

Violence & Indiscipline in Schools: Challenges

The Experience of Barbadian Secondary Schools

presented by

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Barbados

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- Experience has taught us that quality education cannot be achieved without sound discipline.
 - Behaviours which disrupt classes interfere with the learning process or threaten the safety of the staff members and other students should not be tolerated.

Research

- Report on Violence in School & Community Survey
- Commissioned and conducted by the Ministry of Education
- Based on a self-administered questionnaire of 39 items-demographics, school & community, weapons & drugs
- 2.5% multi-stage random sample of 521 secondary students from 5 secondary schools (11-18 years)

ITEMS

- Feelings about school
- Perception of performance at school
- Organizational membership at school
- Perception of school as a safe place
- Reasons why school is considered a safe place
- Reason why school is not considered a safe place
- Witnessed a violent incident at school
- Witnessed a violent incident in the home

ITEMS

- Level of concern by teachers over student problems
- Level of concern by guidance counsellor over student problems
- Are students' problems dealt with well at school
- Reasons why problems are dealt with well at school
- Reasons why problems are not dealt with well at school
- Member of staff most likely to turn to with personal problem
- Member of staff most likely to turn to with personal probs

ITEMS

- Level of violence in community of respondents
- What can be done about violence in community
- Frequency of fighting at school
- Cause of most fights at school
- What should be done with students who fight at school
- Cause of fight respondent was involved in
- Action respondent could have taken to avoid fight/violence

ITEMS

- Frequency of bullying
- Weapons seen
- Frequency weapons used in fights
- Ever seen/held gun
- Weapons carried out and necessary to carry
- Substances used and seen at school
- Level of access to drugs in school and community

Frequency of children fighting

- **Everyday** **15.5%**
- **Few times per week** **32.6 %**
- **Once a week** **8.8 %**
- **Once every few weeks** **21.3 %**
- **Hardly ever** **20.9%**

Causes of Most Fights

- **Rumour/gossip/insults** 28.4%
- **Over boys/girls** 19.2%
- **Gambling/money/property** 16.3%
- **Physical contact/retaliation** 14.8%
- **Reputation/peer pressure** 7.9%

