



All Theses and Dissertations

2009-07-02

Spanish-speaking parents' perceptions of school-based crisis response.

Brenda Dean

Brigham Young University - Provo

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd>

 Part of the [Counseling Psychology Commons](#), and the [Special Education and Teaching Commons](#)

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Dean, Brenda, "Spanish-speaking parents' perceptions of school-based crisis response." (2009). *All Theses and Dissertations*. 1745.
<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd/1745>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

SPANISH-SPEAKING PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF
SCHOOL-BASED CRISIS RESPONSE

by

Brenda Dean

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Educational Specialist

Department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education

Brigham Young University

August 2009

Copyright © 2009 Brenda Dean

All Rights Reserved

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Brenda Dean

This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

Date

Melissa Allen Heath, Chair

Date

Timothy B. Smith

Date

Rachel Crook-Lyon

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of Brenda Dean in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative material including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

Date

Melissa Allen Heath
Chair, Graduate Committee

Accepted for the Department

Ellie L. Young
Graduate Coordinator

Accepted for the College

Barbara Culatta
Associate Dean, College of Education

ABSTRACT

SPANISH-SPEAKING PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL-BASED CRISIS RESPONSE

Brenda Dean

Department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education

Educational Specialist

American schools are becoming increasingly diverse. With the increasing diversity in school enrollment, professionals are faced with the challenge of providing culturally sensitive services in all areas, including crisis intervention planning. Additionally, language differences also affect help-seeking behaviors and may serve as a strong barrier to effective service delivery. Taking into account individual school and district demographics, schools must consider strategies to best meet the needs of students and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

As a starting point, this thesis provides an overview of the literature on school crisis response. Current demographics in U.S. public schools, the perceptions of school safety, and crisis intervention planning will be discussed. Cultural perspectives of trauma will be addressed, considering community resources, help-seeking behavior, and

language barriers. Interviews with open-ended questions were conducted with 10 Spanish-speaking parents. Questions were based on the following categories: parents' overall views of schools safety, help-seeking behaviors, and perceptions of school crisis planning. The discussion section reviews the resulting themes. Themes drawn from parents' interviews will inform this particular school's crisis intervention planning and improve supportive services for Spanish-speaking families. Although this research focused on one particular school, information is discussed in a broader sense, offering suggestions to improve cultural sensitivity and reduce language barriers in school-based crisis planning efforts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There were many people who made this thesis a successful experience. First, I want to give everlasting thanks to my Heavenly Father. Without His love and guidance, none of this would have been possible. Second, I express deep gratitude to my parents, Morrie and Glenna, and sister Domini for their unwavering support from afar. They never doubted I could complete this task and over the last three years, they asked me dutifully each week, “Are you done yet?” Third, I want to thank my Aunt June and Uncle Ed, who graciously invited me to dwell in their basement and provided me with daily encouragement. They were part of my Utah support that I leaned on daily. Also, to Randy, Lindy, Zach, Parker, and Kaden, the second part of my Utah support system, I want to give thanks for their humor that kept me grounded in reality.

To Dr. Melissa Allen Heath, I proclaim her my personal superhero. She is the epitome of the phrase *go above and beyond*. Without her, I would still be looking for a school district to assist me with my thesis. She pushed and prodded me to aim higher and achieve more. Words will never be able to express the depth of my thanks to her. Additionally, to the rest of my thesis committee—Dr. Tim Smith and Dr. Rachel Crook-Lyon—I want to give my sincerest thanks for providing their time and dedication to this thesis. Their revisions and feedback helped to make this a quality study.

Finally, I want to express thanks to those who helped with the data collection—
Ana Kemple, Mirsa Joosten, and Provo School District. To Ana and Mirsa, thank you for
the selfless giving of your time and Spanish-speaking talents. This project could not have
been completed without you. To Provo School District, thank you for allowing us to work
with the school and parents. Your support of this project is deeply appreciated.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ix
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Public School Demographics.....	1
Service Delivery in School-Based Crisis Planning.....	1
Cultural Sensitivity in School-Based Crisis Planning.....	2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	5
Definitions.....	5
Crisis.....	5
School Violence.....	5
Culture.....	6
Acculturation.....	6
Latino/a and Hispanic.....	7
Cultural Broker.....	7
Current School Demographics.....	8
Perceptions and Realities of School Safety.....	8
School Violence.....	9
Earthquakes.....	10
Crisis Intervention Planning.....	11
Cultural Perspectives of Trauma.....	12
Community Resources and Help-Seeking Behaviors.....	14
Language Barriers in Crisis Response.....	16
Examples of Traumatic Events in Schools.....	18
Schoolyard Shooting, Stockton, CA.....	18
Amish School Tragedy, Lancaster County, PA.....	19
Statement of Problem.....	20
Research Questions.....	22
METHODS.....	23

Research Design.....	23
Participants.....	24
Procedures	25
Content Analysis.....	27
RESULTS.....	28
Participant Response Rate.....	28
Parents' Perceptions.....	29
School Safety	29
Response to Scenarios.....	30
School's Assistance to Parents.....	31
Requesting School's Assistance.....	31
Community Resources	32
Current School Crisis Plan.....	32
Recommended Changes to School Crisis Plan.....	33
Contacting School During a Crisis.....	33
DISCUSSION.....	35
Implications.....	35
Limitations.....	37
Suggestions for Future Research.....	38
Conclusion.....	39
REFERENCES.....	40
APPENDIX A.....	53
APPENDIX B.....	54

INTRODUCTION

Public School Demographics

American schools are becoming increasingly diverse. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2003, 2006) reports that approximately 40% of American public school students are students of color. Additionally, nearly 17% of students, almost nine million, speak a language other than English in their home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). Further highlighting the extent of linguistic diversity, the U.S. Census Bureau reports that over 350 languages are spoken in the United States.

In sharp contrast to the ethnic and linguistic diversity represented in public schools, teachers are primarily Caucasian (84%) (NCES, 2003). Furthermore, approximately 95% of school psychologists are Caucasian (Curtis, Grier, Abshier, Sutton, & Hunley, 2002) and only 10% of their members are fluent in a language other than English (Curtis, Hunley, Walker, & Baker, 1999).

Service Delivery in School-Based Crisis Planning

With the increasing diversity in school enrollment, professionals are faced with the challenge of providing culturally sensitive services. More specifically, the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) mission statement advocates “cultural competence in every area of school psychological service delivery” (NASP, n.d., ¶ 1). In terms of service delivery, consultation, intervention, and assessment practices must reflect sensitivity to linguistic and cultural differences.

With the current media focus on school violence, particularly school shootings—and more recently natural disasters such as earthquakes—there is an increased push for school safety, specifically for schools to provide effective crisis plans. The focus on

school shootings has increased parents' concerns about their children's safety (Brooks, Schiraldi, & Ziedenberg, 2000; Peterson, Larson, & Skiba, 2001), despite the fact that schools remain one of the safest environments for children and adolescents (Brooks et al.; NCES, 2006). Unfortunately, the media's focus on sporadic incidents of school shootings has kept political proponents and the general public focused on school violence, shortchanging other safety concerns (Brooks et al.; Kemple et al., 2006).

In comparison to school shootings, other types of incidents and natural disasters are more likely to occur in schools, yet receive much less publicity. However, potential threats to student safety cannot be ignored. Here in the U.S., a major earthquake shook California in 1933, destroying approximately 70 school buildings, prompting state legislators to enact laws that required building new schools or retrofitting schools to withstand earthquakes (Heath & Dean, 2008). Because this earthquake and others in recent years have occurred prior to or after school hours, the U.S. reports very few student fatalities due to earthquakes.

Similar to reactive responses following school shootings and earthquakes, school crisis plans are responsive in nature, reflecting perceived concerns. The content of school crisis plans are centered on responding to specific events rather than focusing on *whom* these plans are actually intended to serve (Heath, Annandale, Ryan, & Smith, 2006).

Cultural Sensitivity in School-Based Crisis Planning

Increasing the scope of crisis planning, schools must consider more than a list of specific events potentially jeopardizing safety. Taking into account individual school and district demographics, schools must consider strategies to best meet the needs of students and families from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Culture greatly influences how trauma is interpreted, providing a context for individuals to interpret situations and establishes a foundation from which individuals and groups respond (Dykeman, 2005). As school demographics become increasingly diverse, administrators must anticipate a wide variety of responses and needs, facing the challenge of creating and delivering services sensitive to the unique needs of students from diverse backgrounds. Careful planning considers a wide range of intervention strategies and types of support services related to immediate trauma response and individual and group help seeking behaviors (National Child Traumatic Stress Network [NCTSN], 2007). In particular, communication must be tailored to linguistic differences (Armstrong, 1991).

How students and families respond to crisis varies greatly, dependent upon several factors. Crisis plans must anticipate the immediate crisis, potential loss, the context of loss, and the perception of loss (Heath, Nickerson, Annandale, Kemple, & Dean, in press). Schools must carefully consider both perceptions and responses, attending to cultural differences. In fact, lack of attention to cultural differences may lead to mismatched goals and expectations regarding care and assistance during a crisis (Klotz, 2006; Klotz & Canter, 2006; Pedersen, 2003).

Understanding the cultural and ethnic background of students will help schools create crisis plans that consider and include cultural sensitivity. This sensitivity involves understanding values and principles that influence behaviors and attitudes (Goode, 2003). Therefore, instead of providing a reactive response to school crises, school and districts must be proactive in aligning services to better serve the cultural demographics representing their students.

