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THE IMPACT OF A PEER MEDIATION PROGRAM ON THE REDUCTION
OF SUSPENSIONS CAUSED BY VIOLENCE

by
Donna L. Covely

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
May 1999

Approved by _____
Professor

Date Approved May 1999

Abstract

Donna L. Covely

The Impact of a Peer Mediation
Program on the Reduction of
Suspensions Caused by Violence
1999

Dr. Ronald Capasso
Educational Administration

This study determined the effectiveness of the peer mediation program at Deptford Township High School, grades 9 through 12, in reducing student discipline problems. Furthermore, the study determined that peer mediation prevented further disputes and/or resolved current misunderstandings, that the disputants were able to resolve their differences constructively, and that mediation prevented disputes from developing into more serious matters. It determined that peer mediation helped to reduce student violence, lowered suspension rates, required less administrative time spent on discipline, and provided a more peaceful school environment.

There was no sample for this study. Any at-risk student in grades 9 through 12 who had a conflict with another student was a candidate for peer mediation.

The successfulness and number of peer mediation sessions were analyzed, in addition to the number of suspensions. The number of peer mediation sessions and suspensions for each school year from the program's inception, September 1993, to March 1999, were recorded and analyzed.

Interviews were held with the two vice-principals, student mediators, disputants, teacher mediators, and the two peer mediation advisors.

The major method of data analysis was comparing the number of peer mediations, the number of suspensions resulting from student fights, and the percent of successful peer mediation sessions during each school year beginning with September 1993.

There have been 43 percent fewer physical confrontations among students and a dramatic reduction in the number of suspensions related to violence since the inception of a peer mediation program at Deptford Township High School in September 1993.

Mini-Abstract

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Focus of the Study

Peer mediation has been a part of Deptford Township High School's risk management plan since 1993. Peer mediation attempts to reduce violence in the school, while providing an opportunity for students to resolve their differences through communication via neutral mediators. It is one method of attempting to reduce discipline problems.

Through peer mediation, students are provided an opportunity to resolve conflicts without violence or interference from the school's administration. Students learn how to work out differences in conflict-resolution mediations.

The peer mediators learn a variety of useful skills such as assertive speaking, respecting cultural differences, rules for fighting fairly, effective listening, paraphrasing, summarizing, questioning and negotiation, and understanding the sources and nature of common responses to conflict.

Purpose of the Study

The study will determine if peer mediation prevents further disputes and/or resolves current misunderstandings, if the disputants are able to resolve their differences constructively, and if mediation prevents disputes from developing into more serious matters. It will determine if peer mediation helps to reduce student violence, lowers detention and suspension rates, requires less administrative time spent on discipline, and provides a more peaceful school environment. It will determine the effectiveness of the present peer mediation program at Deptford Township High School, grades 9 through 12, in reducing student discipline problems.

Definitions

The following terms and definitions are used in this study:

Peer mediation is a program that provides an opportunity for trained student mediators working with faculty facilitators to assist students resolving their complaints with other students. It is a method by which peers help other peers resolve disputes and conflicts before they develop into more serious problems. The peer mediators strive for a mutually acceptable resolution that is then signed by all involved parties. It is a confidential process where students identify, negotiate, and develop solutions to conflicts that arise during the school day.

There are three basic models of peer mediation: the total school model, the elective course model, and the student club model.

The total school model includes every student in the school and therefore primarily takes place in elementary schools which house less students.

The elective school model includes only those students who can fit the course into their schedule. It also limits the time of day that a peer mediation session can be held.

The student club model includes interested volunteers and students chosen by their teachers. Deptford Township High School utilizes the student club model, from which mediators are selected from the school population who will represent the total student body.

There are three stages toward developing peer mediation in a school. They are: the introductory stage, the training stage, and the operational stage.

The introductory stage involves the coordinator becoming acquainted with peer mediation as a program and making operational decisions.

The training stage involves selecting and training the peer mediators.

The operational stage involves operating the program, evaluating program effectiveness, and planning for the future.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study are the at-risk students in grades 9 through 12 at Deptford Township High School. The conclusions cannot be generalized to the entire school district which consists of a middle school housing 7th and 8th graders and seven elementary schools housing kindergarten through 6th grade. High school mediations are usually more involved and time consuming than middle school mediations. High school mediations usually consist of issues of a much more serious nature. The conclusions cannot be generalized to other districts. Other school districts may have a different socioeconomic status or racial balance from those of Deptford Township High School.

Setting of the Study

Deptford Township is a predominantly residential suburb in Gloucester County, New Jersey, 15 minutes from Philadelphia. Currently the population exceeds 25,000. The township is bordered on the west and east by Routes 45 and 41 and on the north by Interstate Route 295. The New Jersey Turnpike and North-South Freeway cut through the northern half of the township. Route 47 (Delsea Drive) runs east and west through the center of Deptford.

Deptford Township operates under the Council-Manager form of government. Under this form of government, a professional administrator called a Manager supervises all municipal affairs. An elected Council hires the Manager. The Council-manager plan is the most common form of government in the United States for cities with populations of 25,000 or more. There are seven elected members of the Council.

Deptford Township is the only community in Gloucester County under the Council-Manager form of government. Under this configuration, Council is the chief governing body for Deptford Township. The Mayor is a member of Council, and is selected by the other members of Council to be Mayor. Like other towns, the Mayor and the Council establish policies, enact appropriate ordinances, and introduce and adopt an annual budget.

The Council hires the Manager to oversee the daily operations and business of Deptford Township. These operations are represented by the following offices and departments: Construction Code Enforcement, Finance, Municipal Court, Planning, Police, Public Works, and Township Clerk.

Established in 1957, Deptford Township High School is a comprehensive senior high school of 1,070 students in grades 9 through 12. It is approved by the New Jersey Department of Education. It is a busing district. There is one middle school, consisting of 7th and 8th graders, and seven elementary schools, kindergarten through 6th grade, one which is specifically designed for special education students. The district's enrollment consists of 3,800 students.

Deptford Township is a middle income community. The township has many ratables. The regional Deptford Mall is the largest of ten major shopping centers, with more under development, and in the planning stages. In addition to commercial and retail growth, Deptford Township has also experienced growth in new housing. Because of an active master planning program maintained during the past ten years, Deptford Township will continue to plan and improve on the infrastructure currently in place.

The school budget has passed the last five years. There has been no tax increase since 1994.

