**FLE Research Summary for Elementary Children on Sexual Abuse Prevention**

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SOCL 351: Family Violence

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April 7, 2023

**Project Overview**

Creating prevention programs can save someone’s life and can help change the future of an individuals life. Children are in their most vulnerable stage of life due to their lack of knowledge about the world around them. Because of this, prevention programs targeted at children are imperative. Child sex abuse awareness is imperative for the safety of the child and the overall mental health of young children. Without the correct and proper awareness, the children are at a greater risk to being abused sexually by a perpetrator (Daro, 1994). The majority of child sexual abusers are conducted by someone whom the child interacts with and/or knows personally whether that is a parent or guardian, babysitter, educational professional, or a neighbor. With this information in mind, the target audience for a sex abuse prevention video will be Elementary School students k-5 through a sexual abuse awareness video. A sex abuse prevention video will encompass a similar feel as the already implemented sex education video that students are already shown.

When addressing the students about sexual abuse in attempts to prevent future crimes to occur, the video would have to be shot in a child engaging way which includes verbiage that can be understood by the children, shorter in length to encompass their attention spans, and address all genders, races, and ethnicities while still portraying the correct information to the children. With keeping the above objective in mind, Deborah A. Daro addressed 5 key points in her article titled “Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse” in 1994 that should be included in a prevention program for child sex abuse. Those points are: clarifying the difference between good, bad and questionable touching, rights that children have to control who can and cannot touch their body and where, importance of the child to tell a trusted and responsible adult if they were to be touched even if the child was told not to tell, defense skills such as yelling, kicking, fighting back and repeatedly saying no, and that there are support systems such the police, child protective services, social services and others that can help a child if they experience any form of maltreatment (Daro, 1994).

Teaching children about what is good, bad and questionable touching comes with many layers including the first layer which is a child knowing about their own body parts. The Body Safety Training (BST) is the most common method of instruction when working with a prevention program (Kenny 2008). The training utilizes behavioral principles in order to give children knowledge about their own body that is most commonly used by teachers and parents (Kenny, 2008).

Support systems for children are large and can be intimidating for children to reach out to, not even considering that the children most likely do not know they exist. Child protective services will focus on creating a safety plan for the child and the police will focus mostly on criminalizing the perpetrator (Cross, Finkelhor, Ormrod, 2005). Including information about child protective services is also important because they are an ever growing service that is essential and the main component of any investigation. Because the children might not be able to wrap their heads around the information about these services, the prevention video will refer to the services as “friends”. Informing the children less on the process and more about who they are and how they can be contact is what would be included (Schene, 1988).

**Obstacles/Concerns**

One obstacle that presents itself with this prevention education video is that the parents would have to give consent for their child to view the video. I letter would go home to each parent for them to sign off on giving a detailed statement on what is in the video and why the video would be shown to their child. Overseas in China, studies have shown that child sex abuse is not uncommon, the same as in America. A study was conducted by Jing Qi Chen and Da Guang Chen on 385 parents of elementary school students on their awareness of child sex abuse in China along with around the world. However, the main portion of the study that was engaging asked the parents a list of questions about if they believe that schools should be accountable for educating students during school hours. 89% of parents agreed that schools should hold prevention programs and only less than half of the parents said that they are afraid that the students will be interested in engaging in more sexual activities because of the sex abuse education at 47% (Chen, Chen 2005).

A question that could be discussed about is “how engaged would the children be and how much prevention would actually occur”. Research that was conducted by David Finkelhor addressed these questions, specifically the topic about the concepts being complex and to in depth for the children. After researching the topic and addressing these questions, Finkelhor concluded that children acquire the concepts and that the programs promote disclose. Other findings that were found included a lawyer that stated children who participate in a prevention program have less self blame if they are victimized (Finkelhor, 2007). A final concern that could be brought up is that the prevention video might make the children or staff feel uneasy. According to Lisa Chasan-Taber and Joan Tabachncik, this is a major problem with prevention programs for children. A way that this has been prevented, is that the authors found that making the content of the program “child friendly”, with using child-like verbiage and tone of voice has been effective (Chasan-Taber, Tabachnick 1999). Not only would showing the children a child friendly video make them feel more safe, it would also make them feel more open to ask questions. Because the video would also be presented to a group of students, it would reflect what a normal class day is like and would mirror a typical class lecture.

**Bibliography**

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