

ABSTRACT

ARTIS, CHERICE SHARON. The Role of School Counselors at Title I Schools in Teen Dating Violence Prevention. (Under the direction of Dr. Stanley B. Baker).

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of school counselors at Title I schools who provide Teen Dating Violence (TDV) prevention. Empowerment Theory (ET) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) informed the approach of this study and were used as an expressive tool to acquire the experiences of school counselors at Title I schools. This study included six school counselors who have worked with students who have experienced TDV. Semi-structured interviews were conducted for data collection. From the data, five main themes and corresponding subthemes emerged.

The results of this study suggest that school counselors at Title I schools have nuanced experiences within their roles, which highlight strengths and limitations in their ability to provide TDV prevention within their roles at Title I schools. Despite facing challenges like busy schedules and limited local funds, school counselors highlighted areas where additional support was provided to meet students' needs and aid in TDV prevention. The partnership between school counselors and social workers has proven to be an asset, providing students with access to vital community resources like mental health services and social support networks. Additionally, collaborations with faith-based and nonprofit groups have complemented school initiatives, enriching the approach to preventing TDV. The findings of this study yielded actionable insights for school counselors, policymakers, or stakeholders to improve practices, address challenges, or enhance outcomes. Additionally, the study identified constraints that may affect the interpretation or validity of the findings, along with recommendations for future research.

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The Role of School Counselors at Title I Schools in Teen Dating Violence Prevention: A Phenomenological Study.

by
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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
North Carolina State University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Educational Policy, Leadership, and Human Development

Raleigh, North Carolina
2024

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my grandma Janie. I know that she would be tickled beyond measure to know that I have accomplished this milestone. I thank her for teaching me the importance of education at a very young age.

BIOGRAPHY

Cherice Artis is the K-12 school counseling coordinator for Durham Public Schools.

Cherice has over 20 years of experience as a school counselor having worked in Lenoir, Durham, and Wake counties. She has worked at the elementary and high school levels. Cherice's emerging research interests include the impact of intersectionality on intervention effectiveness, school climate, and inclusivity, empowerment-based approaches in addressing bullying and teen dating violence, and cultural competency in bullying and teen dating violence prevention programs.

Cherice was born and raised in Ayden, North Carolina. She earned her master's degree in counselor education from East Carolina University. In her spare time, she enjoys watching classic movies, participating in community service for her sorority, and spending time with her family.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my committee. Dr. Stanley Baker for serving as my dissertation chair and providing guidance throughout the writing stages. I would like to express gratitude toward my committee members: Dr. Nicole Childs, Dr. Rolanda Mitchell, and Dr. S. Raymond Ting. I appreciate you all for serving on my committee and sharing your knowledge and feedback that contributed to completing the dissertation

I want to offer my sincerest gratitude to the participants who generously contributed to this study. Your collaboration has been invaluable, and I am truly thankful for your willingness to share your experiences.

I would like to acknowledge my mom and dad, whose encouragement and sacrifices have shaped me into the person I am today. Mom and Dad, your unwavering support and belief in me have been the guiding lights that have illuminated my path. Your wisdom, strength, and unconditional love have been my greatest blessings. Thank you for always being there for me, for instilling in me the values of hard work and perseverance, and for inspiring me to reach for my dreams. This degree is a tribute to your enduring love and the profound impact you have had on my life. I am truly thankful for your guidance and prayers.

Thank you Cameron and Brittany for serving as my why. Your unwavering love, support, and understanding have been my greatest blessings throughout this journey. Cameron, your curiosity and enthusiasm inspire me every day, while Brittany, your kindness and compassion remind me of the importance of empathy and connection. Thank you for filling my life with joy, laughter, and endless moments of pride. This achievement is ours.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter Introduction

Teen dating violence (TDV) is a societal health concern that can have immediate and long-term negative effects (Ackard et al., 2002; Clinton-Sherrod, 2009; Preble et al., 2018). TDV prevention is a critical area of research and intervention aimed at safeguarding the well-being of adolescents and promoting healthy relationships. As adolescents navigate the complexities of romantic relationships, they may encounter various forms of violence and abuse that can have profound and long-lasting effects on their physical, emotional, and social development (Exner-Cortens, Eckenrode & Rothman, 2013). In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the importance of addressing TDV through targeted prevention efforts (Underwood, 2020; Ball et al., 2009; Foshee et al., 2010). Understanding the factors that contribute to dating violence and identifying effective prevention approaches can inform the development of evidence-based interventions that can empower adolescents to build respectful and supportive relationships.

Background of the Problem

TDV represents a distressing and prevalent phenomenon with far-reaching implications for the well-being of adolescents. Research indicates that a considerable proportion of teenagers experience some form of dating violence, encompassing stalking and physical, sexual, psychological, and digital abuse within their romantic relationships (CDC, 2021; Underwood, 2020). The U.S. Youth Risk Behavior Survey reported that 1 in 11 female and 1 in 15 male teens shared experiencing physical dating violence (Basile et al., 2020). The dynamics of TDV are complex and influenced by a myriad of individual, relational, and contextual factors. Adolescents may perpetrate violence due to issues such as poor conflict resolution skills, exposure to familial violence, gender norms emphasizing power and control, and societal

influences glorifying aggression in relationships (De La Rue, 2019; Pusch, 2024). Victims of TDV often face barriers to seeking help, including fear of retaliation, societal stigma, and lack of awareness about available resources (Rueda et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the consequences of TDV can be severe and enduring, impacting various aspects of adolescents' lives. Beyond the immediate physical injuries, victims may suffer from emotional trauma, low self-esteem, depression, and academic difficulties (Exner-Cortens et al., 2013). Moreover, TDV contributes to a culture of tolerance towards abusive behavior, perpetuating harmful attitudes and norms surrounding relationships (Cava et al., 2023). Recognizing the gravity of this issue, it seems worthwhile to explore strategies to promote healthy relationships and mitigate the prevalence of dating violence among adolescents.

Statement of the Problem

The frequency and harmful effects emphasize the necessity for TDV prevention in schools. Adolescents often lack the awareness, skills, and resources necessary to recognize and address unhealthy relationship dynamics on their own (Collins et al., 2009). Currently, over twenty-four states have instituted legislation that either encourages or requires the employment of TDV intervention programs in schools (Niolon et al., 2019). Schools are vital settings where adolescents spend a considerable amount of their time, rendering them optimal environments for implementing prevention initiatives. By integrating prevention programs into school curricula, educators can provide students with essential knowledge about healthy relationships, dating violence awareness, communication, and conflict resolution (Noonan, 2009; Temple, 2013). Moreover, schools offer opportunities for early intervention and support for students who may be at risk of experiencing or perpetrating dating violence (Jaycox, 2006). By addressing this issue within the educational setting, schools can play a pivotal role in equipping adolescents with the

tools and support they need to cultivate safe and respectful relationships, thereby fostering a culture of violence prevention and promoting the well-being of young people.

Rationale of the Study

Despite the well-documented prevalence and detrimental effects of TDV, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the specific efforts and impact of school counselors in preventing dating violence within Title I schools. School counselors serve a crucial role in providing support and guidance to students (ASCA, 2019), yet their involvement in TDV prevention within the context of Title I schools remains underexplored. Given that students in Title I schools often face additional socio-economic stressors and barriers to accessing resources (Evans et al, 2002), understanding the role of school counselors in addressing dating violence in these settings is essential for developing effective prevention strategies tailored to the needs of underserved youth.

Title I schools serve a disproportionately high number of students from low-income families and marginalized communities who may be more vulnerable to experiencing TDV violence (Jones et al, 2020). School counselors are uniquely positioned to provide culturally competent and trauma-informed support to these students (Craigien, 2009), yet there is limited research examining the specific interventions and approaches employed by counselors in addressing dating violence within Title I schools. This study sought to address a significant void in the literature by examining the roles of school counselors in addressing TDV within Title I schools to offer insights into the obstacles, limitations, and effective strategies linked to preventing dating violence in marginalized communities.

Purpose of the Study

This transcendental phenomenological study examined the lived experiences of counselors providing TDV prevention at Title I schools. The purpose was to uncover the nuanced realities of TDV prevention efforts in Title I schools through the exploration of their subjective experiences. By centering the voices and experiences of school counselors, this study identifies recurring themes or patterns in participants' experiences to understand the essence of the phenomenon under investigation. Exploring the meanings participants attributed to their experiences also allowed insights into their subjective perspectives on such as cultural, social, or environmental influences.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks for this study are Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and Empowerment Theory (ET). SCT and ET as theoretical frameworks strongly align with this study as SCT centers on learning occurring because of reciprocal interactions between the person, the environment, and behavior, while ET centers on autonomy, freedom, self-esteem, self-confidence, and control over one's life. SCT offers a robust theoretical framework for understanding and addressing TDV prevention.

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

Grounded in the idea that behavior is shaped by interactions between personal factors, environmental influences, and cognitive processes, SCT provides a comprehensive lens to examine the complex dynamics underlying dating violence among adolescents (Bandura, 1986). By focusing on the reciprocal interactions between individuals, their social environments, and the cognitive factors influencing behavior, SCT recognizes the importance of both individual

characteristics and environmental factors in shaping adolescents' responses to dating violence and their likelihood of perpetrating or experiencing it (Pusch, 2024).

Utilizing SCT in this study facilitated the investigation of school counselors' considerations when working with students experiencing TDV. Numerous factors at multiple levels of influence interact to impact adolescents' attitudes, behaviors, and experiences related to dating violence (ASCA, 2019; Bandura, 1986; Bandura, 2002;). By incorporating SCT principles, key determinants of dating violence within adolescents' social environments could be examined while also targeting cognitive processes that influence their behaviors (Mullet et al., 2023). Moreover, SCT emphasizes the importance of observational learning, whereby adolescents acquire attitudes and behaviors through observing and modeling the actions of others, highlighting the significance of peer and role model influences in shaping TDV prevention efforts (Bandura, 1986). Overall, SCT provides a comprehensive framework that can inform the development of multi-dimensional and multi-level interventions aimed at fostering healthy relationships and reducing the incidence of TDV among adolescents.

Empowerment Theory (ET)

Employing ET offered a comprehensive lens through which to understand and address the root causes of TDV while empowering individuals and communities to enact positive change. Grounded in the principles of social justice and collective action, ET emphasizes the importance of enhancing individuals' sense of control, self-efficacy, and agency in challenging oppressive structures and fostering social change (Zimmerman, 2000). In the context of TDV prevention, ET recognizes that dating violence is often rooted in unequal power dynamics, gender norms, and social inequalities (Zimmerman et al, 2011).

ET can also be utilized to highlight the significance of community-level interventions that address the social, economic, and cultural factors contributing to TDV. By fostering collaboration among stakeholders, including schools, families, community organizations, and policymakers, empowerment-based prevention initiatives can create supportive environments that promote gender equity, social inclusion, and collective action against TDV (Rappaport, 1987). This approach can work towards building resilient communities that are equipped with the knowledge, resources, and skills necessary to prevent TDV and create lasting social change (Eisman et al., 2016). Overall, by employing ET as a theoretical framework, this study contributes to fostering a culture of empowerment, equity, and resilience among adolescents and their communities, ultimately striving toward the elimination of dating violence and the promotion of healthy, respectful relationships.

Significance of the Study

Since many risk factors associated with TDV, such as deficits in conflict resolution skills and self-respect, manifest early in adolescence, prevention plays a pivotal role in addressing TDV (Ball et al., 2009; Cohen et al., 2018; De La Rue, 2019). Schools are key settings for prevention efforts, as they can provide universal or targeted interventions to address these risk factors and promote healthy relationship behaviors (Debnam et al., 2021). The insights gleaned from school counselors' experiences inform school and community partners about how to best support the implementation of evidence-based TDV prevention programs within Title I schools, thereby fostering safer and more supportive school environments for all students.

The significance of this study is rooted in the prevalence of TDV, its long-term effects on adolescents' lives, and the deficit in the literature regarding the experiences of school counselors implementing TDV prevention programs, specifically within Title I schools. Each counselor's

narrative offers a rich tapestry of themes, patterns, and personal accounts that contribute to a comprehensive understanding of TDV prevention within the context of Title I schools. The qualitative nature of this study prohibits direct applications to the general population; however, its significance lies in the depth of understanding it provides regarding the intricacies of TDV prevention efforts in underserved educational settings. The experiences of these counselors serve as invaluable microcosms, offering lessons and insights that can inform and inspire similar efforts in other Title I schools and beyond. Through qualitative analysis, the study not only amplifies the voices of these counselors but also underscores the importance of tailored interventions and support systems that honor the unique needs of students in Title I schools.