Deptford Township High School offers a broad program of subjects which allows a student to select any major which seems appropriate for him/her based upon appropriate ability, achievements and goals, within the limits of the requirements for graduation.

The areas of study are:

Business Education

English

Fine & Performing Arts

Foreign Language

Home Economics

Industrial Arts

Mathematics

Science

Social Studies

Health/Physical Education/Driver Education

Vocational Education

Students who wish to pursue post high school studies are encouraged to enroll in college preparatory courses. The purpose of these courses is to prepare students for the rigors and demands of college study.

Honors courses are offered in English, Foreign Language, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science to any student who meets the established criteria.

Advanced Placement courses are offered in English (Literature & Composition), History (Government & Politics), Calculus (AB), and Chemistry. All AP students are strongly encouraged to take the National AP Exams in the spring.

Based upon the class of 1998, the percentage of students continuing their education is 33 percent - four- year colleges, 28 percent - two-year colleges, and other education - 8 percent.

The school is currently comprised of 75.8 percent Caucasian, 19.7 percent African-American, 2.7 percent Hispanic, 1.3 percent Asian/Pacific Islands, and 0.3 percent American Indian/Alaskan Native.

Project Graduation has been in place for two years. On graduation night, the seniors attend Gloucester County Vocational School for an all night, alcohol-free, gathering. There are numerous activities such as: music, dancing, swimming, prizes, and a variety of foods. There is strong community and parent support for this event.

Significance of the Study

Studying the peer mediation process at Deptford Township High School will make a contribution to the overall atmosphere of the school. The number of suspensions

and the amount of disruptive behavior should be reduced (Wolowiec, 1994). This should allow for more instructional leadership to be achieved by the teachers and administrators. There should be positive changes in the attitudes and behavior of the students and the learning environment should improve (Eisler, 1994). Peer mediation helps students deal more effectively with conflict by increasing their sense of program ownership and independence through continued training.

Organization of the Study

Chapter Two consists of a review of the current literature on peer mediation in high schools. Chapter Three is the design of the study. The study will be an action research open-ended design. The intern will gather data via interviewing, observing, and reviewing material culture. The vice-principal, student mediators, and teachers will be interviewed. Peer mediation sessions will be observed. Chapter Four consists of the presentation of the research findings. The number of suspensions and peer mediation sessions will be recorded for the 1998-99 school year. Chapter Five represents the effectiveness of the peer mediation program at Deptford Township High School. The number and degree of successful peer mediation sessions will be analyzed as well as the number of suspensions. Based upon the research findings, conclusions will be drawn as to whether more time, money, and effort should continue to be placed into peer mediation and what can be done to improve it.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Conflict resolution is the current trend for dealing with disputes and violence among students in elementary, middle, and high schools across this country. Peer mediation is one type of conflict resolution. In peer mediation, students attempt to settle their differences constructively and mutually through the use of a confidential process conducted by a neutral third party.

Learning cannot take place in an atmosphere of fear or intimidation. There are no perfect schools in today's society. The issue of school violence has to be addressed, but not before school administrators realize they will be dealing with student and family problems that are beyond their ability to control (Heller, 1996). "The goal of today's schools must be to develop strategies and provide resources that will reduce acts of student violence, in both number and intensity" (Heller, 1996).

"Well-disciplined schools value and use successful practices; practices used in other schools and proven in research" (Heller, 1996). These schools identify clear, concise, and relevant curriculum goals. The school's focus is totally student oriented. Positive student behaviors, student responsibility, and preventive measures are emphasized by the student management programs.

The school's staff is the most vital variable. This is displayed through the teachers' rules and expectations, visibility, and willingness to participate in committees to address the needs of the school and community (Heller, 1996).

Teachers need to be trained to encourage their students. According to Carlson et al, (1992), six practices should be stressed:

1. Making relationships a priority
2. Carrying on respectful dialogue

3. Practicing encouragement and affirmation daily
4. Making decisions through shared involvement (for example, classroom meetings)
5. Resolving conflict
6. Having fun on a regular basis.

"The more students are involved in a cooperative atmosphere, the more responsible they become; and the more responsible they become, the more they feel a sense of belonging. Conversely, their sense of belonging gives them the courage to contribute and participate, and the result is a more cooperative and democratic classroom" (Meredith and Evans, 1990).

Conflict in the classroom is handled most effectively when teachers deal with the roots in conjunction with the symptoms of the conflict. The teachers must go beyond reacting to isolated crisis situations in order to develop a positive classroom environment. Schools must implement a comprehensive school-wide conflict management program to integrate into school structures, procedures, and curricula.

"Schools that are sensitive to their students' racial and socioeconomic concerns and how these are manifested in the instructional program are examples of well-disciplined schools. Students need to be informed and aware of their rights and responsibilities as citizens in a democratic society. Teacher discussions, informal or formal counseling, parent contact and conferences, detentions and suspensions are examples of intervention strategies" (Heller, 1996). These schools value research that shows school climate and available school activities have a profound positive impact on school discipline.

Well-disciplined schools use the resources of other organizations such as police departments, courts, child welfare organizations, and job placement agencies to meet the needs of their students. Students change and so do their problems and well-disciplined schools are aware of this.

The students need to be in a safe and secure environment; however, emergencies arise and teachers must be prepared for them. "Incident reports covering class cutting, fighting, truancy, weapons in school, drug and alcohol involvement, and vandalism are examples of topics that need to be created. These are the key to addressing the needs of the school" (Heller, 1996).

The expectations of the students must be clear. They should be rewarded for positive behavior. They need to be reminded of the school's rules and regulations and consequences, both at the start of and throughout the school year (Heller, 1996).

"The US Centers for Disease Control and the US Department of Justice have specifically identified peer mediation and conflict resolution as having a great potential for reducing violence in schools and communities." "Schools with peer mediation programs report fewer incidents of violence, lower detention and suspension rates, less time spent on discipline, and a more peaceful school environment" (Fresno Pacific University, 1998).

Some of the positive outcomes are:

1. Nonviolent resolution of disputes that interfere with the education process
2. A stronger sense of cooperation and school community
3. An improved school environment with decreased tension and hostility
4. Increased student participation, self esteem and leadership skills
5. Students learn communication, critical thinking, and problem solving skills (Gish & Lorz).

