Purpose: The aim is to examine mothers’ expectations for elementary schools in Volusia County regarding gun violence prevention and their perceptions of the new changes in school safety among Volusia County elementary schools.

Theory

Theory of Diffusion of Innovations was used to explore mothers’ perceptions of new gun violence prevention measures. The Socioecological Model was integrated to highlight the individual, relationship/community and societal factors that influence a mother’s decision to support the new safety measures.

Methods

A convenience and snowball sampling was employed. Semi-structured in depth interviews were conducted over the phone between July and August 2019. Interviews were transcribed verbatim through an external source, Verbal Ink. Transcripts were imported into MAXQDA and coded using a line-by-line technique. A content analysis approach was employed to explore themes.

Limitations

Small sample thus not all elementary schools were represented. Potential social desirability in participants’ responses. Timing of interviews overlapped with timing of elementary school open houses.

Recommendations/Implications

Recommendations

- Improve transparency between School Board and Volusia County parents through improved communication and feedback processes
- Empower parents to know their role in preventing gun violence prevention
- Increase parental support for new gun violence prevention measures
- Include perceptions of fathers, teachers, school administrators, and the School Board
- Include perceptions of middle and high school measures

Implications

- Increase understanding of the role of parents as a stakeholder
- Improve communication with mothers regarding gun violence prevention measures
- Increase parental support for new gun violence prevention measures

Future Research

- Include perceptions of fathers, teachers, school administrators, and the School Board

Acknowledgements

Briana Woods-Jaeger, PhD and Randi Smith, MD, MPH

Sample Description

Eleven participants enrolled in study. The average age was 39 (range: 28-48) and nine elementary schools were represented. Seven mothers identified as white, three mothers identified as black and one mother identified as hispanic. Seven of the mothers indicated they had a gun in their household.

Project Overview

Mothers’ Perceptions of Volusia County Gun Violence Prevention Measures Conceptual Model

- Individual
  - Compatibility: Expectations of new gun violence prevention programs and degree to which new gun violence prevention measures need expenditures
  - Innovation: New gun violence prevention measures
  - Perceived Behavioral Control: Support of new gun violence prevention measures

- Social: Relationship between mothers, Volusia County Schools and Volusia County School Board
- Communication Channels: Channels used by Volusia County schools to distribute information about gun violence prevention measures
- Innovation Development: Degree to which parental input was considered in gun violence prevention measures
- Social System: Role of mothers, Volusia County Schools, and Volusia County School Board
- Social Culture: Degree to which gun violence prevention measures are implemented in elementary schools

Perception of School Board

“I will tell you that I feel like I am in a district that the School Board doesn’t care what my opinion is.”

Perception of Gun Violence Prevention Measures

“So overall, I mean, it’s a start. But...it won’t fully solve the problem, you know, if someone really...has that intent to do something. It’s a start. But’s not a complete fix.”

Perception of School

“The school[s] intentions are absolutely on target. I believe everyone there cares and would treat my children like they would treat one of their own children.”

Key Findings

Societal

“I feel like I’m at the mercy of whatever the School Board decides.”

Relationship/Community

“I do trust that they have the best interest of the kids in mind.”

Individual

“I think we could do more as parents.”

Innovation

“It’s not a perfect system, but...it’s at least an effort.”

Perceptions of Parents

“But once we understand why the rules are in place and the reasons, we’re more apt to follow the rules, and in doing so, it really does make everyone, teachers, the kids, the parents, everyone, safer.”

Perception of School

Societal

Degree to which gun violence prevention measures are implemented in elementary schools

Relationship/Community

Degree to which parental input was considered in gun violence prevention measures

Individual

Degree of perceived parental support for new gun violence prevention measures

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- Improve communication with mothers regarding gun violence prevention measures.
- Increase parental support for new gun violence prevention measures.

Future Research

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