Research Questions

Research questions were identified as a way to gain deeper insights into the lived experiences of counselors working at Title I schools. They also address the identification of challenges and factors influencing TDV prevention. This study aimed to better understand school counselors' experiences at Title I schools and what motivated program implementation.

The research questions for this study include:

1. What are Title I Counselors' experiences with TDV?
2. What considerations do Title I Counselors consider when working with students experiencing TDV?

Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced exploring the lived experiences of school counselors at Title I schools while implementing TDV prevention, providing background and stating the problem before outlining the rationale and theoretical framework of the current study. Recognizing the unique position of school counselors to offer culturally competent support to vulnerable students

facing socio-economic stressors, this study aims to fill a critical gap in the literature by investigating their role in preventing dating violence within Title I schools. The study utilizes SCT and ET to comprehensively examine the dynamics of TDV prevention. SCT emphasizes reciprocal interactions between individuals, their environments, and cognitive processes, informing interventions targeting both personal and environmental factors influencing TDV. ET, grounded in social justice principles, empowers individuals and communities to challenge oppressive structures and foster social change, highlighting the importance of community-level interventions to address the root causes of TDV and promote healthy relationships. Derived from the theories and the literature review, the research questions aim to explore the lived experiences of school counselors in Title I schools regarding TDV and identify the factors influencing their approaches to TDV prevention. With approximately 1 in 11 female and 1 in 15 male teenagers disclosing encountering physical dating violence in 2019, it is crucial for schools to provide TDV prevention to safeguard students' well-being, foster healthy relationships, and mitigate the long-term negative effects of dating violence on adolescents' physical and emotional health (Basile et al., 2020).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter Introduction

An exploration of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and Empowerment Theory (ET) is presented, highlighting their relevance to understanding the experiences of school counselors in addressing Teen Dating Violence (TDV) within Title I schools. A comprehensive review of the literature revealed limited empirical studies specifically focusing on school counselors' encounters with TDV in Title I school settings. However, current literature offers a general overview of the components of this study. Utilizing the online database ProQuest, a thorough literature search was conducted using the search terms "Title I School Counselors" and "Title I School Counselor Experiences," yielding a pool of 14,216 search results. Relevant literature was identified based on its alignment with key themes, including school counselors, Title I schools, ET, SCT, and TDV, published within the last 25 years. This yielded 106 peer reviewed articles.

Teen Dating Violence

TDV is a significant threat to adolescent well-being and development (Banyard et al., 2008; Cheung et al., 2023; Exner-Cortens et al., 2013). Studies highlight the impact of TDV on physical and mental health, drawing connections to conditions like depression, anxiety, heart disease, cancer, and obesity (Ackard et al., 2002; Coker et al., 2000; Exner-Cortens et al., 2013). In response to these findings, preventive efforts have prioritized empowering teens to establish healthy relationships as a key strategy for TDV prevention (Niolon et al., 2019; Taylor et al., 2017; Vivolo-Kantor et al., 2021). This section aims to delve into existing research on TDV, exploring its prevalence, short and long-term impacts, legislative initiatives, and risk factors.

TDV Statistics

TDV represents a concerning phenomenon among adolescents, with significant implications for their well-being and safety. Approximately one in nine females and one in 36 males experienced sexual dating violence, shedding light on the prevalence of such incidents among adolescents (Kann et al., 2018). These findings were based on a survey encompassing over 13,500 students from public and private educational institutions (Rothman et al., 2021) and highlighted the widespread nature of TDV, reporting that a staggering 48% of dating teens experienced stalking and harassment.

Studies have also delved into the disparities in the TDV impact across different demographic groups. African American female adolescents consistently exhibit elevated levels (11% nationally) of physical violence in adolescent dating relationships compared to their counterparts of different racial and ethnic backgrounds (Kann et al., 2018). The highest occurrence of sexual teen dating violence was observed among multiracial (11.6%) and Hispanic (10%) female students (Kann et al., 2018). Smith et al. (2018) highlighted that a sizable portion of people who later became victims of TDV experienced their first encounter with violence before adulthood, with minority groups disproportionately affected. Basile (2020) corroborated these findings, reporting higher incidences of TDV among Black and Hispanic participants compared to their White counterparts. Moreover, Gonzalez-Guarda et al. (2014) emphasized the necessity of addressing TDV within Hispanic communities, advocating for culturally sensitive approaches to tackle this issue. These findings underscore the imperative of considering sociocultural factors in addressing TDV. Understanding the disparities across various demographic groups is crucial for tailoring prevention and intervention strategies to meet the diverse needs of affected communities.

The Impact of TDV

TDV has been extensively studied due to its significant short-term and long-lasting impacts on victims (Chronister et al. 2014; Exner-Cortens et al, 2013; Haynie et al., 2013). In the immediate aftermath, TDV can precipitate a myriad of negative consequences for victims, as highlighted by research. For instance, Chronister et al. (2014) underscored the immediate effects of TDV, including negative body image, increased drug use, eating disorders, and decreased school engagement. These outcomes underscore the immediate and tangible toll that TDV can have on adolescents. However, the ramifications of TDV often extend far beyond the teenage years, with long-term effects persisting into adulthood (Exner-Cortens et al., 2013). Research by Haynie et al. (2013) has elucidated the enduring physical and psychological effects experienced by victims as they transition into adulthood. Many victims continue to grapple with issues such as suicidal thoughts, depression, and physical ailments such as back and joint pain, underscoring the profound and enduring impact of TDV on individuals' overall well-being (Exner-Cortens et al, 2013).

Short-Term Impact of TDV. Several researchers have studied the short-term effects of TDV (Banyand et al., 2008; Chronister et al.2014; Silverman et al, 2001; Vivolo-Kantor et al., 2016). Silverman et al. (2001) hypothesized that teens who experienced dating violence the previous year were more likely to experience substance abuse, sexual health risks, and pregnancy. Girls who had experienced TDV were found to be more likely to report school bullying and were less likely to attend school due to safety concerns (Vivolo-Kantor et al., 2016). In addition, TDV has been linked to poorer educational attitudes, lack of school enjoyment, the disbelief that one was receiving a quality education, and thoughts of dropping out of school (Banyand et al., 2008). Lastly, students experience a dramatic decline in academic performance

immediately following the start of a violent relationship (Chronister et al.2014). This is characterized by poor attendance, failure to complete assignments, the inability to pay attention in class, and failing grades (Chronister et al., (2014).

Long-Term Impact of TDV. According to researchers, unhealthy dating relationships as a teen can also have severe long-term effects. For instance, those who experienced TDV reported fatigue, shortness of breath, joint pain, back pain, or insomnia (Haynie et al., 2013). Teen girls who have experienced TDV reported severe depressive symptoms at almost three times the rate of those who have not lived through TDV (Bonomi et al., 2006). TDV has been associated with increased emotional distress and diminished self-esteem in adolescents (Smith et al., 2018). They also have a greater tendency to be current or former smokers and heavy drinkers in comparison to those who have not suffered TDV (Silverman et al., 2001). Suicidal thoughts and post-traumatic stress disorder are also reported at higher rates for those who have experienced TDV (Bonomi et al., 2006; Carbone-Lopez et al., 2012).

Statewide TDV Legislation

Legislation addressing TDV has gained traction in response to its prevalence and enduring impact on adolescents (Harland et al., 2021). Currently, at least twenty-three states have implemented laws recommending or mandating the inclusion of curricula promoting healthy relationships in school districts (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2017). This legislative trend aligns with growing research supporting the efficacy of TDV intervention programs (Niolon, 2021). Louisiana, for instance, mandates age and grade-specific TDV education as part of its healthful living curriculum for seventh to twelfth graders (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2017). While not mandated statewide, Maryland encourages the adoption of age-appropriate TDV curricula, and South Carolina is in the process of enacting

the TDV Act (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2017), requiring school boards to develop instructional units on TDV for students in grades sixth through eighth. Additionally, Connecticut requires student instruction on TDV prevention and professional development for school personnel, with schools mandated to assign staff members to oversee a safe and positive school climate (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2017). These legislative efforts recognize schools as key settings for disseminating preventive information to youth, capitalizing on their potential to impact many adolescents regarding TDV prevention. Currently, North Carolina does not have a law that provides for the education of students regarding TDV though a law was proposed in 2013 requiring each school board add TDV and abuse to the health education program. Legislative efforts recognize schools as pivotal settings for disseminating preventive information to youth, aligning with research supporting the efficacy of TDV intervention programs. However, the complexities of TDV extend beyond legislative measures, as risk factors underscore the need for comprehensive prevention strategies that address various contexts.

Risk Factors of TDV

Exposure to Violence. In understanding the complexities of TDV, it is crucial to recognize the multifaceted influences that contribute to its occurrence. Research indicates that students who experience TDV often have prior exposure to various forms of violence (Cheung et al., 2023). Exposure to parental violence further reinforces adolescents' tolerance of dating violence as a legitimate form of conflict resolution (Lichter et al., 2004). In the year 2000, the US Department of Health and Human Services documented that no fewer than 1.5 million children annually witnessed their mothers experiencing abuse from an intimate partner. Studies indicate that the younger the victim, the greater the extent of developmental harm incurred

(Garvey et al., 1999). Stith et al. (2000) further elaborate on this by highlighting the role of parental behavior, suggesting that adolescents may imitate and tolerate dating violence if they have observed violence between their parents.

The National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence underscores the profound impact of caregiver abuse on teens, reporting a substantial increase in the prevalence of physical violence among those who have experienced such abuse (Hamby et al., 2012). Additionally, exposure to community violence emerges as a risk factor, particularly for females, as it has been connected with both being a victim and being the person responsible for TDV (O'Keefe et al., 1997; Malik et al., 1997). Moreover, the influence of peer relationships cannot be overlooked, as aggressiveness within one's peer network is a greater predictor of participation in TDV than contact to violence within one's family (Arriaga et al., 2004). These findings highlight the interconnectedness of familial, peer, and community influences on the prevalence of TDV, emphasizing the need for comprehensive prevention strategies that address these various contexts.

TDV Beliefs and Norms. Tolerant beliefs surrounding dating violence represent one of the most significant risk factors associated with its perpetuation (Cava et al, 2023). Moreover, recent research by Liu et al. (2022) investigated adolescents' acceptance rates of TDV based on their partner's actions. Their findings revealed that both male and female participants identified being hit first, cheated on, insulted, and made jealous as the top acceptable reasons for TDV, with males demonstrating a notably higher acceptance rate for each scenario (Liu et al. 2022). Additionally, studies by Friedlander et al. (2013) suggest that exposure to violent media content and online interactions, where misogynistic attitudes and behaviors are normalized, can significantly influence the tolerance of dating violence among adolescents.

Adolescent males who maintain friendships with peers exhibiting sexually abusive behavior have demonstrated higher levels of acceptance toward such behavior (Sears et al., 2007). This acceptance is believed to stem from adherence to traditional gender roles, where males are socialized to assert dominance in sexual encounters and perceive refusal as less acceptable (Ruel et al., 2020). In contrast, the victimization of females in TDV is influenced by societal gender norms and sexist stereotypes that reinforce unequal power dynamics in relationships (Foshee et al., 2004). Research indicates that conventional gender socialization promotes male dominance and control while expecting females to adopt submissive and accommodating roles (Foshee et al., 2004). These societal pressures can foster an environment where TDV victimization of females becomes more prevalent, as they may feel compelled to endure or tolerate abusive behavior from their partners (Foshee et al., 2004). Furthermore, cultural attitudes that normalize male aggression and control over females contribute to the perpetuation of TDV victimization among females (Foshee et al., 2004). Recognizing the influence of gender socialization and sexist stereotypes on TDV victimization is essential for designing interventions aimed at challenging these harmful norms and fostering healthy, egalitarian relationships among adolescents (Foshee et al., 2004). Understanding the risk factors of teen dating violence, such as exposure to violence and tolerant beliefs, is crucial for developing tailored interventions, particularly in Title I schools where students from low-income families face heightened vulnerabilities due to socioeconomic circumstances.

Title I Schools

Title I schools, established under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, serve as educational institutions primarily catering to students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). These schools receive federal

funding to enhance academic performance and reduce educational disparities among students (U.S. Department of Education, 2004; Malburg, 2015). Allocation of Title I funding is determined by the enrollment of students from economically challenged families to offer additional resources and assistance to address the diverse needs of these students (U.S. Department of Education, 2004; Malburg, 2015). Due to the challenges associated with poverty, such as limited access to educational resources and inadequate facilities, Title I schools often encounter obstacles in providing quality education (Liu, 2007). Nonetheless, they remain pivotal in combating educational inequalities and fostering academic achievement among students from marginalized communities (Liu, 2007).