"Schools with good discipline have programs, strategies, and philosophies that support and value student responsibility and proper citizenship as fundamental components of good discipline" (Heller, 1996). Peer mediation is an example of an intervention strategy that has been successful at the Monroe-Woodbury Senior High School in Central Valley, New York. "This program provides an opportunity for trained

student mediators working with faculty facilitators to assist students resolving their complaints with other students. Peer mediation is a method by which peers help other peers resolve disputes and conflicts before they develop into more serious problems. The peer mediators strive for a mutually acceptable resolution that is then signed by all involved parties. Students may volunteer for peer mediation or be mandated by the administration, in conjunction with the discipline code, depending on the nature of the misbehavior. Pupils involved in student-to-student physical altercations or serious verbal confrontations are mandated for peer mediation" (Heller, 1996).

"Peer mediation is a confidential process whereby two or more parties voluntarily meet to reach their own agreement with the assistance of mediators. The participants are responsible for keeping, or renegotiating their agreements. Mediation is designed to facilitate a win-win solution which benefits both parties" (New York University, 1996). Mediation attempts to empower students and develop self-esteem. Mediation is not counseling; the mediators are trained to facilitate communication. The mediator is a neutral third party who acts as a moderator for the process. The mediators do not take sides or offer advice; what results in a "win-win" situation, especially when both sides "give in" in their attempts to solve the problem and prevent the situation from getting worse. The goal is to work out differences constructively. Students are encouraged to get along with each other - an important skill in today's world.

"Peer mediation gives students and staff members the opportunity to sit, face-to-face, with each other and to talk out any misunderstandings, conflicts or negative feelings. Examples of conflicts that are brought to mediation are he said/she said situations, lost or damaged property, name-calling, rumors, threats, boyfriend/girlfriend issues, a push, shove, bump or nasty look, a family problem, or a classroom conflict" (Randolph).

Peer mediation is a process where students identify, negotiate, and develop solutions to conflicts that arise during the school day. "Peer mediators receive extensive

training in communication and listening skills, anger management, understanding the sources of conflict and strategies for dealing with others. The training consists of a structured process that calls for active listening, reflective paraphrasing, and issues clarification within the context of the dispute at hand. They learn how to conduct mediation sessions in order to facilitate the communication process between all members of the community. The mediator's role is to listen and to work together with both sides to create solutions. Everything said is confidential. What is said in the mediation room stays in the room" (Randolph). After the problem is defined, solutions are created and then evaluated. When an agreement is reached, it is written and signed by all parties.

The mediation steps are:

1. Agree upon the ground rules
2. Each student tells his/her story
3. Verify the stories
4. Generate solutions
5. Discuss solutions
6. Select a solution
7. Sign a contract.

The ground rules are that the participants should be willing to:

1. Solve the problem
2. Tell the truth
3. Listen without interrupting
4. Be respectful
5. Take responsibility for carrying out the agreement (Hawley, 1996).

The three steps of peer mediation are: first, the joint session between the mediator and both disputers; second, the individual sessions between the mediator and each disputer; and third, the joint session for writing the agreement.

In the joint session the goal is to build trust, learn facts, and discover issues. "Each party will explain the situation from his/her perspective while the other party listens. The mediator may ask questions to either party to facilitate story telling. There are no interruptions from the other party while another is speaking. This rule allows each side to be heard fairly. The mediator paraphrases what he/she thinks where each side is coming from" (Kennedy & Sawa).

The goal of the individual sessions is to find out more about the situation, discover attitudes, feelings, and priorities, and start to explore options. "Each party meets separately with the mediator which allows for more confidentiality. The mediator can point out areas of agreement or common values between the parties. At the end of the sessions, the mediator reviews information gained" (Kennedy & Sawa).

At the joint session for writing the agreement, the goal is to reach a positive agreement both sides can agree to carry out. "Both sides discuss what they will agree to. All of the issues that were mediated are covered in the agreement. Each side takes the responsibility for carrying out the agreement and agrees to keep the situation confidential. The agreement is signed and dated by the parties and the mediator" (Kennedy & Sawa).

The goals of peer mediation are:

1. To help peers learn alternate ways of handling anger, disputes, and conflicts.
2. Prevent further disputes and/or resolve current misunderstandings.
3. Work out differences constructively.
4. Prevent disputes from developing into more serious matters.
5. Learn how to get along with each other.

The benefits of peer mediation are that the process is:

1. Understandable
2. Convenient
3. Comfortable

4. Timely
5. Affordable
6. Confidential
7. Healing
8. Empowering
9. Effective (Kennedy & Sawa).

Peer mediation benefits the school by creating an atmosphere of peaceful co-existence and a culture of cooperation is developed. The students learn problem-solving skills and approaches to conflict resolution. Administrators and teachers can refer conflict-oriented problems to the mediators before they become major disciplinary problems, thereby reducing the number of office referrals and the school's suspension rate.

At La Salle Academy, a private school in Providence, Rhode Island, a comprehensive program in social and emotional education called, "Success for Life," is taught. The program is designed to help students develop their self-awareness, interpersonal understanding, and decision-making skills (Pasi, 1997). According to Daniel Goleman (1995), emotional intelligence is virtually all learned. "Throughout the day, students receive messages about the importance of increasing their own self-awareness, self-control, and self-respect, while learning to deepen their appreciation of and ability to get along with others" (Pasi, 1997). Peer mediation is one of the activities in which students participate.

Patricia Phillips is Assistant Principal at East Lyme High School in East Lyme, Connecticut. This school offers an innovative approach for supporting discipline using a series of conflicting-resolution steps posted on the main office wall (Phillips, 1997). The resolution consists of five steps. The first poster defines conflict as "an expressed struggle between at least two people who are interfering with each other in achieving goals" (Phillips, 1997). The second poster states, "What To Do When You Are Angry"

(Phillips, 1997). This step includes taking three deep breaths and counting backwards slowly. The students must be calm enough to begin resolving the issue. In step three, the students begin sentences with "I feel..." as they discuss the meaning of win-win and the process of reaching it. (Phillips, 1997). Step four is the critical stage. This is where the students involved in the mediation see a cause-and-effect relationship and determine what actions they may have taken to escalate the situation, as well as what solutions might be used to de-escalate it. The step five poster reads, "Active Listening and Roadblocks to Communication" (Phillips, 1997). This includes techniques for encouraging students to speak. This step is used if needed. "Students are more likely to commit to positive resolution when they are in control of the outcome" (Phillips, 1997).

