (Eds.), *Preventing violence in schools: A challenge to American democracy* (pp. 95-108). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Willson, P., MacFarlane, J., Malecha, A., Watson, K., Lemmey, D., Schultz, P., Gist, J., & Fredland, N, (2000). Severity of violence against women by intimate partners and associated use of alcohol and/or illicit drugs by the perpetrator. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence,* 15(9), 996-1008.

Winnicott, D. (1958). The capacity to be alone. In D. Winnicott (Ed., 1965), *The maturational processes and the facilitating environment,* (pp. 29-36). New York: International Universities Press.

Winnicott, D. (1960a). Ego distortion in terms of true and false self. In D. Winnicott (Ed., 1965), *The maturational process and the facilitating environment* (pp. 140-152). London: Hogarth Press.

Winnicott, D. (1960b). The theory of the parent-infant relationship. In D. Winnicott (Ed., 1965), *The maturational process and the facilitating environment* (pp. 37-55). London: Hogarth Press.

Winnicott, D. (1962). Ego integration in child development. In D. Winnicott (Ed., 1965), *The maturational processes and the facilitating environment* (pp. 56-63). London: Hogarth Press.

Winnicott, D. (1963). Communicating and not communicating leading to a study of certain opposites. In D. Winnicott (Ed., 1965), *The maturational process and the facilitating environment* (pp. 179-192). New York: International Universities Press (1965).

Yule, W. (2000). From pograms to 'ethnic cleansing': Meeting the needs of war affected children. *Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry & Allied Disciplines,* 41(6), 695-702.