In addition to addressing academic needs, Title I schools often implement various support programs to address the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of their students (Bavin, 2002;). These schools may offer counseling services, mentoring programs, and wraparound services to support students' overall well-being and development (Noell et al., 2016). Paisley et al. (2003) stated that school counselors often possess the highest level of expertise among stakeholders in identifying systemic obstacles that hinder achievement across all aspects of student development. Moreover, Title I schools frequently collaborate with community organizations, local agencies, and community partners to provide additional resources and support to students and families (Trickett et al., 2011). Title I school counselors face the challenge of addressing the conduct, academic achievement, and socio-emotional needs of their students. This unique context is likely to influence how these counselors perceive their duties and responsibilities compared to counselors in non-Title I schools.

Students from Low-Income Families

Students from low-income families often face a myriad of challenges that significantly impact their academic performance and overall well-being (NCES, 2021). In fact, according to a report by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2021), students from low-income families are more likely to experience food insecurity, inadequate healthcare access, and unstable housing situations, all of which hinder their ability to fully engage in education. Additionally, economic disadvantage affects their access to essential educational resources such as high-quality teachers, rigorous coursework, and extracurricular activities, as highlighted by research from the Education Trust (Peske et al., 2006). These disparities exacerbate educational outcomes and perpetuate cycles of poverty.

Students from low-income families also experience higher levels of stress and exposure to adverse childhood experiences, impeding their cognitive and social-emotional development. Chronic stressors, including financial instability and community violence, disproportionately affect children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, leading to academic disengagement and mental health issues (Bradley et al., 2002; Evans et al., 2013). Furthermore, limited access to adequate healthcare services results in untreated health conditions that affect students' ability to focus and participate in academic activities (Currie et al., Stabile, 2006). These challenges are compounded by externalizing behavior problems such as aggression and low attentional regulation, which are prevalent among students from low-income households (Qi et al., 2004). Addressing the academic, social-emotional, and mental health needs of students from low-income families requires a comprehensive approach to ensure equitable opportunities for success in school and beyond. In connection to the challenges faced by students from low-

income families, the role of school counselors emerges as pivotal in fostering student success through comprehensive support and programming.

The Role of School Counselors

School counselors are vital in advancing the objectives of their schools, as defined by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model (ASCA, 2019). They can guide students' academic, career, and social/emotional development while adhering to ethical standards and professional competencies (ASCA, 2019). The ASCA National Model emphasizes the importance of comprehensive programming to meet the diverse needs of all students, especially those from marginalized backgrounds (ASCA, 2019). Through culturally responsive practices, counselors engage in various activities, including individual and group counseling, and classroom instruction units (ASCA, 2019). They are tasked with designing, implementing, and evaluating their programs, aiming for an ideal caseload of no more than 250 students and dedicating 80% of their time to individual or group counseling, crisis intervention, skill-building workshops, classroom presentations, consultation, collaboration, and advocacy (ASCA, 2019). Dimmitt et al. (2013) conducted research that underscores the beneficial influence of comprehensive school counseling programs on students' academic achievement and overall well-being, emphasizing the importance of evidence-based practices in school counseling. Similarly, studies by Bryan et al. (2011) and Bowers et al. (2010) underscore the effectiveness of school counseling interventions in improving low-income students' academic and career outcomes, providing further support for the pivotal role of school counselors in promoting student success. The role of school counselors intersects with Teen Dating Violence Prevention Public Health Initiatives, emphasizing counselors' vital role in promoting student well-being and implementing evidence-based interventions to address TDV.

Public Health Initiatives-TDV Models

TDV has emerged as a significant public health concern, prompting the application of a public health model to connect research with practice (Foshee et al., 2010). This model delineates stages including defining the problem, outlining risk factors, developing, and testing interventions, and promoting widespread utilization. School-based interventions designed to decrease and prevent TDV serve as a platform for extensive implementation, with school counselors playing a pivotal role (Hermann & Finn, 2002). Leveraging their expertise, school counselors can deliver developmentally appropriate activities and services to all students, contributing to the enhancement of their mindsets and behaviors for student success (ASCA, 2014). By integrating evidence-based practices into their interventions, counselors can effectively address TDV and create safer student environments.

Role of School Counselor at Title I Schools

School counselors play a fundamental part in supporting students facing various challenges due to socioeconomic disadvantages at Title I schools (Bavin, 2002; Malburg, 2012). School counselors are positioned to provide crucial guidance and assistance to students navigating academic, social, emotional, and personal issues in a setting often characterized by extreme poverty rates and limited resources (ASCA, 2019; Bemak, 2000). School counselors at Title I schools can engage in various activities, including crisis intervention, academic and career planning, and advocacy (Dahir, 2009). Additionally, their role can include collaborating with community organizations and agencies to partner families with critical resources like food, medical care, and mental health support (ASCA, 2019; Bavin, 2002; Bemak, 2000). By offering comprehensive support and guidance, school counselors are critical in developing a positive and inclusive school climate and empowering students to overcome obstacles and achieve their full

potential despite the challenges they may face due to their socioeconomic status (Gage et. al., 2019).

According to Erford (2011), when working in the school setting, school counselors must modify their programming to address the issues of their student population in general. As a result, both student needs and school priorities shape how counselors distribute time providing services directly to students in the form of counseling sessions, crisis intervention, individual or group therapy, skill-building workshops, or to meet student needs in the form of advocacy, consultation, and coordination (Erford, 2011). Borders (2002) also purports that school counselors should acquire adaptability skills and be flexible to effectively address students' needs within a specific school environment given the need to address a plethora of issues confronting students and their families. Understanding the necessity for adaptability and flexibility in addressing diverse student needs within school settings, as emphasized by Erford (2011) and Borders (2002), highlights the crucial role of school counselors in navigating the complexities of student issues. This underscores the significance of exploring the experiences of counselors, particularly in Title I schools, regarding TDV intervention, as it can inform the development of effective prevention strategies and contribute to creating safer environments for all students.

There remains a dearth of research regarding the lived experiences of school counselors in Title I schools regarding TDV intervention. This gap underscores the need for insights into best practices for implementing intervention programs within this context. By leveraging their expertise and comprehensive programming, school counselors can effectively contribute to TDV prevention efforts and foster a safe and supportive school environment for all students, particularly those from vulnerable backgrounds.

Theoretical Foundations

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

SCT, proposed by Bandura (1986), posits that learning occurs through reciprocal interactions between the person, the environment, and behavior. Originally labeled Social Learning Theory, Bandura (1986) renamed it SCT to emphasize the role of cognitive factors in behavior acquisition, presenting it as a framework for understanding human motivation, actions, and thoughts. The theory highlights individuals' cognitive and self-regulatory capabilities to influence major life events, contrasting with unidirectional views of learning in previous behavior learning theories (Bandura, 1999). Moreover, SCT addresses the limitations of behavioral learning theories by considering both environmental influences and personal disposition as independent factors shaping human behavior.

SCT posits that human development, change, and adaptation can vary across cultures (Bandura, 2002). While heterogeneity exists within cultures, variations may stem from whether the social system is individualistically or collectively oriented (Researchers, year). In career development, SCT underscores individuals' exercise of personal agency in career interest, choice, and development (Lindley, 2005). Additionally, SCT has contributed to sociology, social psychology, education, and public health. For instance, it has informed studies on gender-role socialization and media usage's impact on perceptions of gender-appropriate sports (Huesmann et al., 2006), self-efficacy perceptions' relationship with task-specific performance in work settings (Harrison, 1997), and planning education for gifted students (Burney, 2007).

Connecting school counseling with SCT underscores the pivotal role of school counselors in fostering students' cognitive and behavioral development within the school environment. SCT posits that individuals learn through reciprocal interactions between themselves, their

environment, and their behavior (Bandura, 1986). In the context of school counseling, this theory suggests that students' behaviors and cognitive processes are influenced by various environmental factors within the school setting, including interactions with peers, teachers, and the overall school climate (Bussey, 2023). School counselors, equipped with an understanding of SCT principles, can utilize cognitive and self-regulatory strategies to promote positive behavior change and academic success among students (Bradshaw, 2004). By fostering a supportive and empowering school environment, counselors can enhance students' self-efficacy beliefs and social skills, thereby contributing to their overall well-being and success in school (Lindley, 2005). Additionally, SCT highlights the importance of role modeling and social reinforcement in behavior change processes, suggesting that school counselors can serve as positive role models and provide social support to students as they navigate academic and social challenges (Hardin et al., 2009). Therefore, integrating SCT principles into school counseling practice can enhance counselors' effectiveness in promoting students' cognitive and behavioral development and fostering a positive school climate conducive to academic and personal growth.

SCT has been instrumental in explaining various human behaviors, including aggression, substance abuse, and mental health problems (Bradshaw, 2004). Negatively biased social cognitive factors have been linked to community violence exposure and classroom aggression (Bradshaw, 2004). Additionally, SCT concepts have been associated with combating substance abuse through policy formation and reinforcement (Akers, 1999). SCT has been used to emphasize the role of key figures as socialization agents, suggesting interventions where teens are trained to be peer helpers (Madkour et al., 2019). Further researchers examined relationship contexts and cognitive risk factors related to TDV, highlighting the importance of intervention programs tailored to specific populations and covering various risk factors (Landor et al., 2017;

Niolon et al., 2015). As SCT has been extensively utilized to explain various human behaviors and inform intervention strategies across different fields, its application to TDV underscores the importance of leveraging the role of school counselors in supporting students' social and emotional development within educational settings.

In summary, SCT emphasizes reciprocal interactions between individuals, their environment, and behavior, acknowledging cognitive factors' role in behavior acquisition (Bandura, 1986). SCT has applications in various fields, including career development, sociology, social psychology, education, and public health (Lindley, 2005; Huesmann et al., 2006; Bradshaw, 2004). It has been instrumental in explaining diverse human behaviors, from aggression to substance abuse, and has been used as a theoretical framework for understanding TDV (Bradshaw et al., 2004). Recent studies have explored factors associated with TDV, including cognitive risk factors and relationship contexts (Niolon et al., 2015; Landor & Simons, 2017). Additionally, TDV prevention programs based on SCT support teaching conflict resolution and communication skills in schools to reduce TDV (Ball et al., 2012; Foshee et al., 2005). The connection between SCT and TDV underscores the significance of utilizing the role of school counselors in supporting students' social and emotional development within educational settings.

Empowerment Theory

Empowerment Theory (ET), attributed to Freire (1970), emphasizes mastery over individual, community, or organizational concerns (Rappaport, 1987). The theory aims to achieve autonomy, freedom, self-esteem, self-confidence, and control over life through empowerment processes (Zimmerman, 2000). Initially focused on education and social change, ET has since expanded to various disciplines such as social work and counseling (Zimmerman,

2000). Empowerment theory empowers individuals by providing them with intervention methods aimed at regaining control over their lives. By addressing the ways in which oppression contributes to feelings of helplessness, empowerment theory focuses on helping marginalized individuals at various levels, individual, group, and community, attain personal, interpersonal, and political power. This approach not only supports individuals in improving their lives but also challenges systemic barriers that obstruct their ability to meet their needs. Through empowerment theory, individuals are equipped with the tools and resources necessary to assert their rights and advocate for change on both personal and societal levels.

ET addresses the needs of marginalized communities, incorporating multicultural and diversity concepts (Mungai, 2012). It aims to eliminate systems perpetuating marginalization and enhance social belonging (Mungai, 2012). ET's generalizability allows its application across diverse contexts, considering individual differences and contextual variations (Rigaud, 2020). It has been adopted in social work, community health, political science, psychology, multicultural education, and nursing (Rigaud, 2020).

Counseling. School counselors, as emphasized by Lee (2001) and Musheno & Talbert (2002), possess the unique ability to foster empowerment among both individual students and marginalized groups nationwide. Building on this, Hipolito-Delgado et al. (2007) outline practical intervention strategies for counselors to promote empowerment and well-being, aligning with the principles of Empowerment Theory (ET) highlighted by McWhirter (1991) and Zimmerman & Warschausky (1998). By viewing counseling as a collaborative endeavor aimed at liberating clients, ET encourages students to achieve empowerment independently, reducing reliance on counselors (McWhirter, 1991). This underscores the importance of nurturing students' critical awareness and cultivating a positive self-concept, fostering social activism and

autonomy (Hipolito-Delgado et al., 2007). Additionally, counselors can collaborate with administrators and department chairs to ensure authentic representation of marginalized perspectives in curricula, as suggested by Hipolito-Delgado et al. (2007). These insights align with the research questions posed in the study, which seek to uncover counselors' experiences and motivations for TDV prevention in Title I schools, thereby highlighting the practical application of Empowerment Theory in counseling practice.