One way to increase sensitivity in school crisis planning is to involve parents, giving them a voice in planning and evaluating the effectiveness and practicality of school crisis plans. Previous research recommends involving parents, utilizing this natural support to help children cope with trauma (Nickerson & Zhe, 2004). Including parents in crisis planning helps ensure that plans are sensitively tailored to fit specific cultural and linguistic needs. This is a particularly timely topic, given the growing diversity in public school demographics.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following review highlights issues within the literature of cultural sensitivity in school crisis planning and response. However, prior to a detailed literature review, several terms need to be defined: crisis, school violence, culture, acculturation, Latino/a and Hispanic, and cultural brokers. Following the definitions, current demographics in US public schools, the perceptions of school safety, and crisis intervention planning will be discussed. Cultural perspectives of trauma, community resources and help-seeking behavior, and language barriers will also be addressed. Finally, two examples of traumatic school events will be reviewed.

Definitions

Crisis. Several descriptors define what constitutes a crisis. Gammonley and Dziegielewski (2006) state that crisis includes four areas of trauma: (a) the scope of destruction; (b) the level of exposure; (c) the emotional anger caused by the intent; and (d) the high level of uncertainty following the event. Nickerson and Zhe (2004) define a crisis as “sudden, uncontrollable, and extremely negative events that have the potential to impact an entire school community” (p. 777). For the purpose of this study, crisis will be defined as an “event or circumstance that occurs often without warning and initially poses an overwhelming threat to an individual or group” (Heath & Sheen, 2005, p. 2).

School violence. Community violence is defined as “interpersonal violence that occurs in public places, that involves exposure to guns, knives, drugs, and random violence” (Overstreet & Cerbone, 2005). School violence relates to community violence, but occurs on school property, or during school hours. School violence occurs on a continuum of severity, ranging from minor incidents, such as teasing and taunting, to

more pervasive bullying, harassment, and physical aggression (Furlong, Pavelski, & Saxton, 2002). Some of the most common types of violence-related crises occurring on school grounds are student-to-student fighting, potentially resulting in damage to personal or school property and physical harm to students and staff. The violence may also result in critical injury or sudden death of targeted individuals and bystanders. This violence may be perpetrated with guns or other weapons on school grounds. Other less common forms of violence threatening schools includes kidnappings, bomb threats, terrorist attacks, and homicides (Nickerson & Zhe, 2004). An extreme form of school violence presents in tragic school shootings, potentially resulting in multiple deaths (Furlong et al.).

Culture. Much like the term “crisis,” “culture” has various meanings and definitions. According to NASP (2003), culture is “an integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, languages, practices, beliefs, values, customs, courtesies, rituals, manners of interacting and roles, relationships and expected behaviors of racial, ethnic, religious or social group; and the ability to transmit the above to succeeding generations.” For the purpose of this study, culture was considered a similar base for one group of families within an identified elementary school. This similar culture included racial and ethnic group identity, common primary language within a specific subgroup, and recent migration from one specific country.

Acculturation. Acculturation has been defined as “the process of adapting to a new culture as a result of changes in cultural attitudes, values, and behaviors resulting from contact with two or more distinct cultures” (Rayle & Myers, 2004). Acculturation has also been defined as “those phenomena which result when groups of individuals

having different cultures come into continuous, firsthand contact with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups” (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1935, pp. 145–146 as cited in Brown & Benedict, 2004). Basically stated, acculturation is the adaptation to new surroundings and cultures. While acculturation is difficult to measure, many research studies simply rely on the language spoken at home as a key indicator measuring degree of acculturation (Brown & Benedict, 2004, 2005).

Latino/a and Hispanic. The term Hispanic describes people of Spain, residents of Latin American countries, and those of Spanish or Latin American descent who reside in the United States (Lopez, Lopez, Suarez-Morales, & Castro, 2005). The term Latino/Latina denotes individuals of Latin American descent. The use of the word Hispanic has been noted to have political connotations. In contrast, the term Latino/a has been viewed to have more cultural connections (Gloria, Rodriguez, & Castillo, 2004, p. 168; Lopez et al.). For the purpose of this paper, the terms Latino/a and Hispanic will be used interchangeably.

Cultural broker. Cultural brokers are community leaders that represent diverse groups (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [U.S. DHHS], 2003). If language is a factor, they are representatives who can speak a second language found in the community. By living and working in the same environment as the school’s families, they have a better understanding of the situations and challenges faced by families (Carrier & Cohen, 2005). In a school setting, paraprofessionals are often viewed as cultural brokers. They typically live in the community in which they work and have children or grandchildren attending the school. They have the ability to provide culturally

appropriate ongoing support, bridging the gap between families and schools (Allen & Ashbaker, 2004).

Current School Demographics

The changing demographics of the U.S. population parallel the increasing diversity of public school demographics. Oakland (2005) noted that more than 15% of the U.S. population entered the country within the past 10 years. Although citizens of Hispanic origin are not the largest racial or ethnic minority in the United States, they are a fast growing population. It is projected that by 2050, Hispanics will represent approximately 25% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001).

The majority of the increase in public school enrollment since the 1980's has been due to immigration, with almost half of the increase coming from students of Latin American origin (Camarota, 2002; Earle, 1999; Passel, 1999 as cited in Brown & Benedict, 2005). In fact, in 2000, Latino children accounted for 17% of the overall public school population (Lopez et al., 2005). Additionally, among foreign-born Latino students, almost three-fourths speak Spanish (Lopez et al.). For students of Latino origin, the breakdown of Latin American countries represented in the U.S. is as follows: 63.3% Mexican American; 9.5% Puerto Rican; 3.4% Cuban; 23.8% other Latin American countries (NCTSN, 2007). Therefore, addressing language barriers, particularly for Spanish speaking students and families, is and will continue to be a major challenge for educators and mental health service providers in school settings.

Perceptions and Realities of School Safety

Even though the vast majority of schools, almost 96%, report having a crisis plan in place, the content and specificity of those plans are more difficult to summarize

(NCES, 2000; Nickerson & Osborne, 2006). A driving force defining the basis for crisis intervention plans is the public's perception of school safety, largely formed by the media's coverage of schools in crisis, particularly following incidents of school shootings (Donohue, Schiraldi, & Zeidenberg, 1998).

School violence. Although school shootings have occurred over the course of several decades, the school shootings in the late 1990's, such as Colorado's Columbine High School and Oregon's Thurston High School, pushed the issue of school violence into the national spotlight (Brown & Benedict, 2005). Currently, national media provides prime coverage of school shootings and anniversaries of school shootings. News crews follow the initial event and continue coverage during the aftermath, lasting a few days to a week or longer, depending on the severity of the event (Brown, 2002; Poland & McCormick, 2000).

Reactions to school shootings have heightened safety concerns within every school community, even those not directly affected by the event (NASP, n.d.). In fact, the media's coverage of school violence and school shootings has fostered the public's perception that schools are no longer safe (U.S. DHHS, 2001). This faltering confidence in schools to provide a safe learning environment negatively affects students' academic performance and their desire to attend school (Brown & Benedict, 2005).

Even though reported fears and concerns should not be discounted, facts counter perceptions: The chance a student will be killed at school is less than one in a million (DeVoe et al., 2002; Kaufman et al., 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 1999, as cited in Brown & Benedict, 2005). Students are more likely to report being a victim of theft than any other type of offense (Brown & Benedict). The National Association of School

Psychologists (n.d.) noted that the goal of school safety should be “to reassure students that although there is always a possibility of violence occurring in a school, the probability of a school experiencing a high profile violent act is extremely low” (¶ 5). Despite these differences between public perception of escalating school violence and the actual prevalence of school violence, a balance needs to be maintained between rights to education and the right to feel safe and secure in the classroom (Bon, Faircloth, & LeTendre, 2006).

Earthquakes. In terms of natural disasters, recent catastrophic earthquakes captured international attention for the havoc and destruction they have caused (Heath & Dean, 2008). Although most major earthquakes in the U.S. have occurred in California and Alaska, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reported that 40 of the 50 states are considered “vulnerable to the hazards of earthquakes,” with very few areas in the U.S. considered as minimal risk (2004). In fact, three of the largest earthquakes on record occurred in New Madrid, Missouri during 1811 and 1812 (Heath & Dean; USGS, 1995).

Internationally, the recent earthquake in China alerted everyone to the dangers of inadequately constructed school buildings (Heath & Dean, 2008). In May, 2008, a 7.9 earthquake struck Wenchuan, China. In an August 31, 2008 news release, China’s Director of the Sichuan Provincial Office of Education reported that in one area impacted by the earthquake, 4,675 schools were significantly damaged and 3,339 schools required reconstruction. In the hard-hit Sichuan Province, a total of 13,768 schools were damaged and 11,687 schools required reconstruction (Hua, 2008). At one school, almost 900 students were believed to be buried beneath the rubble (Vause & FlorCruz, 2008).

Although China discontinued releasing death toll counts and would not confirm the numbers of children killed in the earthquake, it is believed that over 10,000 school children died, the majority of the deaths directly attributed to poorly constructed schools (Foreman, 2008; Heath & Dean).

Despite these tragic instances, many schools, both nationally and internationally, have yet to be retrofitted to withstand an earthquake of moderate to extensive magnitude. For example, one-third of Oregon's public schools are not in compliance with the earthquake building codes established in 1977 by the National Earthquakes Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP), as they were built before 1974 (Wang & Burns, 2006). Overall, school buildings nationwide vary in compliance to earthquake codes; when faced with limited school budgets, many schools have been slow in responding to potential earthquake dangers.