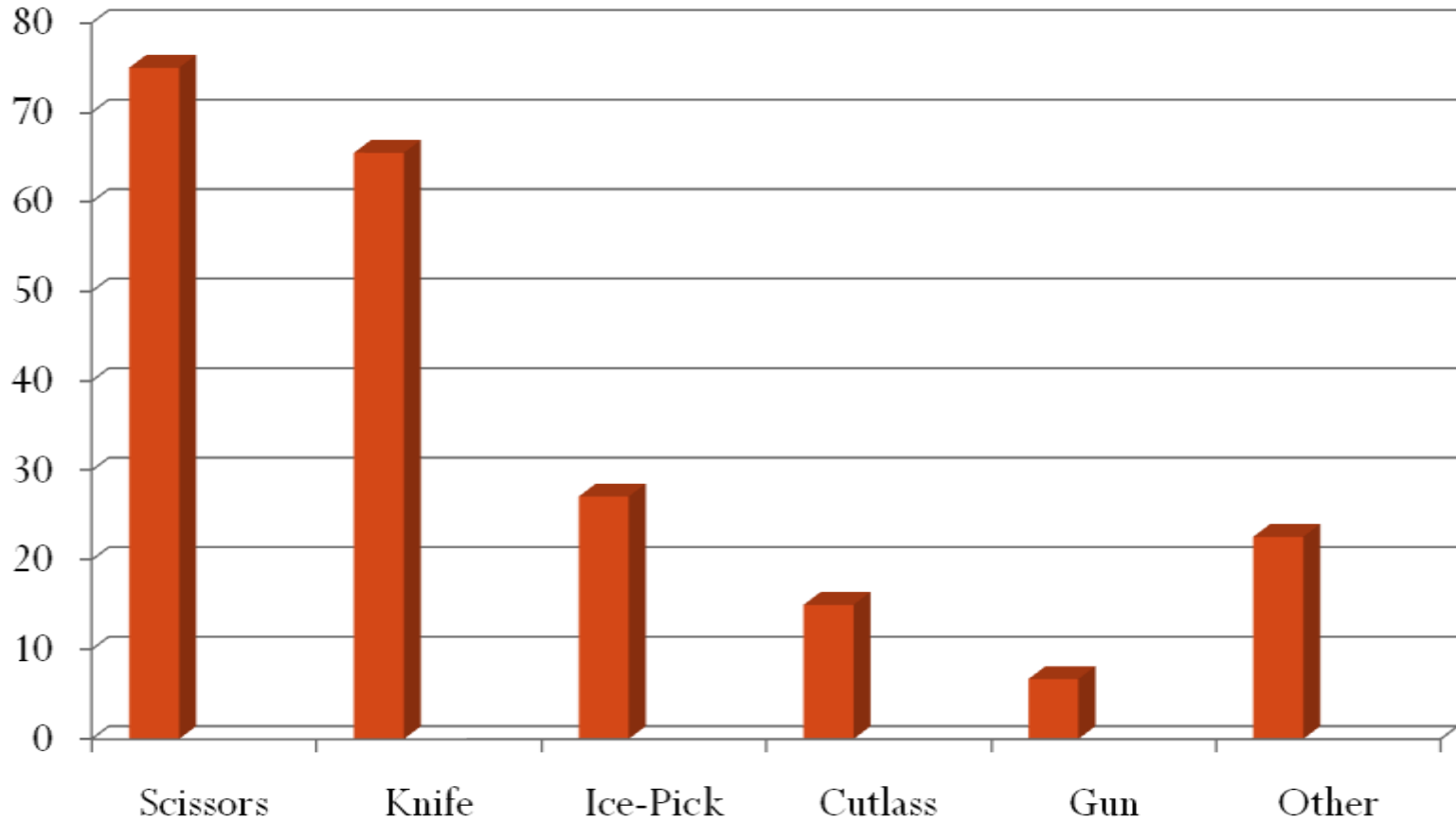
Feelings, Experiences & Perceptions

	%
I have thought about hurting another student	47.0
I worry about being attacked when I go out	43.6
I have been involved in a fight at school	42.0
I worry about being hurt at school	35.1
Have thought about hurting someone in community	29.4
I have been threatened by students at my school	29.2
I have thought about hurting teacher/staff	21.7
I have hurt another student at school	19.2