Empowerment. In the context of TDV prevention, empowerment has emerged as a key strategy in counseling (Debnam et al., 2021). Debnam et al. (2021) conducted a qualitative study on teens' views of empowerment using a safety planning app, and highlighting the importance of addressing the psychological and emotional aspects of TDV. Worrell and Remer's (2003) model of empowerment, outlined its crucial role in the comprehension of the various forms abusive behaviors may take within adolescent relationships, assessing the potential risks and advantages of intervening, and possessing knowledge about the resources accessible to them for assistance. Weisz et al. (2010) explored the empowering effects of utilizing individuals from a similar age group or background to provide education, support, or guidance to their peers in relation to TDV prevention. Additionally, Grasley et al. (1999) weighed the success of the Youth Relationship Project, a community-based curriculum using empowerment to enhance adolescents' social and relationship skills, leading to increased formal help-seeking and community empowerment participation. The aforementioned studies emphasize the importance of addressing not only the physical but also the psychological and emotional aspects of TDV, aligning with the goals of ET. Furthermore, the inclusion of ET, as initially proposed by Freire (1970), underscores its relevance in promoting autonomy, freedom, and social justice, particularly within marginalized communities. By utilizing empowerment as a framework, this study aims to promote resilience,

self-efficacy, and proactive behavior among adolescents, ultimately fostering healthier relationship dynamics and promoting overall well-being.

In summary, ET, initially proposed by Freire (1970), emphasizes individual, community, and organizational mastery over concerns, aiming for autonomy, freedom, and social justice (Rappaport, 1987; Zimmerman, 2000). Its broad applicability across diverse contexts and disciplines underscores its significance in promoting social change and addressing marginalized communities' needs (Mungai, 2012; Rigaud, 2020). In the realm of TDV prevention, empowerment emerges as a vital strategy, as evidenced by studies on safety planning apps, peer education, and community-based interventions (Debnam et al., 2021; Weisz et al., 2010; Grasley et al., 1999). These findings highlight the empowering effects of ET interventions, emphasizing the importance of addressing psychological, emotional, and social aspects of TDV prevention. ET serves as a valuable framework for promoting resilience, self-efficacy, and proactive behavior among adolescents, fostering healthier relationship dynamics, and promoting overall well-being.

Role of SCT and ET in the Present Study

The integration of SCT and ET offers a comprehensive framework for understanding and addressing TDV prevention in Title I schools through the role of school counselors. SCT illuminates the cognitive processes, social influences, and environmental factors shaping adolescents' behaviors (Bandura, 1986), while ET promotes empowerment at individual, organizational, and community levels (Zimmerman, 2000). This study is crucial as it addresses a pressing public health concern of TDV and fills a gap in research regarding the lived experiences of counselors who implement TDV interventions while working in Title I schools (Swearer et al., 2010). Utilizing a phenomenological approach, qualitative interpretations emerge encompassing

the identification of themes, exploration of meanings, understanding of contextual factors, and analysis of personal narratives. Building on the foundation established by the exploration of the role of SCT and ET in this study, the research questions now pivot towards the lived experiences and considerations of Title I school counselors regarding TDV within their schools.

Research Questions

In a qualitative phenomenological inquiry centered on teen dating violence (TDV) within a Title I school setting, the research question "What experiences have Title I Counselors encountered with TDV?" holds significance. This inquiry aims to uncover the intricate realities, obstacles, and reflections that counselors face while addressing TDV within the distinct environment of Title I schools. By delving into counselors' firsthand encounters, the researcher seeks insights into the multifaceted aspects of TDV prevention efforts, including the influence of socio-economic elements, cultural nuances, and institutional complexities. Moreover, this question enables counselors to articulate their viewpoints, approaches, and driving factors, thereby offering invaluable perspectives to shape forthcoming interventions, policies, and support mechanisms tailored to the needs of underprivileged youth in Title I educational settings.

The second research question, "What considerations do Title I Counselors take into account when working with students experiencing TDV?" is designed to understand the unique contextual factors that influence counselors' decision-making processes and interventions. By exploring the specific challenges and constraints faced by counselors in Title I schools when addressing TDV, researchers can gain insights into the structural, cultural, and systemic barriers that may impact the effectiveness of prevention efforts. By conducting qualitative analysis, this question elevates the perspectives of these counselors while underscoring the significance of

tailored interventions and support structures to address the requirements of students in Title I schools.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this phenomenological study lies in its holistic approach to comprehending and mitigating TDV within the school setting, particularly at Title I schools, where research is notably lacking. While numerous school-based prevention programs have been established to address TDV, there exists an unaddressed area in the literature necessitating further exploration to assess the efficacy of these programs and delve into additional factors contributing to TDV risk. Exploring TDV within Title I schools is imperative given the multitude of challenges faced by students from low-income families, which significantly impact their academic performance and overall well-being (NCES, 2021). Economic disadvantage, coupled with heightened stress levels and exposure to adverse childhood experiences, underscores the importance of TDV prevention efforts in addressing the complex interplay of socio-economic factors affecting students' academic engagement and mental health (Bradley et al., 2002; Evans et al., 2013).

Existing literature has pinpointed several risk factors associated with TDV, including exposure to violence and the prevailing beliefs and norms surrounding TDV (Arriaga et al., 2004; Liu et al., 2022). However, research specifically focusing on TDV prevention efforts within Title I schools is notably scarce. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the lived experiences of school counselors in implementing TDV prevention measures within Title I school environments, shedding light on effective strategies and potential challenges unique to these settings. By elucidating the experiences and perspectives of school counselors, this study can provide valuable insights that benefit not only school counselors but also educators and

policymakers. School counselors can gain greater insight into the intricacies and nuances of TDV prevention within Title I schools, thereby enhancing their ability to design and implement effective intervention strategies. Educators can benefit from the findings by gaining insight into the role of school counselors in addressing TDV and integrating these efforts into broader school-based initiatives aimed at promoting student well-being. Policymakers can use the study's findings to inform the development of policies and guidelines that support TDV prevention efforts in Title I schools, contributing to safer and healthier school environments for all students (Arriaga et al., 2004; Liu et al., 2022).

Chapter 3: Method

This chapter will present the methods used to conduct this study. It will begin with the participants. The target population and sample utilized for the study will be described. Participant recruitment and a summary of the participants will also be defined. Next, the interview protocol will be outlined, which include the interview questions and their connection to the research questions, literature, and theories. The procedures for data collection and analysis will follow and conclude with the author's positionality statement.

Research Design

Rationale for Qualitative Research Approach

The current study examines the lived experiences described by the participants to determine their beliefs and interpretations using the phenomenological approach of qualitative methodology (Creswell et al., 2017). Phenomenological studies utilize semi-structured interviews, allowing for the free flow of relevant information as defined by the participant (Ingham-Bloomfield, 2015). Specifically, this phenomenological study will examine the role a sample of school counselors in Title I schools play in TDV prevention. By adopting this approach, the study aims to uncover a range of qualitative interpretations, including identifying recurring themes and patterns, exploring meanings and perspectives, examining contextual factors, and analyzing personal narratives.

Phenomenology

A transcendental phenomenological study was selected to explore the essence of the "lived experiences" (Creswell, 2017) of counselors and their efforts in preventing TDV in Title I schools. Phenomenology was selected based on its ability to offer an in-depth investigation of lived experiences and the creation of genuine accounts of these experiences within their

immediate context (Ganeson et al., 2009; Omizo et al., 2006). The aim is to gather narratives from participants to illuminate their perceptions of the phenomenon (Omizo et al., 2006) and craft a comprehensive description (Creswell, 2017) that encapsulates the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2017; van Manen, 1990). The interview protocol aimed to capture participants' experiences, emotions, viewpoints, and opinions concerning the studied phenomenon (Welman et al., 1999). Ultimately, the goal of the phenomenological model is to decipher the expressions, emotions, and events within the framework of existent life experiences (Omizo et al., 2006).

The subsequent research questions guided the investigation into the lived experiences of counselors who work in Title I schools and were in alignment with the Empowerment Theory (ET) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) dimensions of lived experiences as criteria for significance. The first research question, "What are Title I Counselors' experiences with TDV?" aligns with SCT by examining the experiences of counselors in addressing TDV within Title I schools. SCT emphasizes reciprocal interactions between individuals, their environments, and cognitive processes. By exploring counselors' experiences with TDV, the study can identify the environmental factors, personal characteristics, and cognitive processes that influence their behaviors and decision-making in addressing TDV. The second research question, "What considerations do Title I Counselors consider when working with students experiencing TDV?" aligns with ET by focusing on empowering counselors to address TDV within Title I schools. ET regards counseling as a collaborative relationship created to promote the liberation of the client. By investigating the considerations counselors take into account when working with students experiencing TDV, the study can identify strategies that empower both counselors and students

to challenge oppressive structures and foster social change within their school communities.

Positionality

Bracketing is a method utilized in phenomenological studies to set aside one's beliefs about the phenomenon under investigation and the researcher's knowledge of the subject before the study (Creswell et al., 2017). The purpose of bracketing is to limit biases and assumptions of the researcher. To this end, during this study, notes were taken on all preconceptions during the data collection and analysis process.. Initial information about the primary researcher includes:

I have worked as a school counselor for over 20 years at both the middle and high school levels. Part of my experience includes working with students who have experienced TDV as both the victim and perpetrator. During my career, two of those students were killed at the hands of their intimate dating partners. I have implemented TDV interventions at two different high schools, one of which is a Title I school.

As a result of my position, I began the study with some biases. One bias that I hold is that school counselor interventions can be successful and that it is part of the duties of school counselors to do their part to meet the social/emotional needs of students in addition to their academic and career development needs. I also believe that the implementation of TDV interventions can save students from physical and mental health outcomes or worse. I feel this can be done when school counselors are provided with the resources needed for implementation. Having worked as a school counselor at a Title I school, I also expected school counselors to have TDV experiences to draw from as a part of their interviews.

The researcher's positionality as a school counselor with extensive experience working with students affected by TDV brings valuable insights and perspectives to phenomenological qualitative research. However, the researcher's personal biases and experiences may

inadvertently influence the interpretation of raw data and the analysis process. For example, the researcher assumed that counselors would take cultural considerations when working with students at Title I schools due to the high percentage of minority students. Based on the researcher's background, there was also a belief that participants would obtain and utilize resources to address TDV with their students. To mitigate the impact of these biases, the researcher utilized bracketing techniques to set aside their preconceptions about TDV and the role of school counselors before the study. This approach allows for a more objective examination of participants' lived experiences without undue influence from the researcher's beliefs and experiences. During data collection and analysis, the researcher remained vigilant in noting any preconceptions or biases that arose, ensuring transparency and reflexivity throughout the research process. By acknowledging and addressing these biases, the researcher aimed to enhance the rigor and validity of the study's findings.

Participants

Population

The participants of the current study consist of school counselors recruited from schools identified as Title 1 in the southeast. Purposive and snowball sampling methods were employed for participant selection. Purposive sampling, commonly used in qualitative research, aims to gain a deeper understanding of participants' experiences with the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2017). Utilizing this non-random sampling method, where researchers deliberately choose participants who meet specific criteria or possess certain characteristics relevant to the research question, this approach specifically selected individuals who could provide rich and insightful information related to the study's objectives (Miles et al., 1994). Creswell (2017) characterizes purposive sampling as a deliberate process of selecting

participants and locations to grasp the core phenomenon being studied as perceived by those participants within those research locations.

Snowball sampling is a technique where initial participants in a study are asked to refer potential participants who meet the study criteria (Creswell, 2017). This method relies on referrals to expand the sample size, creating a snowball effect. It is often used when the population of interest is difficult to access or identify through traditional sampling methods (Creswell, 2017).

Sample

Currently, the United States employs more than 31,532 school counselors. Of these professionals, 75.3% are women, with men comprising 24.7% of the workforce. On average, school counselors are 41 years old. Regarding ethnicity, the majority are White (67.0%), followed by Hispanic or Latino (14.2%), Black or African American (10.6%), and Unknown (3.8%). Additionally, 11% of school counselors identify as LGBT.