Crisis Intervention Planning

Crisis intervention planning is essential for all schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). Crisis plans typically include plans for a variety of crisis events, ranging from fire drills and natural disaster drills to school violence and suicide prevention. Many states have placed districts in charge of conducting earthquake drills, with each state varying in the number of drills performed each year (Heath & Dean, 2008). Both the U.S. Department of Education and the Red Cross have endorsed such drills, stating that preparedness increases awareness and reduces fears for children in the event of an actual crisis (Heath & Dean; Red Cross, 2007).

Fire drill research has demonstrated a reduction in fears regarding a fire and better skill performance (Nickerson & Zhe, 2004). Additional research has been conducted

regarding school intruder drills and students' anxiety levels, noting a short-term increase in skill and knowledge for students, but no increase in anxiety levels when compared to the control group (Zhe & Nickerson, 2007). However, the effectiveness of drills for other types of crises remains unknown. Therefore, the Surgeon General urges that all crisis plans regarding youth violence be based on existing research and literature (U.S. DHHS, 2001). Heath and Sheen (2005) note that a well-defined crisis plan requires two basic components: preparation and follow-through. Additionally, crisis plans should be user-friendly, accessible, realistic, and tailored to each school environment (Heath & Sheen).

A contextual approach to crisis intervention planning is beneficial when working with diverse families (Sullivan, Harris, Collado, & Chen, 2006). Plans must consider school environments, particularly the cultural background of students and families. For example, Latino parents, believing that school faculty are experts, may not speak up if they disagree with a discussion (Lopez et al., 2005, p. 249). Therefore, when creating a crisis intervention plan, a needs assessment should be completed. Heath, Sheen, Annandale, and Lyman (2005) stated that schools need to assess the following: (a) which languages are spoken in the school and in students' homes; (b) which cultures are represented in the school district; (c) how individuals from these cultures cope with a crisis; (d) what resources exist and which organizations can be contacted for help during a crisis; and (e) how students and families from the various cultural backgrounds seek help and assistance from mental health professionals.

Cultural Perspectives of Trauma

Heath and Sheen (2005) note the importance of understanding an individual's response to trauma and stress. Therefore, an understanding of cultures can directly

influence our perception of how a crisis impacts an individual or group, how we identify target behaviors following a crisis, and how we intervene with students and families (Heath & Sheen). In fact, the NCTSN (2007) states that understanding cultural values is vital in making sense of a trauma. Unfortunately, trauma experiences for culturally diverse students and families are often misinterpreted and their needs remain unmet (Griner & Smith, 2006). Culture forms the basis for perceptions and not only determines which events are perceived as a crisis, but how the individual will choose to react and respond to the crisis (Sandoval & Lewis, 2002).

The manner in which an individual responds to violence and trauma is highly influenced by their culture and previous experience, particularly concerning anxiety and fear. For example, Brown and Benedict (2005) state that immigrant youth with low levels of acculturation in the U.S. are more fearful of weapon-associated violence than nonimmigrant youth. Furthermore, in a study on student victimization in high schools with a high Hispanic population, Brown and Benedict (2004) note that language at home was the only demographic variable that correlated with the fear of being shot or stabbed, with those with lower levels of acculturation (as indicated by the level of Spanish spoken in the home) reporting higher levels of fear.

More specifically, the NCTSN (2007) notes cultural variations in how Hispanic families respond to a crisis. In fact, Hispanic families may explain trauma through the cultural values of fatalismo, a view that God decides our fate and we are powerless to change it (NCTSN). Additionally, Sandoval and Lewis (2002) note that many groups representing different cultures consider asking direct questions as impolite. Considering these varied perceptions, particularly when perceptions run counter to the dominant

culture, school personnel must consider cultural views in order to meet the needs of students and families effectively during a crisis.

Community Resources and Help Seeking Behaviors

When creating crisis plans for schools, it is important for school personnel to consider cultural attitudes regarding help seeking. Not only does culture influence how an individual reacts to a crisis, but also how an individual seeks support. Clients of color are more likely to use mental health services when their values and beliefs are similar to the intervention offered (Griner & Smith, 2006; Hernandez & Isaacs, 1998; U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003). Furthermore, Latino/a individuals value interpersonal relationships, particularly within the extended family (Sandoval & Lewis, 2002). Therefore, Latino families with more traditional values may feel uncomfortable when contacting outside community agencies during a crisis when they have family support available (NCTSN, 2007).

A recent report from the Surgeon General indicates that, compared to Caucasians, Hispanic individuals are less likely to seek out help and support for mental health issues (U.S. DHHS, 2001). In fact, one study reported that of the Mexican American individuals who were diagnosed with a mental health disorder, only 9% sought services from a mental health professional while in the United States (U.S. DHHS). However, of individuals diagnosed with a mental health disorder in Puerto Rico, 85% receive mental health services, either from a mental health professional or health care provider (U.S. DHHS). Understanding this discrepancy is important. Is this discrepancy related to the difference in home countries studied? Alternatively, is the reason due to barriers, such as culture and language, which deter individuals from seeking services in the U.S.?

Additionally, in regard to culture and trauma, the limited availability of resources to individuals from various cultural backgrounds must be considered. Available and easily accessible resources can buffer the impact of a traumatic event, particularly for families with limited economic resources (Perilla, Norris, & Lavizzo, 2002). Although the resources available to Hispanic families are increasing, these resources continue to fall short of meeting this growing population's needs. Unfortunately, many families are unaware of the resources that are available to them (NCTSN, 2007). Therefore, it is important for schools to gather information regarding available resources and to make these resources accessible to families.

Although school crisis plans are created to assist students and faculty in the event of a crisis, comprehensive crisis plans involve not only the students and faculty, but also the community and social support networks of students (Brock, Lazarus, & Jimerson, 2002; Nickerson & Zhe, 2004; Pitcher & Poland, 1992). In particular, clergy and other religious leaders are prime candidates for assisting and organizing resources during a crisis (Sandoval & Lewis, 2002).

As schools prepare crisis plans and recruit members to participate on crisis teams, careful consideration must be made, ensuring these teams represent the school's diversity (Sandoval & Lewis, 2002). Additionally, it is important for crisis team members to be cognizant of cultural values. However, it is important for crisis teams to understand that those experiencing a crisis are individuals first and members of their cultural group second (Sandoval & Lewis). Crisis team members must be aware of cultural values and, at the same time, avoid stereotyping (Sandoval & Lewis).

Language Barriers in Crisis Response

Language differences also affect help seeking behaviors and may serve as a strong barrier to effective service delivery. For example, individuals who have recently immigrated to the U.S. may fail to report crimes due to language barriers, cultural beliefs regarding crimes, and a lack of knowledge regarding the justice system (Davis & Erez, 1998, as cited in Brown & Benedict, 2005).

Customizing school crisis plans should include consideration of potential language and other communication barriers (Heath & Sheen, 2005). In a study conducted by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), only 39% of school districts nationwide are equipped to communicate with Limited-English Proficient parents during an emergency. Even more alarming is that only 23% of all school districts translate their school crisis plans into other languages (U.S. GAO, 2007). Therefore, many school crisis plans are currently unavailable for families who speak a language other than English.

In order to address potential obstacles, understanding a family's level of acculturation is the first step. Sandoval and Lewis (2002) noted that understanding a family's level of acculturation to the dominant culture is the first step to addressing language barriers. Language preference has been noted to be an accurate indicator of acculturation (Perilla et al., 2002). However, this understanding requires willingness in understanding a family's cultural perspective (NCTSN, 2007).

Once an understanding of acculturation is established, schools can begin to address potential language barriers. It is important that members of crisis teams interact in the language preferred by the family (Sandoval & Lewis, 2002). In fact, interventions that adapted to specific cultural groups were four times more effective than providing a

general intervention to various cultural backgrounds (Griner & Smith, 2006).

Interventions were also observed to be two times more effective when the therapist spoke the same language as the family's preferred language (Griner & Smith). Unfortunately, only 10% of school psychologists are fluent in a language other than English (Curtis, Hunley, Walker, & Baker, 1999).

Therefore, assistance may be required from outside resources. The NCTSN (2007) recommends that crisis assessments be conducted in the family's language of origin. If the evaluator does not speak Spanish, then a Spanish-speaking interpreter should be used. In a study completed by Perilla et al. (2002), Hispanic families were given a choice on what language will be used in the study. The majority of Latinos in the sample chose to complete the interview in Spanish. School districts should look to outside resources, or cultural brokers, to assist with interpreting. Using cultural brokers from the community allows schools to benefit from having people who are committed to the community and know the challenges and specific needs of the area (Carrier & Cohen, 2005).

Despite the need for interpreters when interacting with diverse families during a crisis, it is important to have a qualified interpreter. Interpreting in the mental health services requires skill regarding language use and professionalism with personal and private matters (NCTSN, 2007; U.S. DHHS, 2003). It is important that interpreters know and understand the language of schools and be able to relay the messages accurately and appropriately.

Examples of Traumatic Events in Schools

In order to understand the significance of cultural competence in school-based crisis planning, it is important to review examples of traumatic events in school and how culture and language affected the service delivery. Listed below are two examples: the schoolyard shooting in Stockton, California and the Amish school tragedy in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Schoolyard shooting, Stockton, CA. The school shooting on January 17, 1989 at Cleveland Elementary School in Stockton, California was a prime example of confusion and disorder during and following a crisis (Armstrong, 1991). A man from the community came onto the school property during recess with an AK-47 rifle and opened fire, killing five and injuring 29 students and one teacher (Armstrong, 1991; Knox & Roberts, 2005; Silva 2004). Upon hearing about the crisis, families rushed to the school. Unidentified children were transferred to hospitals and parents waited several hours before learning the status of their children. In the midst of the chaos, parents were fearful and traumatized not knowing if their children were dead or alive (Silva).