Peer mediation is a peaceful solution. It involves the students as well as the teachers and the administration. According to Girard, Rifkin, & Townley (1985), the peer mediation program at Ronald E. McNair Middle School in College Park, Georgia involves voluntary participation in a structured process in which a third neutral party assists two or more disputants to reach a mutual agreement. "The first six weeks of school consists primarily of orientation, recruitment, application and the interview process, selection of peer mediators, research, and a review of curriculum materials for a training program. The second six weeks involves training the students. During the third six-week period, a mediation center opens with a kick-off ceremony that is open to the community" (Thompson, 1996).

There are six program objectives: "(a) to promote a positive school climate, (b) to promote student empowerment and responsibility, (c) to increase student self-esteem, (d) to promote school safety, (e) to learn effective communication skills, and (f) to reduce discipline (fights) referrals to the administration" (Thompson, 1996).

The peer mediation program began with an orientation process through assemblies. At-risk students as well as role models were campaigned for and leaders were sought out. The student application and selection process was done by the

counselors who interviewed all of the applicants. 25 students was considered the ideal number for the next process which was the peer mediation training. Dealing with scheduling was an important issue in implementing the program. The personnel consisted of the school guidance counselors. In order to continue the supervision of the mediators, bimonthly meetings were held. For a first year program, it is ideal to have weekly meetings (Thompson, 1996).

The impartial mediator's function is to facilitate the process so that the disputants themselves can find a solution rather than a police officer, judge, or counselor. According to Lane & McWhirter (1992), they work to encourage problem solving between disputants. There are three basic models: the total school model, the elective course model, and the student club model.

The total school model is advocated by Johnson and Johnson (1994, 1995). Every student is taught the principles and practices of conflict resolution. This should decrease the frequency of conflicts in a school if everyone were trained. Training everyone requires a considerable amount of time and is quite costly. This model seems best suited for the elementary school, where mediation can be made available in classrooms (Lupton-Smith et al, 1996).

The elective course model's strengths are: depth of training, ease of scheduling mediations, and access to mediators for follow-up. The elective course model's weakness is that the mediators are selected only from those students who can enroll in the course, and therefore diversity of the student population may not be well represented. If mediations are restricted to the time of day when the class meets, this could be another weakness (Lupton-Smith et al, 1996).

With the student club model, mediators are selected from the school population who will represent the total student body. This is where the uninvolved students and the at-risk students may be recruited. In the student club model, the depth of training and

frequency of support for mediators may not be as great as with the elective course model. Space and scheduling issues could also cause problems (Lupton-Smith et al, 1996).

"There are three basic stages that must be followed: an introductory stage, a training stage, and an operational stage. The introductory stage involves getting acquainted with peer mediation as a program and making operational decisions. The training stage involves selecting and training the peer mediators. The operational stage involves operating the program, evaluating program effectiveness, and planning for the future" (Lupton-Smith et al, 1996).

The introductory stage involves obtaining support from the school's administration, staff, students, parents, and community. An advisory committee needs to be created with individuals from these groups, because administrative support, principals, and superintendents should provide concrete assistance with logistical issues. Active support of an administration is essential to a program's success. Students, parents, and community members need to be informed. Students can be informed through assemblies, videotapes, or through the curriculum. Parents can be informed through PTA meetings, newsletters, or assemblies and should be invited to participate on committees. The community may be informed through the media and presentations before organizations such as churches and civic groups. To insure the program's success, it is critical for the entire school community to be informed.

The training stage includes selecting and training peer mediators and setting up the program. Mediators should represent a cross section of the student body. They should have the respect of their peers, should speak in the language of their peers, or be known to maintain a neutral diplomacy among varied peer groups. Even some students with behavior problems could become good mediators with the proper encouragement and support of the school staff. According to Araki (1990), the mediator must be confident, caring, and a good listener. According to Eisler, Lane, and Mei (1995),

sensitivity, maturity, self-confidence, trustworthiness, and the respect of other students are the qualities that the coordinators look for in mediators.

Participants will learn a variety of useful skills, including:

1. Understanding the sources and nature of and common responses to conflict
2. Steps to reach win-win solutions
3. Rules for fighting fair
4. Effective listening, paraphrasing, summarizing, questioning and negotiation
5. Assertive speaking
6. Positive dealing with feelings
7. Respecting cultural differences
8. Steps in the mediation process (Gish & Lorz).

The operational stage includes promotion and training for school staff, students and mediators, and an evaluation of the program's effectiveness. The coordinator must maintain the effectiveness of the peer mediation program, which requires a great deal of time. "Ongoing training is necessary during any single school year and over the course of years for those students who continue to function as mediators" (Lupton-Smith et al, 1996).

An example of an exemplary high school program is a school with approximately 1,700 students in grades 9-12. The social studies teacher is the coordinator. There is diversity in the selected mediators, and they possess leadership qualities and good listening skills. Mediations are rotated to avoid consistently missing the same class.

A high school's program is significantly different from an elementary or a middle school program. It is much more difficult to include all of the students at a high school than it is at the elementary school. High school mediations are usually more time consuming than elementary or middle school mediations.

"Some high schools use peer mediation to facilitate community discussions about violence, to debrief students coming back to school after serving a suspension, or to serve on school discipline committees" (Lupton-Smith et al, 1996).

"One individual who functions as a coordinator requires approximately 20% to 50% of their professional time to develop a program in the first year" (Lupton-Smith et al, 1996). A concern, once a program is running, is how the program should mature and become more sophisticated in future years. "Once student-to-student mediations are established, a future development can be to establish teacher-to-student mediations" (Lupton-Smith et al, 1996). A mature program would then carry the mediation process among staff, between staff and administrators, and between educators and parents. Reports in the literature typically indicate an agreement rate of 85% or higher (Lupton-Smith et al, 1996).

There are various manuals, videos, curricula, and support materials available through groups such as the Colorado School Mediation Project. The curriculum guide offers educators a comprehensive set of lessons, integration strategies, background material and articles. The lessons teach students how to communicate effectively and resolve conflicts productively. The guide is experiential, professionally developed, laid out in scope and sequence, and culturally sensitive. The facilitator's implementation guide provides teachers with examples of how to integrate conflict resolution into social studies, language arts, science, health, and physical education. Key principles, skills, and processes are listed. The student mediation training manual is a systematic approach to learning and practicing mediation. They are specific to grade level from kindergarten through 12th grade. The coordinator's student mediation training manual includes lesson plans and supportive materials for implementing a conflict mediation program in a school. Included are peer mediator applications, interview questions, peer mediator contracts, intake forms, role play coaching guidelines, and steps to implementing a program.