The aim in selecting the sample was to encompass participants from various ethnic backgrounds, with diverse levels of experience in school counseling. The target was to include participants from comparatively moderate and culturally diverse schools identified as Title I and located in the southeast. Guest et al. (2006) proposed that six is an adequate sample size for identifying central themes that characterize the collective views, perspectives, and experiences within a group of participants who have common traits or attributes relevant to the study, making them similar to each other in key aspects. Patton (2014) emphasized that "there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry." Mouton & Marais (1992) recommend keeping the sample size at a minimum when dealing with substantial quantities of non-numerical, descriptive data. Creswell (2017) advocated for limiting the number of participants in qualitative research. The

typical guideline for the number of participants selected to participate in phenomenological research is often restricted to ten (Creswell, 2017; Hays & Singh, 2012). In line with previous research guidelines for appropriate number of participants, the current study recruited and studied a total of six participants.

For participant recruitment in this study, both purposive and snowball sampling methods were employed. In order to participate in the current study, participants had to be 21 years or older, currently work as a counselor at a school identified as Title I, have previously provided interventions for students who have experienced TDV and consent to audio recording for research purposes.

The study recruited participants who were current school counselors at Title I schools and had experience working with students who had encountered TDV. Recruitment methods involved advertising on research recruitment websites of the North Carolina and American School Counselor Association, as well as soliciting participants through alumni listservs and counseling organizations. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who met specific criteria relevant to the research question, while snowball sampling was utilized to expand the sample size by asking initial participants to refer others who fit the study criteria.

The current study has six school counselors. Of these participants, 100% are women. On average, the school counselors are 47 years old. Regarding ethnicity, five are Black or African American, with one White school counselor. Additionally, none identified as LGBTQIA. Three school counselors work in rural settings, two work in suburban settings, and one works in a rural setting.

Table 2. Participants' Demographic Profiles

Participant	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Race	Years of School Counseling Experience	Counselor - to- Student Ratio	Location
1	Janie	Female	37	AA	1	Above 1:250	Rural
2	Deborah	Female	51	AA	19	Above 1:250	Urban
3	Cathy	Female	33	AA	4	Above 1:250	Rural
4	Patricia	Female	50	AA	21	Above 1:250	Suburban
5	Mary	Female	46	W	11	Above 1:250	Suburban
6	Alma	Female	72	AA	42	Above 1:250	Rural

Instrumentation

The research objective for this study is to understand the lived experiences of counselors working at Title I schools who have implemented TDV prevention strategies. The central research interview questions examine the experiences of school counselors in TDV prevention training and implementing TDV prevention programming.

Interview Questions

Interview questions were created based on the research questions, literature review content, and foundational theories of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and Empowerment Theory (ET). The purpose of the study is to determine the role of school counselors at Title I schools in TDV prevention. Its aim was to reveal the intricate aspects of TDV prevention initiatives in these

settings by delving into the counselors' subjective experiences. By focusing on the narratives and perspectives of school counselors, the research aimed to discern recurring patterns and themes, shedding light on the core essence of TDV prevention efforts. Additionally, the exploration of participants' interpretations provided insights into their subjective viewpoints, including the impact of cultural, social, and environmental factors.

Interview Question 1. Inquiring about how counselors came to work at a Title I school provides context for understanding their experiences with TDV. It allows exploration of the specific circumstances and motivations that led counselors to these settings, potentially uncovering insights into the unique challenges and dynamics they encounter in addressing TDV within Title I schools. Understanding counselors' backgrounds and pathways to Title I schools can enrich the interpretation of their experiences with TDV, offering a holistic perspective on the interplay between personal narratives and professional roles in shaping their responses to TDV prevention.

Interview Question 2. Exploring Title I school counselors' experiences with TDV can be complemented by understanding their broader experiences working within the Title I school context. By delving into their overall experiences at Title I schools, the researcher can gain insights into the unique challenges, resources, and support structures available in these settings. This contextual understanding can provide valuable context for interpreting school counselors' responses to TDV, shedding light on how the school environment influences their approaches to prevention and intervention efforts. Additionally, probing into their experiences at Title I schools can uncover organizational factors and systemic barriers that may impact the effectiveness of TDV prevention initiatives, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of counselors' roles in addressing TDV within these schools.

Interview Question 3. "Please describe what it is like for you to address TDV at a Title I school," complements the research question "What are Title I School Counselors' experiences with TDV" by inviting counselors to articulate their personal encounters, challenges, and insights in dealing with TDV within the context of Title I schools. The question aims to capture the rich narratives and nuanced reflections of school counselors, thereby illuminating the complexities and realities of TDV prevention efforts in Title I school settings.

Interview Question 4. The interview question, "How do you make decisions regarding TDV interventions?" corresponds with the research inquiry, "What considerations do Title I School Counselors take into account when working with students experiencing TDV?" This alignment allows school counselors to articulate their decision-making processes, factors considered, and strategies utilized in addressing TDV incidents. Through this interview question, researchers aim to reveal the subjective perspectives and nuanced considerations guiding counselors' interventions, shedding light on the complexities of TDV intervention strategies within Title I school contexts.

Interview Question 5. "Are there any cultural considerations that you take into account and why?" is derived from the research question "What do Title I School Counselors take into consideration when working with students experiencing TDV?" This question allows school counselors to share how cultural factors influence their decision-making processes and intervention strategies when addressing TDV incidents among students. By exploring cultural considerations, the researcher aims to uncover the nuanced ways in which school counselors navigate the intersectionality of culture and TDV prevention within Title I school settings.

Interview Question 6. The final interview question, "What else do you want me to know?", derived from the research question "What do Title I School Counselors take into

consideration when working with students experiencing TDV?" provides an opportunity for school counselors to elaborate on additional factors, perspectives, or insights they believe are important in understanding their experiences and approaches to addressing TDV in Title I schools. By inviting school counselors to share any further information they deem relevant, the researcher aimed to capture a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in TDV intervention strategies within these educational contexts.

Research Procedure

Data Collection

Purposeful sampling methods were used to recruit potential participants. The first step of recruitment was securing authorization from the North Carolina State University Institutional Review Board. To participate, at the onset of the study, participants had to meet the following criteria: a current school counselor at a Title I school and must have worked with students who have experienced TDV. Recruitment also included advertising on the North Carolina and American School Counselor Association research recruitment websites. Participants were also solicited through alumni listservs and other counseling organizations. Emails were also sent to a pool of potential participants consisting of an overview of the research study, participation requirements, and an interest survey. Participants received a gift card from Amazon for \$25 after completing the study.

The invitation letter furnished concise details about the study and included the primary investigator's contact information for potential participants seeking clarification or assistance in determining their participation. Additionally, participants received the consent form via Qualtrics, furnishing comprehensive details about the study, potential risks, and ethical considerations. Appendices for this study include the interview protocol (refer to Appendix A),

the informed consent form (refer to Appendix B), the invitation letter (refer to Appendix C), a member-checking email template (refer to Appendix D), the recruitment flier (refer to Appendix E), and a codebook excerpt (refer to Appendix F).

All participants work as school counselors at Title I schools and have had some experience working with students who have experienced TDV. Primary data collected for this phenomenological study was gathered via a one-hour long interview with each participant individually. All six interview questions were open-ended, and if/when additional questions were warranted, the researcher asked additional clarifying open-ended questions.

Data Analysis

Data Analysis

The phenomenological data analysis consists of methods outlined by Moustakas (1994) and Creswell et al. (2017). Following the semi-structured interviews, the recorded videos were transcribed. Participants were identified by pseudonyms that each participant chose while completing their demographic forms.

All recorded videos were reviewed twice, notes and memos were taken, and reflective messages were created. A summary was then made based on these notes and memos. Next, transcripts were reviewed, and a list of significant statements from the interview was compiled. These statements were grouped into clusters of meaning to determine themes. There are two prevalent methods for structuring the memos derived from interviews, which are organizing the data based on the questions and arranging them according to thematic categories (Workbook E: Conducting in-depth interviews, n.d.). Transcripts and accompanying notes were organized chronologically within each participant's folder and stored in a secure online repository on Google Drive, accessible only with two-way authentication.

After summarizing, memoing, and organizing codes, tentative themes were created. Creswell et al. (2017) recommend no more than 25 to 30 categories and then reducing them into 5 or 6 themes. This was done by focusing on interpreting the data. During the process, the data was analyzed to determine what is meaningful and what categories emerged while trying to link the interpretation to current research literature. Diagrams were created representing relationships among codes. The themes were used to describe what the participants have experienced and the situations that have affected and influenced their experiences. These structural and textual descriptions were then synthesized to establish the essence or common experiences of the participants.

Trustworthiness Strategies

Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of the study findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility ensures that the research accurately represents participants' experiences and perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dependability ensures that the study's findings are consistent and replicable over time (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Confirmability refers to the neutrality and objectivity of the research, ensuring that the findings are not influenced by the researcher's biases or preferences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability assesses the extent to which the findings can be applied or transferred to other contexts or populations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility, dependability, and confirmability were utilized in this study to help strengthen the rigor and validity ensuring that the findings are robust, reliable, and reflective of participants' realities.

Credibility. Credibility in qualitative research refers to the extent to which the study findings accurately represent participants' experiences and perspectives and is utilized to ensure

the validity of the study (Creswell, 2017). To establish credibility, this study was conducted using steps similar to phenomenological studies described in *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (Creswell, 2017). Peer debriefing (Creswell, 2017) with an impartial peer occurred where research methods, emerging themes, and biases could be examined. Participants were provided a copy of their transcripts for member-checking via email. This allowed participants the opportunity to check the results for accuracy and provide comments. They were also allowed the opportunity to expand upon their responses or amend the transcript if needed.

Dependability. To further establish trustworthiness, the design of the study consists of dependability, which includes procedures that ensure consistency of the methods and results over time (Creswell, 2017). For the current study, this was done by maintaining an audit trail, which outlines how the study unfolds. Some of the information that the audit trail (Appendix I) contains includes summaries, connections to literature, and notes regarding personal reflections, expectations, and trustworthiness. Lincoln et al. (1985) emphasizes the importance of maintaining an audit trail in qualitative research, which should include various types of information. This includes raw data, such as transcripts or recordings of interviews or observations (Lincoln et al., 1985). Additionally, notes taken during the data reduction and analysis process should be included, documenting the researcher's thought process and decisions made during analysis (Lincoln et al., 1985). It is also essential to include notes regarding the researcher's intentions and predispositions, providing insight into how these factors may have influenced the research process (Lincoln et al., 1985). Information related to instrument development, such as interview guides or survey questions, should be documented (Lincoln et al., 1985). Furthermore, any products resulting from data reconstruction and synthesis, such as

themes or patterns, should be included in the audit trail (Lincoln et al., 1985). Finally, process notes detailing the researcher's reflections on the research process and any challenges or insights gained should also be included (Lincoln et al., 1985).

Confirmability. Confirmability in phenomenological qualitative research refers to the degree to which the findings of the study are free from the influence of the researcher's biases or preferences, ensuring objectivity and neutrality in the interpretation of data. To prevent bias from just one perspective on the research, peer debriefings (Appendix H) occurred with an impartial peer familiar with qualitative research (Creswell, 2017). The debriefer is also knowledgeable of the area of study to ensure that their input is both challenging and stimulating (Lincoln et al., 1985). They are also qualified to aid in resolving issues that might arise and identifying blind spots that the researcher may possess.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of chapter three was to provide details regarding the methods utilized for this phenomenological study. It includes a description of the population that was studied, along with the method that was used for sampling. The interview questions, as well as the protocols for data collection, analysis, and validation, were also included. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the study's modes of trustworthiness, as measured through credibility, dependability, and confirmability.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter will present the findings of this study's research questions. Five major themes answering the two main research questions: 1. What are Title I counselors' experiences with TDV? and 2. What considerations do Title I counselors consider when working with students experiencing TDV? were identified through data analysis. Diagrams were created representing relationships among codes. These themes provided a foundation for describing the strengths and limitations of existing intervention programs and to determine elements that may contribute to Teen Dating Violence (TDV) prevention.

Overview of the Participants

Six participants participated in semi-structured interviews and were assigned a pseudonym. Before participating in the interviews, participants completed the informed consent and demographic questionnaire. The following is a brief description of each participant offering insight into the demographics and characteristics of the individuals involved in the study to help establish the context for the findings presented in the results. Each description is followed by a quote related to their demographic information to add depth and richness to the presentation of their characteristics, enhancing authenticity and credibility.