During and following the Stockton schoolyard shooting, communicating with children and parents was especially difficult. Of the 970 students attending school, 70% were of Southeast Asian origin. Most of the families were from Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos. The majority of these families did not speak English (Heath & Sheen, 2005). Mike Armstrong, the school psychologist on-site during the crisis, noted that there was no one initially to communicate with the families (Armstrong, 1991). Armstrong noted that although a few instructional aides were Southeast Asian and bilingual, they were assisting with the injured children, or were too traumatized to assist in the communication

efforts. Families became increasingly frustrated and attempted to rush into the school to find their children, but they were halted by the police (Armstrong). Additionally, Armstrong reported that in meeting the children's emotional needs following the disaster, students preferred speaking in their native tongue. Even though they were capable of speaking English, emotional expressions were more easily communicated in their native language.

Following the Stockton schoolyard shootings, understanding the cultural environment proved vital to helping families (Sandoval & Lewis, 2002). Armstrong (1991) noted that Buddhism was the dominant religion for many of the children and families from Southeast Asia. In line with Buddhism, individuals believed in spirits and reincarnation. For children still learning about their beliefs, this translated into a fear of ghosts, spirits, and shadows. Therefore, an exorcism was performed to rid the school of evil spirits. Relaying this knowledge to students was one of the few things counselors and other school personnel were able to do to comfort the children (Armstrong).

Amish school tragedy, Lancaster County, PA. On October 2, 2006, a gunman held 10 girls hostage in an Amish classroom, ultimately killing five girls then committing suicide. Understanding the Amish culture and traditions was vital for crisis responders in this situation. Due to the Amish custom of abstaining from electronics, there was no telephone at the school (Scolforo, 2006a). The teacher ran to a neighboring farmhouse to call the police. In addition, the police could not call the parents and had to track them down in the farms (Hewitt et al., 2006). Many in the Amish community coped with the tragedy by "looking inward, relying on themselves and their faith, just as they have for centuries" (Scolforo, 2006b). Additionally, though people outside the area wanted to

donate money for a memorial honoring the dead, the Amish community politely declined, due to their belief that individuals must not be elevated above others or honored with memorials.

These examples demonstrate the need for culturally sensitive school crisis response. Additionally, these situations demonstrate the importance of preparing to understand, work, and interact with families from various cultural backgrounds. In essence, by proactively planning for cultural sensitivity in school crisis response, schools are preparing to more effectively serve individuals and their families, meeting their unique needs.

Statement of Problem

It is important for schools to adequately plan and prepare interventions for families coping with trauma (Gammonley & Dziegielewski, 2006). However, the cultural applications to school crisis responses and assessments have not been readily addressed (Bromet & Havenaar, 2006). Schools often create crisis intervention plans without addressing the needs of parents and families from various backgrounds. Therefore, it would be beneficial for schools to communicate with families to find out what would be most useful to them during a crisis (Brown, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

Research has been conducted regarding school psychologists' perceptions of the effectiveness of crisis prevention and intervention (Nickerson & Zhe, 2004) and teachers' views regarding school violence (Bon, Faircloth, & LeTendre, 2006). Research has even been conducted with families regarding general violence in the school and community (California Department of Education, 2001; Dwyer & Jimerson, 2002). However, there is

no research available regarding parents' perceptions of the effectiveness of school crisis plans.

Additionally, school psychologists feel unprepared to work and interact with families from diverse backgrounds during a crisis. In a study regarding school psychologists' preparedness for crisis response, almost 53% of respondents reported concerns when faced with providing crisis intervention to students from diverse backgrounds (Kemple et al., 2006).

Crisis interventions often recommend the involvement of parents in helping children cope through trauma (Nickerson & Zhe, 2004). In fact, Family Health International (2006) states that parental involvement improves a program's influence and assistance to a community. Gansle and Pogue (2005) also note that if a program is not visible and lacks parental support, it is unlikely that community members will use the services provided. Therefore, in order to encourage parental involvement, it is important for school psychologists to understand the family's view of crisis events and how the school might best serve students and families.

In addition, limited research has focused on multicultural issues and crisis intervention, particularly in relation to school-based services for children and families. Most crisis-related research has focused on Caucasian samples (Rabalais, Ruggiero, & Scotti, 2002). Given the limitation of current and past research, during a crisis it is difficult for schools to know what to do to best meet the needs of students and families from diverse cultures, even more so when language barriers complicate service delivery. Succinctly stated, school-based efforts need direction in planning and implementing culturally sensitive crisis intervention. One recommended strategy is to invite parents

from diverse backgrounds to have a voice in what schools can do to assist them during a crisis. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to assist a selected school in bridging Spanish-speaking parent input into culturally sensitive crisis plans.

Research Questions

Based on school-based crisis plans, more specifically focusing on the area of school safety, the following research questions will be answered through the course of this study. From the perspective of parents, whose primary language is Spanish and whose children attend an elementary school, the following areas will be investigated:

(1) Overall view of school safety: (a) What are parents' views of how their school keeps students safe? (b) What are parents' worries about their child's safety at school?

(2) Help-seeking behaviors: (a) During times of crisis, what are parents' expectations for accessing assistance from their school and community? (b) In times of crisis, what are parents' anticipated needs and how can they communicate those needs to the school and community? (c) Whom would they call for assistance?

(3) Improving school's crisis plan: After reviewing school crisis plan, what suggestions would parents offer to strengthen the existing school crisis plan to better meet their needs?

METHODS

Research Design

In interviewing families, a proactive approach regarding multicultural issues in school crisis response was established. The study was conducted to explore the cultural elements for Latino families in regards to school crisis plans. The interview approach allowed respondents to “speak in their own voice, rather than conforming to categories and terms imposed on them by others” (Palinkas, 2006, p. 160). In order to understand the reality and meaning for each individual interviewed, researchers need to “encourage people to describe their worlds in their own terms” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 2). Furthermore, in order to communicate effectively to families, it is important to understand their perspective. In-person interviews allow for the scope of information to produce findings that have theoretical and practical value to the school and community (Bromet & Havenaar, p. 96).

However, to assist with analysis of respondent answers, the methodological approach utilized in this study followed the guidelines of content analysis. The U.S. GAO defines content analysis as the “[classification] of key ideas in a written communication, such as a report, article, or film. Evaluators can do content analysis of video, film, or other forms of recorded information...” (U.S. GAO, 1996, p. 7). This approach summarizes interview responses in a manner that does not fit the overall ideals of a qualitative study. Content analysis methodology focuses on analyzing information that allows for inference of ideas from the text (U.S. GAO).

Since limited research has been conducted on multicultural considerations in school-based crisis intervention, open-ended questions would gather beginning

information upon which to base future research studies (Creswell, 2003; Kemple et al., 2006; Richardson, 1996; Schwartz, 1999). Therefore, the responses will not be used to explain how all crisis plans can be improved to help Spanish-speaking families. Instead, the themes created from the interview responses will be used to help propose possible solutions to improve services for families at the selected school.

Participants

After discussing this study with district and local administrators, a selected elementary school from Provo School District, with 49% Spanish-speaking students, was selected as the target school. A Spanish-speaking population of at least five percent was chosen to ensure a demographic large enough for this study. Mothers were the typical contact point (more mothers listed cell phone numbers in school records and as emergency contact numbers) and more mothers than fathers participated because they were more likely to be home during the day and attend school meetings and functions. However, fathers were invited to participate and their input was welcomed. Prior to interviewing the parents, a small focus group with three Latino mothers helped identify language errors and potential biases in interview questions.

Initially, the principal and school secretaries provided a list of parents as possible participants for the study. From this list, parents were assigned a number and then randomly selected for participation based on number sequencing. Ultimately, the participants consisted of 12 Latino parents representing 10 families (10 mothers and 2 fathers). The parents had one child or more attending the identified school. For two of the interviews, the fathers and mothers from selected families participated in the discussion.

For this study, purposeful sampling was conducted. Purposeful sampling involves

interviewing individuals found in a specific location (Cutcliff, 2000). This allowed the participating school to receive the greatest benefit from the information. Criteria for parents participating in this study included the following: (a) parents had at least one student attending the selected school; (b) the family recently immigrated to the United States, more specifically within the previous ten years; (c) parents predominantly spoke Spanish in the home; and (d) parents agreed to participate and sign consent forms. Demographic information was not collected on participating parents and their families. As the study interviewed families who recently immigrated to the United States, there was a question of legal immigration status, a very sensitive subject. In order to help maintain a sense of confidentiality and to reduce mistrust of the study's purpose, demographic questions were not asked.

Procedures

A list of initial open-ended questions were generated from the information provided by Athey and Moody (2003) in the U.S. DHHS booklet *Developing cultural competence in disaster mental health programs: Guiding principles and recommendations* and from the Family Health International (2006) *Youth peer education toolkit: Assessing the quality of youth peer education programmes*. The questions were created based on the following categories: (a) overall view of school safety; (b) help seeking behaviors; and (c) suggestions for improving the school's crisis plan.

Once the initial list of potential participants was created, a research volunteer fluent in Spanish contacted the identified parent by phone. One of the research volunteers is a practicing bilingual Mexican American school psychologist with seven years experience. The other research volunteer is a Peruvian Spanish-speaking school district

interpreter with over 25 years of experience. After describing the study, the research volunteer asked the parent if they would participate in the study. The parents were given information regarding the purpose of the study and the confidentiality of their responses. A time was established for two research volunteers to individually visit with the participating parent, either in the participant's home or at a location of their choice.