There are also videos that may be purchased. One is entitled "Peer Mediation in Action." It is a training resource demonstrating a student-to-student and teacher-to-student mediation. It also covers sensitive issues such as multi-party mediations, sexual harassment, and gang/clique issues. Another video, "Alternatives to Violence: Conflict Resolution and Mediation" comes in two parts, one for students and the other for adults. The students learn the value of problem solving and conflict resolution as alternatives to fighting. In the second part, school staff learn methods of using conflict resolution in their everyday interactions, as well as the basic process for setting up a peer mediation program.

Role-plays for mediation training are offered at each school level. The role-plays include a variety of scenarios dealing with such topics as: rumors, friendships, lost/stolen items, harassment, fighting, teacher-student issues, discrimination, value issues, girlfriend/boyfriend, and styles of working together.

One of the support materials is a 60 page manual of ten narratives from around the world, each with accompanying activities for secondary students. The stories illustrate various themes associated with violence prevention, including tolerating differences, taking responsibility for one's actions, dealing with hurt and anger, seeing the consequences of violence, building trust, and facing problems before they escalate. The stories help people to understand that there are helpful and productive ways to solve conflict and give them the tools for peaceful action in their own lives.

There is also a handbook for study circle discussion leaders, organizers, and participants. It is meant to be used by teams who are coordinating the program, and/or grade level teams who meet on a regular basis to discuss their conflict resolution education efforts.

An example of peer mediation's success, took place at Sachem High School. Two students who were about to fight were separated and given time to cool down. A mediation followed after a few minutes. The ground rules of peer mediation included no

profanity, name calling, physical violence, etc. Each disputant met with a peer mediator in private. At these meetings, the peer mediators were able to peruse the facts of the case and get the information necessary to draw up a contract. The two parties were brought back into the room and asked if they agreed upon the conditions of the contract. If they agreed, the legal document was signed. If it was not followed, the students risked suspension.

There are many positive outcomes of peer mediation such as:

1. Nonviolent resolution of disputes that interfere with the education process
2. A stronger sense of cooperation and school community
3. An improved school environment with decreased tension and hostility
4. Increased student participation, self esteem and leadership skills
5. Students learn communication, critical thinking, and problem solving skills (Gish & Lorz).

Chapter 3

The Design of the Study

Research Design

This study was a community-based action research open-ended design. The data represented the effectiveness of the peer mediation program at Deptford Township High School, consisting of students in grades nine through twelve. Peer mediation is entering its sixth year as a method of conflict resolution at Deptford Township High School. One of the main goals of peer mediation is to provide students with a vehicle to resolve conflicts with their fellow students. The peer mediation program has been accepted by both students and staff as being an effective and worthwhile program. The program is also self-sustaining, because the faculty peer mediation coordinators have developed an effective in-house student and staff training program which allows the school to annually develop student and staff mediators. The peer mediation program presently exists in the district from grades four through twelve. The utilization of peer mediation for the high school means providing students with an opportunity to resolve conflicts without violence or interference from the administration.

Student mediators have organized themselves in a high school co-curricular program. Program goals include the development of conflict resolution in the curriculum and as a vocation in life.

The components of "fact finding" and "problem exploration" conferences are being included in the peer mediation program this year for the purpose of including students who are in need of mediation but express a reluctance to involve themselves in the mediation process.

Development and Design of the Research Instruments

Peer mediation sessions were recorded by the peer mediators. There was one trained peer mediator for each student in conflict. A trained teacher or administrator was stationed outside the classroom in the event that he or she was needed.

Sample

There was no sample for this study. Any at-risk student who had a conflict with another student was a candidate for peer mediation. One of the two vice-principals could require that two or more students participate in a peer mediation session. A teacher might suggest peer mediation for students in conflict that were in his or her class. There are forms in the main office, guidance office, nurse's office, and athletic director's office regarding peer mediation. A student may complete this form requesting peer mediation.

Data Collection Approach

The primary data gathering techniques were observing, interviewing, and review of material culture. Peer mediation sessions were observed without interference from the intern. The intern recorded the events of the mediation and the dialogue among the disputants and peer mediators. She evaluated the success of each mediation. The intern obtained knowledge by quietly and confidentially observing the interaction between the mediators and students in conflict. The intern listened attentively as each disputant told his or her version of the problem to the peer mediators. She watched to assure that the mediators remained silent during this time. The intern observed the brain storming sessions between the disputant and peer mediator, looking for the solutions to come from the disputant and not the mediator. She observed each disputant's actions to see if they were truly satisfied with the mutual agreement on paper.

The intern met with the individual faculty members who supervised one or more peer mediation sessions (See Appendix A). The peer mediators involved in a session were interviewed after their session. The interviews determined the students' thoughts and opinions about the success of the individual sessions, and each student's own

individual performance (See Appendix B). The disputants were interviewed to establish if they were satisfied with the process and outcome of the mediation (See Appendix C).

The vice-principal responsible for peer mediation was interviewed. His knowledge of the circumstances which led to each peer mediation session was discussed with the intern. His opinions about the degree of success of each mediation were also a component of the interview. He was asked if any suspensions among the disputants arose after the peer mediation sessions.

The intern reviewed the material culture. The peer mediators' written results of the sessions were perused by the intern. The intern was not privy to two of the seven peer mediation sessions' reports for the 1998-99 school year. The peer mediation manual was reviewed by the intern. The intern read the manual to determine if the peer mediators were following it properly.

Data Analysis Plan

The data analysis procedure represented the effectiveness of the peer mediation program. The successfulness and number of peer mediation sessions were analyzed, in addition to the number of suspensions. The peer mediation program was established for the 1993-94 school year. The number of peer mediation sessions and suspensions for each school year from peer mediation's inception to date were recorded and analyzed. The ninth grade joined the ten to twelve high school for the 1992-93 school year. The suspensions for the school year 1992-93 were recorded and analyzed. There was no peer mediation during the 1992-93 school year.

Chapter 4

Presentation of the Research Findings

The purpose of the peer mediation study was to determine the effectiveness of the program in place in reducing student violence at Deptford Township High School from its inception in 1993 until present. Over the five full years of the program's existence, altercations in the school have decreased 43 percent and the number of students involved in altercations has decreased by 53 percent as of June 1998. The program has surpassed the administration's goal of reducing physical confrontations by 50 percent.