Janie

Janie is a 37-year-old African American woman. She spent 12 years as a teacher at a Title I school in a rural school district in the southeast before obtaining a school counseling degree and license and moving into a school counseling opening. She is currently employed at a middle school, undertaking her first year in that role. Janie noted that her counselor-to-student ratio exceeds 1:250 and shared her reason for seeking employment at a school classified as Title I. A direct quote from Janie that summarizes her career as a school counselor is as follows:

I've always worked as a teacher in Title I school, and that was kind of my why, to be with students in need. So I taught for 12 years. And then, of course, I said, Well, if I'm gonna teach in a Title I school, I would also want to be a counselor in a Title I school, because that population seems to need me and I need them.

Deborah

Deborah is a 51-year-old female K-12 school counselor at a Title I school in an urban school district in the southeast. She is currently the only school counselor at her school and her student-to-school counselor ratio is greater than 1:250. Deborah stated that before beginning at her current school, she was previously employed in another county where she worked as a school counselor for more than 18 years but decided to seek a job closer to home.

I worked in another county for 18 years. When I was working in that particular county, it was like 47 miles one way from where I was living, and then my mother became sick or was diagnosed with cancer and I was the caregiver. So it took a toll on me whenever she had a doctor's appointment. Her illness became worse, and it was hard for me to continue to work and drive back and forth. I was first on intermittent family leave, but then I went to permanent family leave, and then she transitioned. So after that, I was tired of driving that far, and then I decided to seek employment locally or within 30 miles of where I was living. This is my second year working in a Title I school. So it's new to me. I've heard of Title I schools before but this is my second year working in a Title I school.

Cathy

Cathy is a 33-year-old African American school counselor at a Title I school in a rural school district in the southeast. She is one of two school counselors at a middle school of 665

students. She stated that she ended up working at a Title I school because of her desire to work in the school district in which her master's program instructor serves as the district supervisor.

So my current supervisor was an adjunct professor during my master's program and because of the person that she was during that time frame, I really enjoyed the things that she taught us. So I wanted to work for her. She was like an influence, a really big influence. And I knew I just wanted to work for her. I call her a bulldog because she's a huge advocate for kids, and for our profession. And that was really important to me when selecting an employer. So I just walked up to her one day we were outside Starbucks, and I was like, "Hey, you got any positions"? She was like, "actually I do." And then we just kinda started from there. I went through the interview process and here I am.

Patricia

Patricia is a 50-year-old African American school counselor at a Title I school in the southeast. She is one of seven school counselors at the suburban high school of 1,850 students. She has been working as a school counselor for over twenty-one years. Six years ago, she was hired to help open the Title I school where she currently works, though it did not have the Title I classification the first year that it was open to students.

I was at a middle school and wanted to get back to the high school level. It just so happened that the school that I currently work at had a position open that allowed me to get back to a high school level. And it was, of course, not Title I when we opened, but became Title I based on our population.

Mary

Mary is a 46-year-old White female school counselor with thirteen years of school counseling experience. She currently works at a Title I high school in a suburban town in the

southeast. She is one of five school counselors. She is now in her second year at a Title I school, having previously served for 11 years as a school counselor in the Midwest.

I interviewed at many schools, and it was actually... It was the first one to offer me a job and the location that I wanted. So it just happened to be Title I.

Alma

Alma is a 72-year-old African American counselor working at a middle school with Title I status. She currently works in a rural community in the southeast. She is one of two school counselors at a school of 420 students where the other school counselor works part-time. Alma came out of retirement to work at her current school.

I actually came to work at a Title I school after my first retirement from another school district. My current school district is also my home district, where I graduated from myself. So my purpose was to come back and give of my talent to the school system that actually helped me become who I am today.

Themes and Subthemes

The themes and subthemes emerged through data analysis which consisted of creating notes and memos of transcriptions, summarizing the notes and memos, establishing a list of significant statements, and grouping statements into clusters of meaning (see Appendix F). A priori codes composed of constructs from ET and SCT were used to assist in analyzing the data (see Appendix G) along with emotion, process, and evaluation coding. After coding, the data was interpreted to determine emerging themes and subthemes. These are visualized in Table 3.

Table 3. Emerging Themes and Subthemes.**Emerging Themes and Subthemes**

Research Question 1: What are Title I School Counselors' experiences with TDV?	
Theme	Subtheme
<p>Empowering Together</p> <p><u>Definition:</u> The proactive engagement of community partners and resources to collectively support the holistic development and well-being of students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborating with School Social Workers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaborative Counseling ○ Bringing in Outside Support ● Partnering with faith-based and non-profit organizations ● Utilizing Title I Funding
<p>A Safe Harbor</p> <p><u>Definition:</u> Deliberate cultivation of an environment where students feel emotionally and physically secure to seek guidance, support, and resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dependence upon Referrals ● Creating Rapport Between Counselors and Students ● Partnering with Families Amid TDV
<p>Equipping Teens for Healthy Relationships</p> <p><u>Definition:</u> Facilitating the development of essential interpersonal competencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Utilizing Evidence-based Programs ● Redefining Healthy Relationships for Students ● Building Communication Skills ● Increasing Positive Self-esteem
Research Question 2: What do Title I School Counselors take into consideration when working with students experiencing TDV?	
Theme	Subtheme
<p>Empowering Students Amid Childhood Challenges</p> <p><u>Definition:</u> Empowering students by fostering resilience, self-efficacy, and coping strategies to address a wide range of childhood adversities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nurturing Growth Beyond Academic Struggles ● Breaking Economic Barriers ● Managing Family Dynamics
<p>Culturally Responsive Counseling</p> <p><u>Definition:</u> Striving to understand the cultural context in which clients live, including their values, beliefs, traditions, and communication styles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Embracing Cultural Norms ● Employing Diverse Counseling Resources

Research Question 1 Themes and Subthemes

Research question one:

What are Title I School Counselors' experiences with TDV?

Empowering Together

The constructs of autonomy and proactive behavior to bring about social change were evident throughout the participant's experiences with TDV, in connection to the theoretical foundation of ET. All participants discussed their efforts to empower students to select healthy relationships and to promote social change concerning the prevalence of TDV. Some participants reported that they knew that working at a Title I school would be challenging before they took the job while others were not aware of typical challenges that come with working at a Title I school. Janie stated,

It is very busy. Because it is Title I, the students have high needs. So my day is packed with all kinds of things from mediations to fights, mediations to referrals, and DSS reports. Because we have high needs on the Title I spectrum, and our population is so needy, we have three counselors in one building for middle school, and that is unheard of. The district gave us another school counselor position because 80% of our students are below performing and then we have a high rate of fighting.

Additionally, Participants shared that there was support available to assist them in their school counseling role.

Cathy shared the need for support to meet the financial needs of the school:

I've seen the ups and downs. I've seen the ebbs and flows—one of those being funding. My school does not have PTA or PTO. So, my principals and I've had 2 during my tenure. My principals have had to do a lot of finagling with our budget, cutting here,

attaching there, and piecing together. So, they make it work. They are able to get the needs of my students met. We use things like Donors Choose. We use donations and community partnerships.

Collaborating with School Social Workers. In this study, a school social worker is defined as a professional operating within an educational environment, facilitating connections between students and families with available resources and support services to enhance academic and social well-being. Study participants discussed collaborating with the school social worker to introduce external support systems, such as community partners, into the school environment. These partnerships were established to supplement existing resources and address the diverse needs of students and families effectively. Participants also shared collaborative counseling efforts. Deborah shared how she has utilized her school social worker to help her provide TVD interventions to students in an unhealthy relationship at her middle school:

So I wanted to bring them together. Her male companion had shared some things about her that she said weren't true. So, she was hurt and distraught. And when it got back to her friends, her friends said something to him, and then he became angry, and he just started shouting and throwing things at her from a distance. I met with them individually first and included the social worker. And then once we talked to each student, I wanted to bring both of them together, so that they could learn how to communicate effectively to express themselves more positively.

Deborah also shared how she and the school social worker worked together to provide TDV prevention before students entered into unhealthy relationships:

I try to teach them how to communicate. I give them "I" statements. I include the social worker. We develop little skits.

Partnering with faith-based and non-profit organizations. In this study, community support encompasses both faith-based organizations and non-profit community organizations. Faith-based communities include churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, and other religious institutions where individuals of the same faith gather to enhance their spiritual connections, offer mutual support and engage in community service. Non-profit community organizations are entities dedicated to benefiting specific communities without a primary focus on profit generation. Several participants mentioned leveraging resources from faith-based communities and non-profit organizations for proactive TDV prevention. Alma discussed utilizing local churches as a way to help make parent information sessions less intimidating. She states:

I'm gonna tell you another thing that has been helpful that we've done. We've taken some of our meetings and some of our groups away from the school. . . Away from the school building because sometimes you keep in mind that many people who refuse to come to the school because they didn't have a healthy experience in school themselves. So, that building to them is like a reminder. So, you can take them to the various centers in your district that you can meet. Your local churches. You take it into their community.

Cathy summarized the need to incorporate community partnerships into her comprehensive school counseling program as follows:

Any program that I can get my school involved in within our parameters, I do that. It's really a team effort.

Janie stated the need for outside resources to assist with proactive TDV interventions from both a local church and community organization.

We have two programs that come in. We have some outside resources that come in and do a boy's group and a girl's group. And then through those two groups, they kind of hit

on those things. Max Factor is the boy's group and Daughters of Worth is a girl's group. And so, they hit on topics for us, and we kind of piggyback on them. They handle relationships, leadership, self-esteem, sexual abuse, and substance abuse. They designed their programs. A church created Max Factor and then Daughters of Worth is a local organization.

Alma also stressed the importance of community resources.

We definitely want to use the resources that are available to us. A lot of times we don't use the resources. Use agencies within your state. Use those persons that have things that will work for you. Don't try to rebuild everything that you need to make a difference in TDV prevention. There are things that are already there. There are people who will come out and help you do groups and that will make a big difference. We just need to tap into them and use those things and those workshops.

In conclusion, the participants shared the challenges that came with working at schools classified as Title I. It resulted in the need for engagement with community support systems, which encompassed both faith-based communities and non-profit organizations. Through their narratives, they depicted how they utilized these resources to implement interventions aimed at addressing TDV.

Title I Funding. For this study, Title I funding refers to a federal program in the United States designed to provide financial assistance to schools and school districts with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families. Most participants mentioned Title I funding in their school counseling role. Janie shared that Title I funding was used to provide their school with another school counseling position:

It is very busy. Because we are a Title I school, the students have high needs. We have three counselors because of the population itself and all three of us are busy all day.

Three counselors in one middle school is unheard of.

Cathy also spoke of the use of Title I funding when hiring additional school counselors at her school:

We could probably split our caseload evenly at about 330 apiece. Given the baggage that a lot of students come with, I think that there's something that can be said about a smaller ratio. Our administration has worked hard to get school counselors and a lot of that has to do with Title I funding. It greatly affects us and who we are able to have in the building.

Alma spoke of using Title I funding for purposes other than hiring additional staff:

It's been a very unique experience for me because my previous school district did have Title I schools but I never personally worked in a Title I school. They were receiving special funds to help them acquire extra activities that would help them increase their academic ability and also help those low-achieving students to want to work towards meeting higher standards. So that was brand new to me but I did see how I could integrate so much within the system that I currently work. We just have to know that if can help them use those funds that we get as Title I the way that it should be used, we're going to see a difference and we are going to see an impact.

In summary, participants shared their individual experiences with Title I funding in relation to their work with TDV prevention.

A Safe Harbor

During the interview, participants articulated various strategies employed to assist students in navigating TDV. They discussed serving as a safe harbor for students experiencing TDV, receiving referrals, redefining healthy relationships, and partnering with parents. Participants highlighted their reliance on staff referrals to identify students in need of support, acknowledging the collaborative effort within the school community. Additionally, participants shared their intentionality in partnering with families to address TDV, recognizing the vital role families play in providing support and guidance to students facing these challenges.

Dependence upon Referrals. Participants discussed their experiences with referrals for students facing TDV. Observations of student relationships, staff referrals, student self-referrals, parent involvement, and even referrals from coaches were mentioned as avenues through which students were identified for school counseling related to TDV. The manner in which counselors received these referrals influenced their approach to addressing the issue. Deborah received a teacher referral the week of the interview:

I did meet with a student this week. She was referred to me by her teacher. She went to the teacher and the teacher referred her to me. I met with the teacher to get background information.

Alma stated observations were one means for determining if students were involved in an unhealthy relationship.

The first thing is we have to be able to identify students that are in need of intervention. When you are a school counselor, you can't sit in your office behind closed doors. You've got to be visible. You've got to be out there in their area, the cafeteria, hallways,

and things of that nature. If you are an observer, you can see sometimes. You can observe unhealthy relationships.