At the beginning of the interview, prior to discussing the research questions, three scenarios were read to the parents in Spanish to provide a context from which to answer the questions. The scenarios were related to the following incidents: school violence, natural disasters, and extreme weather. The three scenarios listed below were read to participants:

(1) About 10:45 a.m., the gunman entered the school. An announcement was made over the PA system that a stranger with a gun was spotted in the building and all teachers were instructed to go into lockdown, meaning they lock their classroom doors and do not open them for anyone. Shots were heard outside, but no other information has been given out to the public.

(2) At 1:15 p.m., a moderate earthquake shook Salt Lake City and surrounding towns while your children were at school. Your house was damaged (broken windows, fallen bookshelves, etc). Your home phone and cell phones do not work. The electricity is off-not working. You don't know what has happened at the school.

(3) Snow has fallen heavy all day. It is very cold. The temperature is below freezing. It is dangerous driving on the slick roads, so you can't drive to the school. The buses got stuck driving to the school, the roads are closed and the busses cannot bring

your child home. The school is five miles from your home, too far for your child to walk home.

Prior to the interview questions for the third research area (improving the school's crisis plan), the school psychologists read the school crisis plan in Spanish to the participant. Reviewing the selected school's crisis plan removed possible misconceptions about what was included in the school's crisis plan, as well as educated the parents on what was currently in place to assist them and their children.

The parents were interviewed using an open-ended question format to allow for a wider variety of responses and to permit greater flexibility in exploring participants' perspectives. As the questions were read aloud, the parents were also provided a Spanish translation of the scenarios and associated research questions to refer to when needed. With the parents' permission, the interviews were tape recorded for later review, increasing coding accuracy. Additionally, notes were taken during the interviews to record nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions and body language.

Content Analysis

In regards to content analysis and this study, data was gathered through interviews and themes that emerged in participant's responses. Following the interviews, the research volunteers and the principal researcher reviewed the interviews and coded themes that emerged from each question. Content analysis not only analyzes the coded themes from interviews, but also the frequency count of statements (U.S. GAO, 1996, p. 7) The themes and frequencies were given a final review by a licensed psychologist familiar with the study.

RESULTS

Participant Response Rate

It was difficult for the selected elementary school's secretaries and principal to designate a list of families that moved to the United States within the last 10 years. Though each student's school record included a response category regarding date of immigration into the U.S., the vast majority of parents did not respond to this query. They did not indicate an immigration date. However, the school secretaries identified 20 parents as potential participants, based on school records identifying Spanish as the home language and a note requiring an update in their child's early immunizations and verification of TB test. Based on the school secretaries' information, only children recently entering the U.S. had this type of information in their school records. Unfortunately, the initial 20 names did not yield the necessary 10 participants. Therefore, 34 additional names that met the study's inclusion criteria were extracted from the school records, totaling a pool of 54 potential participants.

There were a variety of reasons for the low participation rate. Nine parents were not contacted because their phone numbers were disconnected. Four parents declined to participate. Twenty-two participants never answered their phone, despite multiple phone calls attempting to make contact. Of the 19 parents who agreed to participate, only seven were home during the scheduled interview times. Although follow-up phone calls were made to the 12 parents not home for scheduled interviews, these parents did not respond nor reschedule interviews. The final three participants were selected based on recommendations of previously interviewed parents.

Though initially intended to be a randomly selected sample, the participants were ultimately described as a convenience sample. All ten participating parents met the study's criteria for inclusion. The low response rate notes a potential challenge for schools attempting to involve parents in crisis planning. Additionally, the difficulty contacting parents and accessing working phone numbers may pose communication barriers to schools in the event of an emergency or crisis situation.

Parents' Perceptions

School safety. Four of 10 participants noted that the school has procedures in place when emergencies occur that keep children safe. Three responses indicated that participating parents had confidence in teachers and staff keeping their children safe at school. There was no mention of specific individuals, just that the adults who work at the school are there to keep children safe. Two responses noted preventative procedures, specifically the check-in procedures for visitors entering the school. Effectively enforcing a visitor check-in policy was a repeated theme in participants' concerns about keeping children safe.

In regard to the three scenarios described at the beginning of the interview, one participant felt their school was not prepared to handle such situations. As reported in this response and in subsequent responses, this participant indicated that if the school had metal detectors, they would be more prepared to keep children safe and would prevent students from bringing weapons (such as guns and knives) to school.

Another respondent reported that children are kept safe by having a new school building. The school was recently built and constructed to withstand natural disasters, including earthquakes and flooding. One parent noted that their school keeps children

safe by having emergency supplies available, such as blankets and back-up generators. Although this was one parent's perception, in reality the school does not have back-up generators or blankets for students to use at the school.

In regard to their individual child's safety at school, five parents stated they had no concerns. Two respondents noted that during general day-to-day routine school, they did not have any concerns; however, if the described scenarios actually happened, they would be concerned. They noted that they never considered the situations described in the scenarios. Two parents reported concerns with unauthorized guests at school. They noted that although the school has check-in procedures, they did not believe their school consistently enforced the policy. Additionally, prior to school starting each morning, children are required to wait outside the building. One parent noted a concern with Utah's extreme weather and how this might impact their child's safety. They felt their child might be physically harmed by the extreme cold.

Response to scenarios. Three parents noted that they would feel frightened if the scenarios actually occurred in their school. "Worried" and/or "nervous" were reactions of four participants. Two respondents noted anxious feelings for parents in the scenarios. Two parents noted that on top of other emotions, the parents in the scenarios should attempt to remain calm. They felt that the school would do what they could to keep their children safe and that parents would need to be calm and not over-react. One respondent noted that they would respond by moving to action, by going down to the school to find out what happened. One parent noted panic as a reaction to the scenarios. They noted that the scenarios listed are not things that people normally think about or prepare for, so the natural reaction would be panic. One participant reported having a feeling of desperation.

Not knowing how they would communicate with the school, they would feel desperate as to what they should do. Finally, one respondent noted that the parents in the scenarios should wait for news from the school. They mentioned that the school would do what they can to keep children safe and that parents will create more problems if they went down to the school.

The question was asked in relation to help-seeking behaviors. However, the parent responses noted emotional reactions to the situations, rather than responses regarding problem solving and seeking assistance or guidance from school personnel or community based resources. The misperception of the question may be due to the Spanish translation, or the parent may react emotionally and not seek assistance when faced with a potential crisis.

School's assistance to parents. Five responses were related to the school's communication with families. The parents wanted immediate news about what was going on at the school and what was happening with their children during a crisis. Four respondents noted that the school could help them by educating them on what to do during a school crisis. They stated that in the event of a school crisis, such as the described scenarios, they would not know what to do or what the school would want them to do. One respondent stated, "They could help, if there was some kind of training. I would want to know the evacuation plan and exactly what they would do if there was a bomb threat or something like that."

One parent noted that more information communicated in Spanish would help them in crisis situations. One participant noted that contacting community agencies would be helpful. The community agencies mentioned were emergency care personnel,

such as police, fire, and medical services. One respondent suggested that more Spanish speakers at the school would help them during a crisis; they would then know whom they could contact. One participant reported that there was nothing extra the school could do to help. They felt the school was already doing enough and that nothing more was needed. Finally, one parent noted that the school could help their children by enforcing existing school policies, particularly visitor check-in policies.

Requesting school's assistance. Five respondents noted that although they wanted to tell the school what they needed during a crisis, they did not know exactly how to communicate with the school. One respondent stated, "Yes, I'd ask [for help] because [the school] is a safe school and not just for the students, but for the community as well." Two respondents said that they would tell the school what they needed by calling the school. One respondent noted that they would communicate their needs to the school through another person who spoke both English and Spanish. One respondent noted that they would not tell the school what they needed, but would instead wait to hear from the school regarding the crisis. Finally, one respondent indicated that they were unsure about what they would do in the case of a school crisis. They did not know if they would or would not call to inform the school of their needs.

Community resources. Eight respondents said they did not know anyone in the community who they would go to for help. One of the eight stated that they didn't know any community resources, so they would go straight to the school for help. Two parents noted that they would contact leaders of their respective churches for assistance. One respondent, employed as a social worker, noted that they would contact their employer for help. They explained that their employer has a policy to assist families during crises.

One parent stated they would contact a specific community-based service, called the Parent Center, for assistance. Finally, one respondent reported that they would contact another Spanish-speaking parent for assistance during a crisis.

Current school crisis plan. Five parents indicated that the school was prepared with a crisis plan and they believed the school would be able to help if the scenarios occurred. One of the five parents noted that in addition to the school's crisis plan, the school would be able to help prevent a school shooting if metal detectors were installed. For this parent, school violence appeared to be a major concern and metal detectors were identified as a preventative measure to alleviate their concerns regarding weapons in the school. Four parents were unsure of the school's ability to help in the event of a crisis situation because they were unsure about the content and strategies outlined in their school's crisis plan. Finally, one parent reported that the school was not prepared to help in the described scenarios, because the school had never met with parents to discuss the school's crisis plan. The parent noted that if parents and staff did not discuss plans and how to respond in the event of a crisis, then she doubted if the school was prepared to effectively face a crisis situation.

Recommended changes to school crisis plan. After reviewing the selected school's crisis plan with the parents, six respondents indicated that they liked the crisis plan the way it was. Five respondents noted that providing the crisis plan in Spanish would be helpful. Four parents stated it would be beneficial to educate families about the school crisis plan's policies. One parent stated, "It's a good plan. If there's any way we [parents] could be trained, I'd like that. I want to know what we can do to help." Another respondent suggested adding practice drills that included families, stating this would be

helpful. Two respondents identified the need for specifics about communication with families during a crisis. One parent noted that the school had good policies in place, but needed to be enforced, such as the previously mentioned visitor check-in policies. One parent wanted metal detectors added to the school crisis plan. This parent repeated this concern throughout the interview, as she felt that was the main flaw of the school's crisis plan. Finally, one participant suggested improving the school's crisis plan by adding a parent committee to assist during a crisis.