During the 1992-93 school year, the vice-principal presented to the high school administrative staff, peer mediation as a student conflict management system. A discussion on the feasibility of peer mediation at Deptford Township High School ensued. Three vendors presented their peer mediation programs to the high school, middle school, and elementary school staff for consideration. After careful consideration, the high school administrative staff selected an appropriate peer mediation program. A presentation of peer mediation as a viable student conflict management program was made to the Board of Education for their reaction and approval. An in-service on peer mediation was made to the high school faculty and administration by Peer Mediation Programs Inc. The nomination and selection of student peer mediators and faculty mediation staff took place, and approval of student peer mediators and faculty staff was given. Selected student and faculty mediators participated in a conflict management training program.

Data Collected

44 incidents of fighting during the 1992-93 school year were reported to the state by D.T.H.S. In addition, there were 15 reported incidents of student harassment to other

students. There were a total of 55 mediations, of which 49 conflicts were resolved. This was a success rate of 89 percent.

During the 1993-94 school year, a presentation of the peer mediation program was made to the D.T.H.S. student body for acceptance as an avenue of conflict management. Implementation of peer mediation as a method of conflict resolution began at D.T.H.S. Monthly follow-up meetings were conducted by PMP of Medford, NJ to monitor student peer mediators and faculty mediation staff. The faculty peer mediation staff coordinator developed a curriculum and plan for training additional faculty and student mediators. The conflict management training program was held to train additional faculty and student mediators. An analysis of the 1992-93 monthly discipline reports as compared to the 1993-94 monthly discipline reports was made to determine the effectiveness of peer mediation at D.T.H.S. A revision of faculty mediation staff duty schedules was made to include time for mediation administrative assignments. A comparative analysis of the 1993-94 monthly reports and the previous year's summary was completed.

In the 1993-94 school year, the first year of peer mediation as an integral part of the high school discipline system, there were 41 incidents of fighting reported to the state. This comparison represents a 4.7 percent decline in physical confrontations from the 1992-93 school year.

A plan of action for the 1993-94 school year included the following: program acceptance by the high school staff and student body, developing the program in conjunction with the existing system of discipline, rearranging faculty mediators' duty schedules to include mediation as a coverage, development of an in-house curriculum for training additional faculty and student mediators, and a significant reduction in the number of student conflicts brought to the vice-principals' offices.

The peer mediation program at D.T.H.S. had been well received by the student body, faculty, and administration. Since the program experienced its first operation, several procedural problems had to be resolved. Many improvements were made in this

area. To increase the program's effectiveness, an on-going presentation of peer mediation as an effective tool in resolving student conflict was made to the student body at large. It was achieved via poster campaigns, in-school television skits, and bulletin board displays. Of the 41 fights that took place in Deptford Township High School, 38 took place in the school's corridors. The fights for the most part were spontaneous in nature. In an effort to more efficiently monitor student behavior, Mr. Ronald Taylor, vice-principal responsible for peer mediation, wanted to implement television cameras in the corridors, stairwells, and adjoining outside areas of the school to record student movement.

Local high schools that have such systems in place have experienced dramatic decreases in student violence. The implementation of an electronic surveillance system coupled with an effective peer mediation program was expected to far exceed the school's stated objective of reducing physical confrontations at Deptford Township High School. Mr. Taylor felt that this form of electronic surveillance would have a positive psychological effect on deterring inappropriate behavior.

During the 1994-95 school year, student awareness of peer mediation as a method of conflict resolution was again promoted by school wide posters and hand bill displays. A brief in-school television tape presentation was telecast at the onset of the school year to further acquaint the students with peer mediation as a successful means of handling conflict. Monthly faculty/student mediator organizational and instructional meetings were held. The vice-principal and high school mediation staff trainer presented peer mediation as a student conflict management system to the district's elementary principals. A discussion on the feasibility of peer mediation in the elementary schools ensued. Each elementary school would develop its own peer mediation program. The established high school and middle school programs and staff would serve the elementary programs as a reference source. The number trained were as follows: 11 elementary staff members, 46

elementary peer mediators, 20 middle school peer mediators, and 18 high school peer mediators.

Elementary school peer mediation presentation assemblies took place in September of 1995. The middle school peer mediation staff and students conducted the presentations. A proposal of how to introduce and install peer mediation in each of the district's elementary schools having grades 4, 5, and 6 was given to and discussed with each building principal. Two-day training sessions were held for student mediators in grades 6 through 11. A one-day training session was held in May to develop mediation skills and techniques for two staff members and ten students from each elementary school.

All activities indicated in the plan of action to be completed during the 1994-95 school year were accomplished in an effective manner. They were: continued acceptance of peer mediation as a viable method of settling student conflicts, installation peer mediation in the elementary schools in grades 4, 5, and 6 as a system of conflict management, training of middle school and high school students to become peer mediators to replace peer mediators lost by promotion or graduation, and continued reduction in the number of student conflicts handled in the vice-principals' offices.

In the 1994-95 school year, 34 referrals for fighting were sent to and handled by the vice-principals' offices. In addition, there were seven student assaults on other students. The 1994-95 school year was the second year of peer mediation at D.T.H.S. There were 51 mediations, three of which resulted in no resolution. This showed a success rate of 94.1 percent. There was a total of two fights that took place after mediation.

The peer mediation program at D.T.H.S. continued to be well accepted by the student body, faculty, and administration. Overall, the 1994-95 school year showed a 20 percent reduction in student fights when compared with the 1993-94 school year. An average of five mediations per month took place during the school year. Sixty students

applied to become mediators. Twenty mediations were requested by students wanting to assist their classmates. The high school and middle school faculty peer mediation coordinators trained elementary staff and students so that peer mediation programs would be in operation in the district's elementary schools in grades four through six.

In 1996, a program objective was that after implementation of the peer mediation program, students in grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 who had participated in peer mediation as a method of conflict resolution, would demonstrate a 50 percent reduction in physical confrontations. This objective was to be achieved by June 1997.

During the 1995-96 school year, student awareness of peer mediation as a method of conflict resolution was again promoted by school wide posters and hand bill displays. A brief in-school television tape presentation was telecast at the onset of the school year to further acquaint the students with peer mediation as a workable means of handling conflict. Monthly faculty/student mediator organizational and instructional meetings were held. The high school vice-principal and mediation coordinators met with the middle school and elementary schools' staff coordinators to discuss staff and student peer mediation training. It was determined that the high school and middle school would train together as a group. The elementary schools would train apart from the secondary schools and develop their own programs due to the uniqueness of each elementary school. A system wide peer mediation staff development program would be scheduled to take place during district staff development dates. The staff and student mediators trained during the 1995/1996 school year were as follows: 1 elementary staff member, 2 middle school staff members, 2 high school staff members, 17 middle school peer mediators, and 10 high school peer mediators.