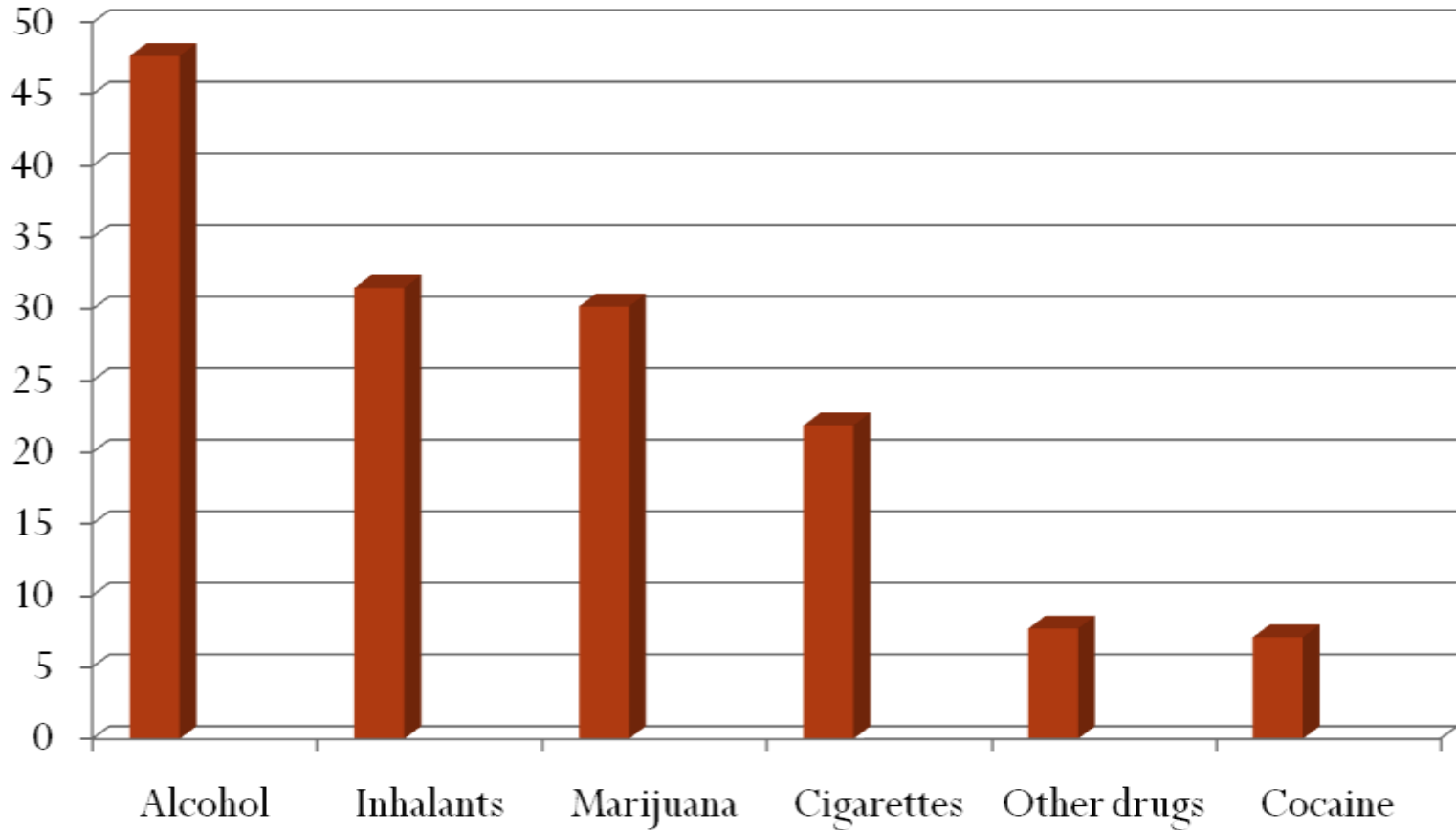
Feelings, Experiences & Perceptions

	%
I have been threatened in my community	18.8
I have hurt someone in my community	17.7
I have been threatened by teacher/staff	9.6
I have been hurt by violence at home	9.6
I have been suspended from school	9.4
I have been hurt by violence at school	8.8
I have been hurt by violence in community	6.7
I have hurt a teacher/staff member	2.3

Weapons Seen At School



Substances Students Have Seen at School



Recommendations

- A deliberate programme to determine and reduce the level of felt alienation among students.
(14% dislike school)
- Increasing the level of active participation in life of school through membership of groups and organisations. (45% are not members of group/org.)

Recommendations

- Developing/Preserving the physical integrity of the school compound either through use of security guards and/or fencing. (27% cited lack of fencing/security as reason why school is unsafe)
- Enforcing a consistent policy in relation to deviant and anti-social behaviour in the school. (29.5% cited inconsistency as reason why problems not dealt with well)

Recommendations

- Determining students who have experienced violence in personal lives and develop programme to respond to their circumstances. (14% have experienced a violent incident in all three contexts: home, community and school)
- Creating/building a caring and supportive environment within the school (or convince students if it already exists). (38% feel teachers care little or not at all about students' problems)

Recommendations

- A greater and more consistent level of supervision of students. (More than 80% have seen weapons, more than 50% have seen drugs, 60% report at least weekly fights)
- Providing students with the skills to negotiate and resolve conflict. (Of those who had been involved in a fight at school more than 60% indicated that they could have “negotiated” the conflict)

Recommendations

- Active implementation of “power-to-search” provision of the Education Act. (21.3% have carried a weapon to school, 30% said its easy to get drugs at school)
- Earlier intervention strategies in relation to substance abuse prevention based on a greater degree of imagination, sophistication and creativity. (Average age of first usage 10 years of age, complex socio-cultural drivers of experimentation and abuse)

“ The potential for tragedy...is clearly and disturbingly presented in the findings of this survey....One in five students has carried a weapon to school...and the majority of these weapons have the potential for serious or fatal injury.”

Report on Violence in School and Community Survey, 2006

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