Contacting school during a crisis. Six respondents reported that they would contact the principal during a crisis. One parent noted, "I would talk to the principal because she is the one with the most information about the school." It should be noted that this school's principal speaks fluent Spanish. Three parents noted that they would call the school's main office number. One parent stated, "The only number I have is the main number, so I would call that. But, that's it." Two respondents reported that they would attempt to contact their child's teacher. One respondent indicated they would contact a Spanish-speaking aide who worked in the school. One parent noted that they would contact another parent who spoke Spanish. One respondent noted that they would contact the school's secretary (also Spanish speaking). Another parent noted that they would send an email to the school, although they were unclear about the e-mail address and exactly who would receive the e-mail.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to offer Spanish-speaking parents an opportunity to voice opinions regarding their school's crisis plan. The themes that emerged as a result of the interviews provided some valuable insight into the experiences of the Spanish-speaking families at the selected elementary school. The following sections discuss implications of research findings, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

Implications

The first theme indicated by the parents in the study was a sense of isolation from the community. This is an interesting perspective, as almost half (49%) of the students attending the selected school are Spanish-speaking. Many of the parents indicated a lack of knowledge regarding community resources available to them during a crisis. While living in a primarily English-speaking country, they may feel that there is no one who can help and communicate to them in their primary language. This idea is congruent with research indicating that services are accessed and utilized more when the services are offered in the participant's home language (Griner & Smith, 2006; U. S. DHHS, 2001).

Although minimal resources are available to Spanish-speaking families, there are community crisis services available for these families. However, this study indicates that these services are unknown to non-English speaking families who may benefit from them. As parents may feel comfortable coming to the school for help, having services available at the school, or offering services near the school may increase awareness and access to available community services.

Respondents also indicated a sense of safety and support from the school. Many respondents reported that they would talk to school personnel for assistance. This may be

directly attributed to the school's Spanish-speaking principal and secretary. Apart from the principal and secretary, there are teachers and aides at the school who speak Spanish. Yet, they have enough trust in the principal to feel comfortable talking to her. As research has previously discovered, individuals are likely to seek help when they believe that their values or beliefs are similar or understood by those providing assistance (Griner & Smith, 2006). However, there may be a sense of deference to the principal for her role as the authority figure at the school. Parents may look to her for support during a crisis event, as opposed to the Spanish-speaking teacher or aides.

Additionally, this feeling of support offered by the principal and school provides a strong argument for housing community services in school buildings, rather than elsewhere in the community. Parents know where schools are located. They may stop by daily to drop their children off at school. This is not the case of other buildings and services in the community. Programs (and crisis plans) that are not visible and lack parental support are unlikely to be used by community members (Gansle & Pogue, 2005). Comprehensive crisis plans for schools not only involve faculty, parents, and students, but community resources (Brock & Jimerson, 2002; Nickerson & Zhe, 2004; Pitcher & Poland, 1992). Often, parents feel comfortable coming to schools that their children attend. Parents who might not normally seek assistance from outside services might do so if it is supported in a location to which they come repeatedly.

Finally, a common theme for many respondents was education of the school crisis plan. Many parents reported that they did not know what the school crisis plan was, or what parents needed to do if there was a crisis. For crisis plans to run smoothly, everyone needs to know their role, and that includes parents. Just as practice drills can help

children know what to do during a crisis event, educating families on what they can do will help to alleviate any worries and help them provide a sense of control.

To help educate parents on the crisis plan, the option of adding a parent committee to assist with the crisis plan was offered by some respondents. A parent committee, under the direction of the principal, can help the school provide insight into the needs and experiences of parents at their particular school. They can plan parent meetings to review the school crisis plan and provide needed information in Spanish. Additionally, as the committee becomes more visible to parents, the parents will feel less isolation from the school and know whom they can contact for assistance during any crisis. They can also provide support immediately following a crisis. While many respondents felt comfortable talking to the principal, in the reality of a crisis, the principal will not have the time to talk to each parent. Providing a committee of parents can help relay needed information during the immediate crisis response.

Limitations

The researchers acknowledge the limitations of this study. The sample was selected from a specific source, using a method of convenience. This was due in part to the nature of the study, as the researchers were interested in the views and experiences of Spanish-speaking parents who have children at the selected elementary school.

Additionally, it was difficult to find parents who agreed to participate in the interviews. Therefore, the sample was probably biased towards parents who were willing to participate and more active in school and community involvement. There are various possibilities as to the difficulty in finding participants. As stated earlier, many of the phone numbers listed for the families were inactive. There were families who did not

want to participate, indicating a lack of time available or a possible mistrust of outside people asking personal questions. Additionally, some families agreed to participate, but would only provide one word responses.

Furthermore, the limited number of those interviewed may not have been representative of the larger group of Spanish-speaking parents at the school. With only 10 families interviewed, perspectives of participating families may not accurately or fully represent families who elected not to participate or families not considered in the potential participant pool. However, the nature of qualitative research is that it is a never-ending study. Future research will build upon this study's contributions.

Finally, when language translations occur following the interviews for analysis, there is the possibility of miscommunicated ideas. However, involving the interviewers during coding, taking into account their observations, helped reduce this concern.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study reviewed Spanish-speaking parents and their overall perceptions of school crisis response. The findings of this study open the door for more in-depth studies investigating aspects of cultural sensitivity in the area of school-based crisis response. Ultimately, crisis planning and response that incorporates sensitivity to the diverse needs of school populations will offer more effective crisis response.

Crisis planning must also consider that parents and families may respond different depending on the crisis event (i.e. a school shooting as opposed to an earthquake). Future studies may focus on parent responses to specific types of crises and the various ways schools should adjust crisis response considering parents' perceptions and perceived needs.

Additionally, this study was also conducted at a selected elementary school. The views and opinions of Spanish-speaking parents may differ with middle/junior high schools, high schools, and even college. Interviews of parents with children attending these schools may yield different results based on their opinions and experiences.

Finally, this study only reviewed the experiences and views of Spanish-speaking parents. Crisis planning may benefit from other ethnicities and cultures offering their voice, opinions, and concerns. Instead of a general, open-ended question, future researchers could present questions in a quantitative format for comparisons in cultural sensitivity and crisis response. Furthermore, more detailed analysis of past school crisis response-and how they assisted culturally diverse families-may prove helpful in improving and strengthening school crisis plans.

Conclusion

Overall, the results provided a solid foundation on which to build future research. There are many facets that need to be reviewed and studied. It is the goal of this research study that the information be incorporated into the selected school's crisis plan. Additionally, it is the goal of this research to provide information to parents on available community resources. If nothing else comes about as a result of this study, providing additional information to parents, and allowing their voices to be heard, makes this a successful study. Hopefully, the findings will incite other districts and schools to look at their own crisis plans and how they can assist parents and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

REFERENCES

- Allen, M., & Ashbaker, B. Y. (2004). Strengthening schools: Involving paraprofessionals in crisis prevention and intervention. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 39*, 139-146.
- Armstrong, M. (1991). Cross-cultural issues in responding to a tragedy: The Stockton schoolyard shootings. In J. Sandoval (Ed.), *Resources in crisis intervention: School, family, and community applications* (pp. 97-99). Silver Spring, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Athey, J., & Moody-Williams, J. (2003). *Developing cultural competence in disaster mental health programs: Guiding principles and recommendations*. DHHS Pub. No. SMA 3828. Rockville, MD: Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
- Bon, S. C., Faircloth, S. C., & LeTendre, G. K. (2006). The school violence dilemma: Protecting the rights of students with disabilities while maintaining teachers' sense of safety in schools. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies, 17*, 148-157.
- Brock, S. E., Lazarus, P. J., & Jimerson, S. R. (Eds.). (2002). *Best practices in school crisis prevention and intervention*. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Bromet, E. J., & Havenaar, J. H. (2006). Basic epidemiological approaches to disaster research: Value of face-to-face procedures. In F. H. Norris, S. Galea, M. J. Friedman, & P. J. Watson (Eds.), *Methods for disaster mental health research* (pp. 95-110). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