In the 1995-96 school year, 27 referrals for fighting were sent to and handled by the vice-principals' offices. In addition, there were two student assaults on other students. The 1995-96 school year was the third year of peer mediation at D.T.H.S. There were 25

mediations, two of which resulted in no resolution. This showed a success rate of 92 percent. There was one fight that took place after mediation.

The peer mediation program at D.T.H.S. continued to be well accepted by the student body, faculty, and administration. In the 1994-95 school year, there were 41 physical confrontations as opposed to a total of 29 in the 1995-96 school year. This reflected a 29.2 percent reduction in student physical confrontations from the previous year. An average of two mediations per month took place during the school year. 30 students applied to become mediators. 16 were selected and trained. Approximately 60 percent of the 1995-96 school year's mediations were requested by students wanting to assist their classmates. The high school and middle school faculty peer mediation coordinators trained elementary staff and students such that peer mediation programs would be in operation in grades 4 through 12.

Adjunct to peer mediation and student incentive programs, electronic surveillance cameras were installed in both the high school and middle school to aid in maintaining a safe and secure environment.

Additionally, an alternative suspension program (ASP) was being proposed for the 1996-97 school year. This proposal eliminated the present internal and external suspension as punishment for student misconduct. Under the alternative suspension program, students who are suspended will report to school at 3:00 p.m. on their day(s) of suspension and remain in the designated suspension room until 7:00 p.m. The suspension room will be monitored by a teacher. Student transportation to and from school for suspended students is the parent's responsibility. This program certainly involves more parental responsibility in the discipline process and further serves as a stronger deterrent to student misbehavior.

In 1997, the objective for the peer mediation program to be met by June 1998 was that the program would demonstrate an additional 50 percent reduction in physical confrontations in Deptford Township High School.

During the 1997-98 school year, continued student awareness of peer mediation as a method of conflict resolution was promoted by school wide posters and hand bill displays. A brief in-school TV tape presentation was telecast at the onset of the school year to further acquaint the students with peer mediation as a constructive means of handling conflict. Monthly faculty/student mediator organizational and instructional meetings were held. The high school vice-principal and mediation coordinators met to discuss staff and student peer mediation training. It was determined that the high school and middle school students and staff would train together as a group in September of 1998. After the June 1998 graduation, there were 21 remaining trained high school mediators. In an April 1998 meeting between Janice Countess of Peer Mediation Programs and Ronald H. Taylor, vice-principal, a proposal for peer mediation training of students and faculty was drafted. This proposal and its cost were pending administrative and board approval.

All activities indicated in the plan of action to be completed during the 1997-98 school year were accomplished in an effective manner. They were: continued acceptance of peer mediation as an effective method of settling student conflict in grades four through twelve and moderate reduction in the number of student conflicts handled in the vice-principals' offices.

In the 1997-98 school year, 15 referrals for fighting were sent to and handled by the vice-principals' offices. In addition, there were seven student assaults on students. The 1997-98 school year was the fifth year of peer mediation at Deptford Township High School. There were four mediations. All resulted in positive resolutions, showing a success rate of 100 percent.

Data Interpretation

The peer mediation program at Deptford Township High School continued to be well accepted by the student body, faculty, and administration. In the 1992-93 school year, there were a total of 44 physical confrontations as opposed to a total of 22 physical

confrontations in the 1997-98 school year. This reflects an overall reduction of 51.1 percent. During the 1996-97 school year, there were 24 suspensions as a result of student fights which represents a 9.2 percent reduction from the previous school year. All of the 1997-98 mediations were requested by students wanting to assist their classmates. In an effort to promote mediations for individuals who were referred but declined, mandatory "fact finding" and "conflict exploration conferences" were to be held. When appropriate, a mediation was mandated even if one or both parties objected. The school received assistance from representatives of Peer Mediation Programs in the development and implementation of these new strategies. It was the school's objective to significantly increase the number of mediations.

In addition to peer mediation and student incentive programs, electronic surveillance cameras and the after school Alternative Education Programs have significantly aided in maintaining a safe and secure learning environment. Peer mediation at Deptford Township High School has had a significant and positive impact on the reduction of suspensions and fights since 1993. Students are learning that there are effective, nonviolent techniques to resolving their differences.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications, and Further Study

Study's Major Conclusions and Their Corresponding Implications

This study's major conclusions are that there have been far fewer physical confrontations among students and a dramatic reduction in the number of suspensions related to violence because of the inception of peer mediation in September of 1993 at Deptford Township High School.

During the first year of peer mediation there was a 4.7 percent decline in physical confrontations from the 1992-93 school year. There were 55 mediations, of which 49 conflicts were resolved, for a success rate of 89 percent. Only six fights took place after mediation.

During the second year of peer mediation, 1994-95, there were 51 sessions, three of which resulted in no resolution. The success rate was 94.1 percent, with only two fights taking place after mediation. The 1994-95 school year showed a 20 percent reduction in student fights when compared with the 1993-94 school year.

During the 1995-96 school year, there were 25 mediations, two of which resulted in no resolution. The success rate was 92 percent, and only one fight took place after mediation. During the 1994-95 school year, there were 41 physical confrontations as opposed to 29 in the 1995-96 school year. This was a 29.2 percent reduction in student physical confrontations from 1994-95.

During the 1997-98 school year, there were four mediations; all resulted in positive resolutions, for a success rate of 100 percent.

Currently, during the 1998-99 school year there have been nine peer mediation sessions and 17 suspensions due to physical confrontations.

The statistics and data thoroughly indicate the positive effect of peer mediation on the students at Deptford Township High School. Students are now aware of the fact that if they are involved in a fight, some type of communication will take place between the parties involved, following the incident. A peer mediation session is usually required by one of the two vice-principals. Following a fight, a student is suspended for a minimum of seven days and is required to attend the alternative suspension program for each of those days.