Janie shared that the referral process helps her to determine her approach to students experiencing TDV:

The way our system is, the students typically request to talk to the counselor, or they write a referral for themselves. Or, if the teacher sees anything they write a referral. Parents also can write referrals or call in and ask for help. So, depending on how the referral comes in for the student is depending on how we kind of approach the situation.

Mary shared her experiences with high school students who self-refer for school counseling as a result of TDV.

I literally came from a school that was the opposite of a Title I school. I find the kids more open here. They come in and share all of their problems.

Creating Rapport Between Counselors and Students. Participants described their experiences in building rapport with students through various methods. They shared their experiences conducting background research to better understand each student, asking questions, using humor to lighten the mood, and being transparent about their intentions. They also mentioned that students were generally open to discussions, and efforts were made to ensure their comfort throughout the counseling process. Despite the weight of student issues, participants consistently found working with students to be both challenging and rewarding.

Patricia encapsulated this sentiment by stating:

It has actually been challenging but rewarding. Challenging in that our population is a high-needs population. However, rewarding when we get to see them accomplish their goals and walk that graduation stage especially.

Alma stated that she wants her students to feel open to talking to her and that, as the oldest school counselor in her district, she goes to measures to ensure that her age doesn't hinder students from feeling comfortable talking to her:

The first thing that I like to put in place is a safe haven. I want you to feel safe when you come in. I want you to feel open to talking to me, one-on-one.

Mary identified the students' openness, noting that it has facilitated easier relationship-building compared to her previous school experience. Consequently, she finds herself often dwelling on their situations after the school day concludes, owing to the gravity of the issues they face:

I take more work home with me with these kiddos, and I think that I can attribute more to Title I, just the struggles that more of the students have. And so I carry it with me just a little bit more than at my previous job.

Deborah shared that because she is new to her school she tries to find out as much about students as possible before meeting with them:

I first do more of the assessment or investigation to figure out what has happened. What is going on? I review the students' grades. I meet with the teachers to get some background information on the students, if I don't already know them. To see what has already transpired, what's going on. [I] try to get an understanding of the child's personal life and social life. Once I get all of that, then I call the student in.

Partnering with Families Amid TDV. During the interview, four participants discussed partnering with families to address TDV. They highlighted their experience collaborating with parents and families to provide support, resources, and guidance regarding TDV. Various strategies were mentioned, including conducting parent workshops, facilitating communication

between home and school, and offering counseling or referrals as needed. Additionally, participants mentioned family counseling sessions and involving parents actively in addressing TDV concerns. Moreover, participants emphasized notifying families in cases of physical TDV and educating students about the nature of TDV, focusing on its aspects of control and coercion. Patricia shared that often students learn about unhealthy relationships due to their home environment:

Sometimes what they learned about relationships is what they've seen. What they've experienced at home, whether it was their parents' relationship or aunties and uncle's relationship, and sometimes they need to understand. I'm not saying all of them come from a bad place, but to understand that sometimes they're not always the healthiest that they have experienced through the adults in their lives. So sometimes they feel like what's happening with them is natural or is healthy because that's all they know.

Alma shared that she partners with families because it is important for students and family members to learn how to communicate when students are having relationship issues:

Sometimes a young lady, whether it's male or female, doesn't know how to go to their parents to say this is what I'm dealing with.

Deborah stated that it can be a challenge forging partnerships with parents due to economic barriers at Title I schools:

Getting the parents to participate is quite different as well. Those parents that are economically challenged either are working multiple jobs to make ends meet or children are coming from single-parent households.

However, Janie states that there are times when parents provide referrals, in the form of notes and phone calls, to the school counselor to help meet student needs.

Equipping Teens for Healthy Relationships

In connection with the ET construct autonomy, participants shared their experiences in equipping students on how to make informed, uncoerced decisions regarding healthy relationships. They discussed the utilization of evidence-based methods and stated how they put forth efforts to construct rapport with students, aiming to foster a trusting and supportive environment for discussions about relationships. Furthermore, participants noted that many of their experiences with students dealing with TDV lack communication skills. Consequently, participants shared TDV prevention efforts focused on instructing students in communication skills, and providing them with tools for effective interaction and conflict resolution. Moreover, they described their experiences empowering students with positive self-esteem, enabling them to assert boundaries and make healthy relationship choices. Cathy stated that she:

Really feels like when we're thinking about foundations, [we should] remember to, reach back and grab those littles and pull them forward so they understand that boundaries are okay, so that when they have future relationships, they're healthy.

Utilizing Evidence-Based Interventions. Some counselors expressed a desire for evidence-based programs, while others discussed their utilization of such programs to prevent TDV. Patricia mentioned her district's recent acquisition of an evidence-based social-emotional learning curriculum that will be required to be implemented at every grade level next school year. Her school is currently trying it out and formulating a plan to have a required class for freshmen in an effort to establish consistency in social-emotional learning curriculum implementation.

[It's] probably more than what we've done in the past. Second Step, they're starting to learn about it in elementary, middle, and then continue in high school. It will be a

continuance just like their English class. My new principal would like for us to look at actually something similar to a freshman seminar for all freshmen coming in. And so we're hoping that's something, if we implement it next school year that's also a place where we'll do more SEL and lessons like this in the actual classroom, because it'd be a required class for our freshman if it works out.

Redefining Healthy Relationships for Students. Two participants shared their experiences helping students redefine healthy relationships. Mary shares challenges in redefining healthy relationships for students involved in TDV. Despite efforts to counsel students on what constitutes a healthy relationship, counselors often found it difficult to effect lasting change, especially if students were not ready to end their current relationships. Mary recounted an instance where she believed she had made progress with a student, only for the student to reconcile with their partner afterward. She stated:

I don't even know. It's sad to say, but I don't know how successful I've ever been addressing it individually with students, just talking them through what a healthy relationship should be because if they're not ready to break up with that person or really make the change and move on...Like one time I thought I had broken through with a student and she had a good cry, and she's like, Yeah, I can see that it's terrible. And then they got back together. These kids are giving people so much power over them. They're giving their partners so much power over them.

Cathy shared her experiences reeducating students who were misinformed about identifying behaviors that constitute a healthy relationship. She stated:

You know it doesn't mean that he likes you if he punches you. It doesn't mean that she likes you if she pushes you down [or] if he calls you stupid or dumb. That does not mean he likes

you. That means that he's being rude, and you have to tell children that now. I think I can safely say that you and I are from the age that people told us if a boy hits you, he really likes you. He just doesn't know how to say it. Okay, we'll teach him how to say it. So that's also part of it, giving them the verbiage to say, yes, I like this or no, I don't. Help them feel comfortable with boundaries. Children need boundaries. Especially if we want them to be productive members of society. So we have to teach them that it is okay to have boundaries.

Instructing Students in Communication Skills. The counselors consistently stated that communication skills were lacking in most student relationships. They actively teach these skills, recognizing communication as a key aspect of TDV prevention. Their efforts are dedicated to teaching students how to communicate effectively, emphasizing the importance of expressing wants and needs. Furthermore, they focus on teaching students to use words rather than resorting to physical confrontation and guide them in navigating difficult conversations with others. Janie shared the following strategy for teaching students how to have difficult conversations:

We do a lot of sentence starters to help them create those conversations, those difficult conversations. And using journaling is another thing we do to just write it all down so that you can speak about it freely.

Patricia discussed providing communication skills to all students to help support both friendships and romantic relationships:

It's definitely something that we feel like we need around dating, but just healthy relationships in general, because we find that students, even friendships are not healthy, and they talk bad to each other. [They] like each other one day, and they don't like each other the next day. And it's in all relationships, just not, you know, relationships with boyfriend/girlfriend or girlfriend/ girlfriend.

Deborah shared her experience with dealing with a relationship and trying to teach the students how to communicate effectively:

I wanted to bring them together. I met with them individually first and included the male social worker to deal with the male students. And then once we talked to each student, I wanted to bring both of them together, so that they could learn how to communicate effectively to express themselves more positively.

Cathy shared that it's important to teach students how to express their feelings. She referenced male students in particular:

It doesn't mean that he likes you if he punches you. It doesn't mean that she likes you if she pushes you down if he calls you stupid or dumb. That does not mean he likes you. That means that he's being rude. We'll teach him how to say it.

Empowering Students with Positive Self-esteem. Two participants shared TDV experiences working with students to increase positive self-esteem. Cathy stated:

I start with trying to teach them how to build positive self-esteem. So, one thing that I've learned with the girls, and this is elementary, middle, and high school. . . I even do it with some of my adult friends. I ask them to look in the mirror each day. . . find one positive thing about themselves. They are looking at themselves in this mirror. Have one thing that you like about yourself. Once you find out one thing, I want you to say it to yourself. Say every day. . . multiple times throughout the day, "I love such and such about me". For instance, look at me, I look in the mirror every day. I said, please don't take this personally, or [think] that I am arrogant, but I just look at myself, and I say, "I love my hair" and then I keep going from that. I said once, "You say that to yourself every day or something about yourself, you begin to believe it, and when you believe it, you feel it,

and when you feel it you start walking in a certain way where you present yourself as if I'm strong. I'm ready for anything that can come my way.

Janie shared her TDV experiences with building positive self-esteem by reflecting on the following conversation with a student who had recently visited her office:

Use your voice and know that you are important. And you are important enough to be able to love yourself enough to say, I don't like this. I need this to stop.

Research Question 2 Themes and Subthemes

Research question two:

What do school counselors take into consideration when working with students experiencing TDV?

Empowering Students Amid Childhood Challenges

While reflecting on their experiences of taking considerations when working with students experiencing TDV, participants discussed building resilience amid ongoing childhood challenges. The constructs of observational learning, self-efficacy, reinforcement, and self-control were evident throughout the participants' experiences with cultural considerations when working with students experiencing TDV, connecting to the theoretical foundation of SCT.

Building Resilience. Participants shared their experiences working with students experiencing TDV while having to consider the students' adverse childhood experiences. Specifically, the construct of observational learning was evident as they shared their experiences working with students experiencing traumatic events such as abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction to build resilience. Patricia stated:

My hope is that whatever we implement is to teach our young people. Sometimes what they learned about relationships is what they've seen. What they've experienced at home,

whether it was their parents' relationship or aunties and uncle's relationship, and sometimes they need to understand. I'm not saying all of them come from a bad place, but to understand that sometimes they're not always the healthiest that they have experienced through the adults in their lives. So sometimes they feel like what's happening to them is natural or healthy because that's all they know.

Nurturing Growth Beyond Academic Struggles. Three participants stated that working with academically low-performing students was a consideration when working with students experiencing TDV. Janie stated:

We take the intervention part very seriously when it comes to academics. We do a lot of data digging and a lot of our students are low performing. We do a lot of interventions proactively meaning, we have people come in the classroom for support. I do a group in my office every week. I do a great check-in with the students.

Both Deborah and Mary shared that in their work they experienced a connection between academic struggles and an increase in students opening up to them about TDV. Deborah stated:

The number of assaults or counseling sessions that I provided to students who weren't as academically challenged wasn't as great as the ones that are at this Title I school. And the way I can surmise that as being they kept theirs private. Their violence and abuse were private at the other schools.

Mary stated that in comparison to her previous school where students were 5th-generation college students:

[I] just don't feel like kids felt comfortable, necessarily coming to counseling to talk about issues as much as they do at this school. They'll come in and blurt out all their problems.

Breaking Economic Barriers. Three of the participants spoke of considering economic status when working with students experiencing TDV. Alma summarized it by saying that much of her experience surrounds working with students from economically disadvantaged communities and that she has gone to public housing to meet with families:

You can take them to various centers in your district that you can meet. Your local churches. You take it into their community. Your community centers, sometimes if you live in an area where they have. . . I call it subsidized housing. They may have a fancier name now, but you take it where they're comfortable.

Deborah stated that her economically disadvantaged families come with many challenges:

Those parents that are economically challenged either are working multiple jobs to make ends meet or their children are coming from single-parent households. So those children are going home after they leave school having to take care of themselves and their siblings with no adult supervision at home. So then they also report to school hungry, or they return home hungry. So it's very challenging.

Cathy stated that much of her work is with a very transient student population:

Then we have a large McKinney-Vento population in my county as well. So, I have people coming from out-of-state with no arrangements for living situations.