- Brooks, K., Schiraldi, V., & Ziedenberg, J. (2000). *School house hype: Two years later: Policy report*. Washington, DC: Justice Policy Institute; Covington, KY: Children's Law Center. Retrieved March 10, 2007, from <http://www.justicepolicy.org/downloads/SHH2.PDF>
- Brown, B., & Benedict, W. R. (2005). Student victimization in Hispanic high schools: A research note and methodological comment. *Criminal Justice Studies, 18*, 255-269.
- Brown, B., & Benedict, W. R. (2004). Bullets, blades, and being afraid in Hispanic high schools: An exploratory study of the presence of weapons and fear of weapon-associated victimization among high school students in a border town. *Crime & Delinquency, 50*, 372-394.
- Brown, M. B. (2002). School violence. In S. E. Brock, P. J. Lazarus, & S. R. Jimerson (Eds.), *Best practices in school crisis prevention and intervention* (pp. 487-502). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Camarota, S. A. (2002). *Immigrants in the United States-2002: A snapshot of America's foreign-born population*. Washington, DC: Center for Immigration Studies.
- Carrier, K. A., & Cohen, J. A. (2005). Hispanic individuals in their communities: An untapped resource for increasing the bilingual teacher population. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 4*, 51-63.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Curtis, M. J., Grier, J. E. C., Abshier, D. W., Sutton, N. T., & Hunley, S. (2002). School psychology: Turning the corner into the twenty-first century. *Communique*, 30(8), 1, 5-6.
- Curtis, M. J., Hunley, S. A., Walker, K. J., & Baker, A. C. (1999). Demographic characteristics and professional practices in school psychology. *School Psychology Review*, 28, 104-116.
- Davis, R. C., & Erez, E. (1998). *Immigrant populations as victims: Toward a multicultural criminal justice system* (NCJ 167571). Washington DC: US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice.
- DeVoe, J. F., Peter, K., Kaufman, P., Ruddy, S. A., Miller, A. K., Planty, M., et al. (2002). *Indicators of school crime and safety, 2002* (NCJ 196753). Washington DC: US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Donohue, E., Schiraldi, V., & Zeidenberg, J. (1998). *School house hype: The school shootings, and the real risks kids face in America*. San Francisco, CA: Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice. Retrieved May 13, 2006, from <http://www.cjcj.org/pubs/shooting/shootings.html>
- Dwyer, K. P., & Jimerson, S. R. (2002). Enabling prevention through planning. In S. E. Brock, P. J. Lazarus, & S. R. Jimerson (Eds.), *Best practices in school crisis prevention and intervention* (pp. 23-46). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Dykeman, B. F. (2005). Cultural implications of crisis intervention. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 32, 45-48.

- Earle, D. M. (1999). Border crossings, border control: Illegalized migrants from the other side. In D. W. Haines & K. E. Rosenblum (Eds.), *Illegal immigration in America: A reference handbook* (pp. 396-411). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Family Health International. (2006). *Youth peer education toolkit: Assessing the quality of youth peer education programmes*. Retrieved May 12, 2007, from <http://www.fhi.org/NR/rdonlyres/eyazx2qfgwexdo4ikugnqwhcqf7sjepxtblqe3sz3p5mbi7wlaneukwut3pwthyh36prawawsskhwb/peeredassessment.pdf>
- Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2004). *Risk management series: Design guide for improving school safety in earthquakes, floods, and high winds* (FEMA 424). Washington, DC: Author.
- Foreman, W. (2008, May 12). *1,000 buried in another school collapse*. ABC News. Retrieved April 18, 2009, from <http://abcnews.go.com/International/Weather/wireStory?id=4834010>
- Furlong, M. J., Pavelski, R., & Saxton, J. (2002). The prevention of school violence. In S. E. Brock, P. J. Lazarus, & S. R. Jimerson (Eds.), *Best practices in school crisis prevention and intervention* (pp. 131-149). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Gammonley, D., & Dziegielewski, S. F. (2006). Crisis intervention responses to children victimized by terrorism: Children are not little adults. *Brief Treatment and Crisis Intervention*, 6, 22-35.
- Gansle, K. A., & Pogue, R. (2005). Successful community programs for youth in multicultural environments. In C. L. Frisby & C. R. Reynolds (Eds.),

Comprehensive handbook of multicultural school psychology (pp. 973-992).
Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Gloria, A. M., Rodriguez, E. R., & Castillo, E. M. (2004). Counseling and psychotherapy with Latino/Latina clients. In T. B. Smith (Ed.), *Practicing multiculturalism: Affirming diversity in counseling and psychology* (pp. 167-189). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Goode, T. (2003). Getting started...Planning, implementing and evaluating culturally & linguistically competent service delivery systems for children with special health care needs and their families. Washington, DC: National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development.

Griner, D., & Smith, T. B. (2006). Culturally adapted mental health interventions: A meta-analytic review. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, 43, 531-548.

Heath, M. A., Annandale, N. O., Ryan, K., & Smith, T. B. (2006). School crisis plans and sensitivity to diversity: Who are we planning for? *Communiqué*, 35(3), 30-32.

Heath, M. A., & Dean, B. (2008). Preparing for an earthquake: Information for schools and families. *Communiqué*, 37, 1, 10-12.

Heath, M. A., Nickerson, A. B., Annandale, N., Kemple, A., & Dean, B. (in press). Strengthening cultural sensitivity in children's disaster mental health services. *School Psychology International*.

Heath, M. A., & Sheen, D. (2005). *School-based crisis intervention: Preparing all personnel to assist*. New York: Guilford Press.

- Heath, M. A., Sheen, D., Annandale, N. O., & Lyman, B. (2005). Responding to a crisis. In M. A. Heath & D. Sheen (Eds.), *School-based crisis intervention: Preparing all personnel to assist* (pp. 23-43). New York: Guilford Press.
- Hernandez, M., & Isaacs, M. R. (1998). *Promoting cultural competence in children's mental health services*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.
- Hewitt, B., Burleigh, N., Dowd, K. E., Egan, N. W., Green, M., Scully, S., et al. (2006, October 16). Heartbreak in a small town. *People*, 66(16), 62-67. Retrieved June 17, 2009, from <http://www.people.com/people/archive/article/0,,20060774,00.html>
- Hua, W. (2008, September 3). Back to school after Sichuan earthquake: Reality check. *Epoch Times*. Retrieved April 21, 2009, from <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/content/view/3796/>
- Kaufman, P., Xianglei, C., Choy, S. P., Ruddy, S. A., Miller, A. K., Fleury, J. K., Chandler, K., Rand, M. R., Klaus, P., & Planty, M. G. (2000). *Indicators of school crime and safety, 2000* (NCJ 184176). Washington DC: US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justics Statistics.
- Kemple, A. E., Heath, M. A., Hansen, K., Annandale, N. O., Fischer, L., Young, E. L., & Ryan, K. (2006). Cultural sensitivity in school-based crisis intervention. *Communique*, 34(7), 34-37.
- Klotz, M. B. (2006). *Culturally competent schools; Guidelines for secondary school principals*. Retrieved May 2, 2007, from <http://www.nasponline.org/resources/principals/Culturally%20Competent%20Schools%20NASSP.pdf>

Klotz, M. B., & Canter, A. (2006). *Culturally competent assessment and consultation*.

Retrieved May 2, 2007, from

<http://www.nasponline.org/resources/principals/Culturally%20Competent%20Assessment%20and%20Consultation%20NASSP.pdf>

Knox, K. S., & Roberts, A. R. (2005). Crisis intervention and crisis team models in schools. *Children & Schools*, 27, 93-101.

Lopez, C., Lopez, V. Suarez-Morales, L., & Castro, F. G. (2005). Cultural variation within Hispanic American families. In C. L. Frisby & C. R. Reynolds (Eds.), *Comprehensive handbook of multicultural school psychology* (pp. 234-264). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

National Association of School Psychologists. (2003). *Defining culture*. Retrieved May 5, 2009, from

<http://www.nasponline.org/resources/culturalcompetence/definingculture.aspx>

National Association of School Psychologists. (n.d.). *NASP's commitment to culturally competent practice*. Retrieved April 18, 2009, from

<http://www.nasponline.org/resources/culturalcompetence/mission.aspx>

National Association of School Psychologists. (n.d.). *Tips for school administrators for reinforcing school safety*. Retrieved June 6, 2007, from

http://nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/schoolsafety_admin.aspx

National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (2007). Preliminary adaptations for working with traumatized Latino/Hispanic children and their families. *Culture and Trauma Brief*. Retrieved June 2, 2007, from

http://www.nctsn.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/culture_and_trauma_brief_v2n3_LatinoHispanicChildren.pdf

- Nickerson, A. B., & Osborne, K. M. (2006). Crisis preparedness, response, and management: Surveys of school professionals. In S. R. Jimerson & M. J. Furlong (Eds.), *Handbook of school violence and school safety: From research to practice* (pp. 89-101). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Nickerson, A. B., & Zhe, E. J. (2004). Crisis prevention and intervention: A survey of school psychologists. *Psychology in the Schools, 41*, 777-788.
- Oakland, T. (2005). Commentary #1: What is multicultural school psychology. In C. L. Frisby & C. R. Reynolds (Eds.), *Comprehensive handbook of multicultural school psychology* (pp. 3-13). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Overstreet, S., & Cerbone, A. (2005). Psychological effects of armed conflict and community violence. In C. L. Frisby & C. R. Reynolds (Eds.), *Comprehensive handbook of multicultural school psychology* (pp. 769-794). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Palinkas, L. A. (2006). Qualitative approaches to studying the effects of disasters. In F. H. Norris, S. Galea, M. J. Friedman, & P. J. Watson (Eds.), *Methods for disaster mental health research* (pp. 158-173). New York: Guilford Press.
- Passel, J. S. (1999). Undocumented immigration into the United States: Numbers, trends, and characteristics. In D. W. Haines & K. E. Rosenblum (Eds.), *Illegal immigration in America: A reference handbook* (pp. 27-111). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

- Pedersen, P. B. (2003). Culturally biased assumptions in counseling psychology. *The Counseling Psychologist, 31*, 396-403.
- Perilla, J. L., Norris, F. H., & Lavizzo, E. A. (2002). Ethnicity, culture, and disaster response: Identifying and explaining ethnic differences in PTSD six months after hurricane Andrew. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 21*, 20-45.
- Peterson, R. L., Larson, J., & Skiba, R. (2001). School violence prevention: Current status and policy recommendations. *Law & Policy, 23*, 345-371.
- Pitcher, G., & Poland, S. (1992). *Crisis intervention in the schools*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Rabalais, A. E., Ruggiero, K. J., & Scotti, J. R. (2002). Multicultural issues in the response of children to disasters. In A. La Greca, W. Silverman, E. Vernberg, M. Roberts, A. Rabalais, K. Ruggiero, et al. (Eds.), *Helping children cope with disasters and terrorism* (pp. 73-99). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Rayle, A. D., & Myers, J. E. (2004). Counseling adolescents toward wellness: The roles of ethnic identity, acculturation, and mattering. *Professional School Counseling, 8*, 81-90.
- Red Cross. (2007). *Earthquakes*. Retrieved June 6, 2008, from <http://www.redcross.org/images/pdfs/code/earthquakes.pdf>
- Redfield, R., Linton, R., & Herskovits, M. J. (1935). A memorandum for the study of acculturation. *Man, 35*, 145-148.