Conclusions and Implications of the Study on the Intern's Leadership Development

The intern participated with the students in the two three-hour training sessions on September 29 and October 1, 1998, after school from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. The ground rules of peer mediation were discussed at length. The five step peer mediation process was thoroughly explained and examples of various student conflicts were supplied. Charts were used by the presenter and demonstrations of how to handle specific situations were given. Handouts were distributed and there was time allotted for questions.

The student mediators were trained to be impartial. They participated in role playing. There were two mediators and two disputants in each group. Each student had an opportunity to be a disputant and a peer mediator. Much more time should have been spent on role playing, because the students did not gain expertise in mediating. Some were not assertive enough; some needed to speak much more clearly and loudly. Mediators were not to discuss their personal experiences nor attempt to solve the problem or suggest an agreement for the disputants.

The intern observed the groups of four in role playing. The intern could not attempt to solve the problem between the disputants. She could not interject suggestions or possible solutions to the student mediators, because they were in charge of the mock mediation.

The intern interviewed the vice-principal responsible for peer mediation, the student mediators, staff mediators, and the disputants. The vice-principal is very satisfied

with the progress of the peer mediation program. Most of the staff mediators were discouraged due to the fact that the vice-principals were monitoring the peer mediation sessions rather than themselves. Some student mediators have not been involved in even one mediation during this school year, 1998-99. They realize that they need experience in conducting peer mediation sessions in order to become more effective peer mediators. This could discourage the students from continuing in the peer mediation program. A few of the disputants felt as if the peer mediation session was not necessary. They thought that they would have been able to work it out for themselves. Most disputants agreed that the peer mediation session forced one disputant to communicate with the other.

How the Organization Changed as a Result of the Study

Students at Deptford Township High School have learned how to deal with their problems in a constructive manner rather than a violent one. Since the beginning of peer mediation, the school has become a much safer environment for both the students and faculty. Peer mediation has given the students an opportunity to confront a particular situation in a calm, mature setting. Students have learned to communicate with one another in a productive manner. Peer mediators have learned to objectively and impartially assist their peers in resolving conflicts. They have learned the importance of confidentiality.

Teachers are now better able to concentrate on the job of teaching with far fewer conflicts. The apprehension and anxiety of who is about to physically attack whom at any time have subsided. Teachers are again discussing strategies related to teaching rather than talking about fights between students.

For the first time, there are now two paid peer mediation advisors. Their salaries are negotiated in the teachers' contract.

Peer mediation needs to be continued at Deptford Township High School. Efforts should be made to include as many students as possible in order to sustain the program's

continued success. A difficulty occurred as the vice-principals were conducting the peer mediation sessions because teachers were not available during a particular class period. Teachers' schedules must be arranged so that one faculty mediator is available each period of the school day. Some disputants' situations are dire and immediate and cannot be delayed for resolution until their specific lunch period or study hall.

When peer mediation first began, many students became involved just to get out of a class. These particular students with chronic problems were forced to participate in a mediation during their lunch or study hall, rather than miss one or more of their classes.

The alternative suspension program has taken the fun and very little punishment out of being suspended. No longer is the student able to stay home for the entire day, most likely without parent supervision. The student reports to school from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. and is required to complete four hours of school work. Each teacher is notified of his or her student's suspension. The teacher sends work to the vice-principal for that particular student.

Conflict exploration conferences and fact finding were mandated to promote mediations for individuals who were referred but declined peer mediation. Periodically, a mediation is required even if one or both parties objects.

Need for Further Study

As a result of this study, the intern concluded that the staff mediators should be trained periodically to keep them current on peer mediation training. All teachers could be in-serviced on this type of training. The gained knowledge could also help to alleviate problems between students in the classroom as the teacher attempts to intervene.

Investigation as to what other schools are doing to reduce suspensions and fights is necessary. A survey to the peer mediation coordinator, staff mediators, and student mediators should supply ample information.

Yearly, there will be reduced numbers of student mediators due to promotion or graduation. Prospective students are needed to replace the mediators. The elementary

school student mediators need incentives to continue mediating through middle school and high school. The experienced student mediator will be more successful in conducting peer mediation sessions. Mr. Ronald Taylor, vice-principal responsible for peer mediation, as an incentive held an ice cream party in December for the student mediators. It did not take place after school, but during the last period of the school day. Although the students did miss a class, they were given a chance to socialize, learn from one another, and be rewarded for their time and effort.

Mr. Ronald Taylor recommended a camera surveillance system to monitor student behavior in the corridors, stairwells, and adjoining outside areas of the high school. The system was installed for use during the 1995-96 school year. The system is somewhat ineffective. The cameras take sporadic shots of the school's hallways, cafeteria, gymnasium, and grounds. The system is not sophisticated enough to discern one student from another. It seems to function as more of a scare tactic for the students because the students are not yet aware of the system's limits. Parents may soon discover this when they ask to view the tape of their son or daughter who has been accused of instigating or being involved in a conflict. Further study into a more efficient system is needed. Contact with schools in the area who have a camera surveillance system is needed to determine what type of system is most effective.

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Appendix A
Interview Questions for Faculty

1. Each faculty member was asked what he or she thought about the particular peer mediation session that he or she was involved in.
2. Was the mediation successful?
3. If the answer was yes, comments were asked for.
4. If the answer was no, an explanation was asked for.
5. Did the teacher have to intervene during the session between the two disputants?
6. Did the teacher feel as though the peer mediators performed thoroughly?
7. Did the session go beyond the class period?
8. If so, was the vice-principal contacted to replace the teacher?

Appendix B
Interview Questions for Peer Mediators

1. Each student was asked what he or she thought about the particular peer mediation session that he or she was involved in
2. Was the mediation session successful?
3. If the answer was yes, comments were asked for.
4. If the answer was no, an explanation was asked for.
5. Did the peer mediator feel as though the disputants came to an honest agreement that they would stand by?
6. Did the peer mediator work well with the other peer mediator?
7. Was it difficult to remain silent while each disputant told his or her version of the situation?
8. Did the peer mediator want to be a participant in a future peer mediation session?
9. What did the peer mediator learn from participating in this role?

Appendix C
Interview Questions for Disputants

1. Each disputant was asked what he or she thought about the particular peer mediation session that he or she was involved in.
2. Did the disputant feel that the peer mediation session was worthwhile?
3. If the answer was yes, comments were asked for.
4. If the answer was no, an explanation was asked for.
5. Was the disputant concerned about a future problem with the other disputant?
6. Would the disputant agree to another peer mediation session if necessary, in the future?
7. What did the disputant think about the peer mediators' effectiveness?

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