- Richardson, J. T. E. (Ed.). (1996). *Handbook of qualitative research methods for psychology and the social sciences*. Oxford, UK: The British Psychological Society.
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Sandoval, J., & Lewis, S. (2002). Cultural considerations in crisis intervention. In S. E. Brock, P. J. Lazarus, & S. R. Jimerson (Eds.) *Best practices in school crisis prevention and intervention* (pp. 293-308). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Scolforo, M. (2006a). *Two more children die following Amish community school shooting, pushing death toll to 5 girls*. Retrieved November 30, 2006, from http://www.lexisnexis.com.erl.lib.byu.edu/us/lnacademic/results/docview/docview.do?risb=21_T2985606435&format=GNBFI&sort=RELEVANCE&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T2985606445&cisb=22_T2985606444&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=138211&docNo=1
- Scolforo, M. (2006b). *Pennsylvania Amish community prepares to bury school shooting victims, urges forgiveness for gunman*. Retrieved November 30, 2006, from http://www.lexisnexis.com.erl.lib.byu.edu/us/lnacademic/results/docview/docview.do?risb=21_T2985599460&format=GNBFI&sort=RELEVANCE&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T2985599473&cisb=22_T2985599472&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=138211&docNo=1
- Schwarz, N. (1999). Self-reports: How the questions shape the answers. *American Psychologist*, 54, 93-105.

- Silva, A. (2004). *Culturally competent crisis response: Information for school psychologists and crisis teams*. Retrieved November 20, 2006, from http://www.nasponline.org/resources/culturalcompetence/cc_crisis.pdf
- Sullivan, M. A., Harris, E., Collado, C., & Chen, T. (2006). Noways tired: Perspectives of clinicians of color on culturally competent crisis intervention. *Journal of Clinical Psychology: In Session*, 62, 987-999.
- United States Census Bureau. (2001). *Statistical Abstract of the United States*. Retrieved May 2, 2007, from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/01statab/educ.pdf>
- United States Department of Education. (2003). Practical information on crisis planning: A guide for schools and communities. Retrieved May 2, 2007, from <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/crisisplanning.pdf>
- United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2003). *Public school student, staff, and graduate counts by state: School year 2001-2002*. Retrieved September 20, 2005, from http://nces.ed.gov/pubss2003/snf_report03/table_04.asp
- United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2006). *Digest of Education Statistics, 2005* (NCES 2006-030). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- United States Department of Health and Human Services. (2001). *Mental health: Culture, race, and ethnicity-A supplement to mental health: A report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services.

- United States Department of Health and Human Services. (2001). *Prevention and intervention*. Retrieved May 2, 2007, from <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence/chapter5/sec1.html>
- United States Department of Health and Human Services. (2001). *Risk factors for youth violence*. Retrieved May 2, 2007, from <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence/chapter4/sec1.html>
- United States Department of Health and Human Services. (2001). *Strategies and programs: Model, promising, and does not work*. Retrieved May 2, 2007, from <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence/chapter5/sec3.html>
- United States Geological Survey. (1995). *The Mississippi valley-"Whole lotta shakin' goin' on."* Retrieved June 6, 2008, from <http://quake.usgs.gov/prepare/factsheets/NewMadrid>
- United States Government Accountability Office. (1996, September 1). *Content analysis: A methodology for structuring and analyzing written material*. Washington, DC: Author (PEMD-10.3.1). Retrieved June 13, 2009, from <http://archive.gao.gov/f0102/157490.pdf>
- United States Government Accountability Office. (2007, May 17). *Emergency management: Status of school districts' planning and preparedness*. Washington, DC: Author (GAO-07-821T). Retrieved July 29, 2007, from <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d07821t.pdf>
- Vause, J., & FlorCruz, J. (2008, May 15). Nearly 10,000 reported killed by China quake. *CNN*. Retrieved April 18, 2009, from <http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/asiapcf/05/12/china.quake/index.html>

- Wang, Y., & Burns, B. (2006, March). New earthquake safety laws: Oregon's public schools and emergency facilities. *Association of Environmental and Engineering Geologists News*, 49(1), 8-10.
- Walker, D., & Myrick, F. (2006). Grounded theory: An exploration of process and procedure. *Qualitative Health Research*, 16, 547-559.
- Zhe, E. J., & Nickerson, A. B. (2007). Effects of an intruder crisis drill on children's knowledge, anxiety, and perceptions of school safety. *School Psychology Review*, 36, 501-508.

APPENDIX A (English)

Interview Questions

(Compiled from *Family Health International & US Dept of Health & Human Services*)

Scenario #1:

About 10:45 a.m., the gunman entered the school. An announcement was made over the PA system that a stranger with a gun was spotted in the building and all teachers were instructed to go into lockdown, meaning they lock their classroom doors and do not open them for anyone. Shots were heard outside, but no other information has been given out to the public.

Scenario #2:

At 1:15 p.m., a moderate earthquake shook Salt Lake City and surrounding towns while your children were at school. Your house was damaged (broken windows, fallen bookshelves, etc). Your home phone and cell phones do not work. The electricity is off-not working. You don't know what has happened at the school.

Scenario #3:

Snow has fallen heavy all day. It is very cold. The temperature is below freezing. It is dangerous driving on the slick roads, so you can't drive to the school. The buses got stuck driving to the school, the roads are closed and the busses cannot bring your child home. The school is five miles from your home, too far for your child to walk home.

- 1) Overall view of school safety
 - a) How do schools keep children safe? Please explain your response.
 - b) What -if any- worries do you have about your own child's safety at school? If you have worries, explain and give examples.
- 2) Help-seeking behaviors
 - a) In your opinion, how do you think parents will react to the story?
 - b) How can the school help you best?
 - c) How do you (or would you) tell the school what you need from them?
 - d) In your community, whom would you go to for help if the story above happened?
- 3) School Policy (discuss basics of school crisis plan)
 - a) Would your school be able to help you if this story really happened? If yes, how? If no, why not?
 - b) What part of the school's policy could be changed to work better for you?
 - c) If one of the earlier stories happened at your child's school, whom at the school would you contact?
- 4) Discuss community resources for families

APPENDIX B (Spanish)

Preguntas de la Entrevista

(Adquiridas de *Family Health International & US Dept of Health & Human Services*)

Escenario #1:

Alrededor de las 10:45 a.m., la persona armada entró a la escuela. Se anunció por medio del altavoz que una persona armada entró a la escuela y se les dió instrucciones a todos los maestros que se encerrarán en el salón. Los maestros se encierran en el salón y no dejan entrar a nadie. Se escucharon disparos afuera, pero no se ha dado ninguna información al público.

Escenario #2:

A la 1:15 p.m., hubo un terremoto en la ciudad de Lago Salado y sus alrededores mientras su hijo(a) estaba en la escuela. Su casa ha sido dañada (ventanas rotas, libreros tirados, etc.). Su teléfono en la casa y los celulares no funcionan. No hay electricidad. Usted no sabe que ha pasado en la escuela donde asiste su hijo(a).

Escenario #3:

Ha habido una tormenta de nieve. Está muy frío afuera. La temperatura está mas abajo del nivel de congelación. Es muy peligroso manejar en este momento por las calles cubiertas de hielo, y usted no pueda manejar a la escuela. Los autobuses de escuela se atrancaron en camino a la escuela. Las carreteras están cerradas y los autobuses de la escuela no pueden traer a su hijo(a) a su casa. La escuela está a cinco millas de su casa, muy lejos para que su hijo(a) camine de la escuela a la casa.

- 1) Punto de vista general de la seguridad en la escuela
 - a) ¿Cómo mantienen seguros las escuelas a los estudiantes? Favor de explicar su respuesta.
 - b) ¿Tiene alguna preocupación acerca de la seguridad que se le otorga a su hijo(a) en la escuela? Si es que tiene alguna preocupación, favor de explicar y dar algunos ejemplos.
- 2) El comportamiento en busca de ayuda
 - a) En su opinion, ¿cómo reaccionarían los padres de familia ante situaciones anteriormente mencionadas?
 - b) ¿Cómo le puede ayudar la escuela en estos casos?
 - c) ¿Cómo pidiera a la escuela ayuda en casos como estos? Tendría valor pedir a la escuela la ayuda que necesita?
 - d) ¿En su comunidad, conoce los lugares o personas a los que puede asistir en caso de emergencia como las anteriormente mencionadas?
- 3) Pautas de la escuela (discutir lo básico del plan de crisis en la escuela)
 - a) En la escuela donde asiste su hijo(a) ¿Cree usted que están capacitados para brindarle ayuda en casos de emergencias como las anteriormente mencionadas? Favor de explicar.
 - b) ¿Qué parte de las pautas de la escuela podría cambiar para servirle mejor?
 - c) Si alguna de estas situaciones pasaran en la escuela donde asiste su hijo(a), ¿Con quién se comunicaría usted?
- 4) Discutir sobre los recursos en la comunidad para las familias en caso de crisis.