Managing Family Dynamics. In this study, family dynamics refers to patterns of interactions, relationships, and behaviors within a family unit. Participants' experiences included working with students living with domestic violence, having no adult supervision, experiencing homelessness, and having poor or non-existent relationships with their parents. Alma stated that:

They sometimes have not built that relationship with their father. Girls, especially with their fathers... And if you have not built a healthy relationship there... Your father is a

man who shouldn't want anything from you... Should not abuse you in any way, but just present you with love, care, and concern.

Janie shared her experiences doing background research to determine the family dynamics of her students:

The student may be in foster care right now. So we do a lot of partnership with foster care and the probation and parole officers because we also have a lot of students with that as well.

In alignment with the SCT construct reinforcement, two participants stated that they relied on family support to help address TDV. Deborah stated that when working with students experiencing TDV she encourages them to get support to help reinforce the skills taught by offering a variety of options:

Do they have a friend or someone that they can trust at home? I ask them to identify that person and try to communicate with them and spend some quality time with that person. It could be a mom. It could be Dad, sister, brother. . . Somebody next door. . . Could be an older person next door. . . Somebody at church.

Alma shares her experiences working with the families to get them to a place where they can reinforce positive behaviors by addressing household dysfunction. This includes offering family counseling, changing families' perceptions of schools, and working to make them feel comfortable.

I do set up times that they can come in and we meet together. Because sometimes the family needs that family counseling as much as their child needs that one-on-one. We've also taken some of our meetings and some of our groups away from the school. . . Away from the school building. Keep in mind that many people refuse to come to school

because they didn't have a healthy experience in school themselves. So, that building to them is like a reminder.

Culturally Responsive Counseling

While reflecting on their experiences working with students experiencing TDV, participants discussed providing culturally responsive care and approaching the issue with cultural sensitivity. In connection to the theoretical framework of SCT, participants shared their experiences taking cultural considerations and connecting how cultural factors shape behaviors and self-efficacy. They shared their experiences embracing cultural norms and employing diverse counseling resources. They shared their experiences seeking understanding and respecting diverse cultural norms within their Title I schools. Participants identified the necessity for counseling resources that reflect their schools' diversity.

Approaching TDV with Sensitivity. All participants shared their experiences addressing TDV by recognizing and respecting cultural norms prevalent within their student population. They spoke of creating an inclusive environment where students feel understood and supported. Moreover, participants spoke of employing diverse counseling resources customized to address the specific needs of students from various cultural backgrounds. They shared their experiences with considering this approach to ensure that counseling interventions are effective and culturally relevant. Deborah stated that:

You have to understand the differences in some students being in families that are middle class and upper class versus the ones that are more economically challenged.

Deborah also shared her considerations and challenges when working with the LGBTQIA population:

It's not just male-female relationships, it's same-sex relationships too. We try to express to them the importance of positive relationships. With same-sex relationships, a lot of abuse occurs. I'm working on being more accepting.

Embracing Cultural Norms. Participants shared the extent to which they considered cultural norms as a part of their experiences working with students experiencing TDV. They also share the methods deployed to help embrace cultural norms. Two participants shared that they learned their lingo. Janie said:

So that everybody feels included a lot of times in what we do, this sounds weird, but I learned their lingo. I learned who they are. We use what they use. I learned their relationship lingo.

Alma shared her experiences with this strategy as well:

I'm the most mature counselor in the district that I work in now. But at the same time, I try to learn their language. The only thing that I will probably never get into doing on a regular basis is texting. I'm just not gonna do that because of my age.

Patricia's experiences consist of working at a school with a large minority population. Regarding cultural norms, she stated:

I do try to keep it in mind because we are predominantly a black and brown school. I keep in mind the way sometimes we view relationships differently.

Mary in comparison shared that cultural considerations have not played a part in her TDV experiences:

That's a tough one. I mean, I always try to consider if there's anything culturally to be aware of with students, but I don't know. I don't know if it has necessarily played a factor, I guess. Yeah, I don't know. That's a tough one to answer. I don't think I have.

Cathy shared that her experiences working with students centered around cultural considerations:

I think you have to consider everyone's culture. I call it a mixed bag because no one is of a pure cultural background. When it comes to culture, we are mainly a black-and-brown school. Meaning, I have African American children, and then I have children who are biracial or from different countries. So I have to be mindful and stay abreast of any cultural models that have been introduced. So if someone is of Asian descent or follows Asian culture, I have to know that looking me in the eye or talking, you know, directly to me as an adult, the children might have difficulty with, because that's not part of their culture. Culture is huge when it comes to deciphering how I'm gonna be able to provide counseling or treatment or provide help for my students.

Employing Diverse Counseling Resources. Two participants shared their experiences with culturally responsive resources. Deborah reported the need for additional resources to support working with her Latinx students:

My Latina girls have not come to me to express anything. But I'm keeping in mind we are also limited with English or Spanish English-speaking students. So that's hard at my school because a lot of them do not speak English. Although they don't speak English, we have to learn a way to communicate about this TDV, because, like I said, with that population, administratively, there have been some write-ups about the males abusing students. But counseling, we haven't dealt with those issues as they have been reported.

Janie shared the need to find diverse counseling resources to align with her student population:

Our school is predominantly African American. And so we have to take into consideration cultural norms for that population. And we also have to take into

consideration the minorities in our school. We dig and do that research, we kind of find material that they can relate to.

Title I schools often face unique challenges due to the economic circumstances of their students and communities. In exploring the experiences of Title I school counselors with TDV prevention experience, several key themes emerged that resonate with the characteristics of Title I schools. These school counselors are dedicated to empowering students holistically, leveraging community partnerships, including faith-based and non-profit organizations, and utilizing Title I funding to address TDV. They create safe havens where students can seek support and guidance, breaking down barriers to accessing resources and building rapport with students and families. Additionally, school counselors prioritize equipping teens with skills for healthy relationships, focusing on evidence-based programs and culturally responsive counseling to address the unique challenges faced by students in Title I schools. Overall, their efforts are deeply rooted in empowering students, fostering resilience amid adversity, and ensuring culturally competent support for all students.

Peer Review

The transcripts were provided to a fellow doctoral student in the counselor education program for peer review (see Appendix H). Before commencing the analysis of the data, the peer reviewer engaged in self-reflection to identify personal biases, assumptions, beliefs, and prior knowledge concerning the phenomenon under investigation. This process involved consciously setting aside any preconceived notions, assumptions, and expectations about the phenomenon, recognizing that personal background and experiences may not fully align with those of the participants. Bracketing statements were created to document and acknowledge these biases and assumptions explicitly. Regular reflection was undertaken throughout the data analysis process to

monitor adherence to bracketing and identify any new biases or assumptions. To delineate units, for each transcript, significant statements (units of meaning) were highlighted, the significant statements were separated, redundant statements were struck through and removed from the list, The significant statements were then grouped together to form clusters. Next the clusters were placed into a table designed to create preliminary themes. Then, the interview was summarized based on the preliminary themes elicited from the transcript. Finally, the peer reviewer created final themes, provided a definition for the themes, and supporting codes.

Their transcript analysis revealed five similar themes to the researcher. Specifically the peer reviewer identified, Heavy Workload (Empowering Together), the Importance of Multicultural Empathy/Competency (Culturally Responsive Counseling), Relationship Building (A Safe Harbor), Differentiation of Interventions (Equipping Teens for Healthy Relationships), and Challenging Workload (Empowering Students Amid Childhood Challenges). They surmised that counselors in these settings grapple with a significantly higher workload and emotional burden due to the complex challenges faced by students, often extending into their personal lives. Addressing TDV proves challenging, with common issues including unhealthy relationship patterns like jealousy and cheating, which are prevalent among students. Despite potential cultural differences, counselors strive to provide equitable support to all students. Collaboration with others, such as student assistance program counselors and school social workers, is essential for implementing effective interventions and educational programs aimed at addressing issues like dating violence and promoting healthy relationships within schools. Academic challenges, including limited skills and adverse home circumstances, further complicate the support landscape, impacting both student performance and parental engagement. Intense emotional responses, such as physical and verbal abuse, are observed among students experiencing TDV,

necessitating interventions focused on communication skills, self-esteem building, and fostering healthy relationships. Establishing trust and rapport with students emerges as a critical aspect of effective counseling, with counselors employing various strategies to connect with students and address their needs comprehensively.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter provides an analysis of the themes that emerged from the study, which include: a. Empowering Together, b. A Safe Harbor, c. Equipping Teens for Healthy Relationships, d. Empowering Students Amid Childhood Challenges, and e. Culturally Responsive Counseling. Based on the data analysis, the study participants experienced complex challenges as school counselors providing TDV prevention at Title I schools.

Discussion of Thematic Findings

Theme 1: Empowering Together

Bringing in Outside Support. Although participants discussed challenges with working at Title I schools, such as hectic schedules and lack of local funds, they also shared areas where additional support was provided to address student needs and assist with TDV prevention. While this study focuses on school counselors' experiences with TDV, it is worthwhile to mention that participants spoke of working collaboratively with their school social worker. They relied on school social workers to both bring in outside resources and to collaborate in counseling. This aligns with previous research that speaks to school counselors and school social workers pooling their knowledge and networks to tap into community resources such as mental health services,

financial assistance programs, and social support networks to assist students facing academic, social, and emotional challenges (Chung, 2021).

Partnering with Faith-based and Non-profit Organizations. Participants' experiences with TDV also elicited sharing regarding partnering with faith-based and non-profit organizations. Participants spoke of such organizations providing proactive TDV interventions. The schools then complemented these efforts by reinforcing the lessons learned. Jordan (2017) discusses the benefits of faith-based partnerships in providing comprehensive support services, enhancing academic achievement, and promoting family engagement within the faith-based community. This is supported by a study by Hahn et al. (2007) which discusses how community partnership can serve to reduce violence among teens.

Utilizing Title I Funding. While reflecting on their experiences with TDV, participants referenced funding that comes with Title I designation and how it can be used to benefit school programs. The fundamental tenets of Title 1 stipulates that elementary and secondary institutions with significant numbers of economically disadvantaged students will obtain additional funding to support the achievement of students' educational goals (Malburg, 2015). One such way participants experienced the utilization of funds was the hiring of additional school counselors. This measure can assist schools in getting closer to the ASCA-recommended school counselor-to-student ratio of 1:250 (ASCA, 2019). Participants also spoke of leveraging Title I funds to prioritize TDV prevention initiatives so that schools can address the unique needs of their student population and contribute to creating safer and healthier school environments.

Theme 2: A Safe Harbor

Dependence upon Referrals. All participants could relay recent experiences empowering students who were navigating TDV. Referrals from various sources, including teachers, parents, coaches, and students themselves played a role in identifying those in need of counseling related to TDV. Participants' observations of student behavior offered another avenue for identifying those involved in unhealthy relationships. This aligns with previous studies that have demonstrated that the establishment of a connection between students and counselors can transform counselors into agents of empowerment (Farmer-Hinton 2008; O'Conner 2000; Stanton-Salazar 2011). Depending on how students were identified, participants tailored their interventions accordingly.

Redefining Healthy Relationships. In sharing their experiences with TDV, participants disclosed their efforts to redefine healthy relationships for students. Prior research shows that preventive SEL approaches can help youth develop skills to prevent violence (Hahn et al., 2007; Waschbusch, 2019). Participants shared the challenges they faced in this process, expressing difficulty in effecting lasting change if students were not ready to end their current relationships. Participants also spoke about re-educating students who held misconceptions about what constitutes a healthy relationship. Participants shared that these misconceptions often stemmed from their home environment.

Partnering with Families Amid TDV. Participants discussed their experiences partnering with families to address TDV. This aligns with previous studies that show the benefit of including families as part of the TDV intervention process (Crean et al., 2013; Merrill, 2017). Moreover, interventions executed in both school and home settings exhibit greater efficacy in fostering enduring behavioral transformations (Eppler & Weir, 2009). Furthermore, according to

the 2016 Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), it is emphasized that school counselors must comprehend their responsibilities in engaging with families (G.2.b) and possess the capability to analyze the links between family engagement and student academic success (G.3.h). Participants for this study utilized collaboration with parents and family members to support the reinforcement of their TDV prevention and intervention efforts. Specific strategies included conducting parent workshops, facilitating communication between the student and the parent, offering community referrals, and involving parents actively in addressing specific TDV concerns. Participants shared the utilization of family counseling sessions and the need to notify families in cases of physical violence. Challenges in forging partnerships with parents were acknowledged, but participants also noted instances where parents provided referrals to school counselors.

Participants shared a couple of challenges to their efforts to address TDV. The challenges highlighted in the text include the difficulty in effecting lasting change in redefining healthy relationships for students involved in TDV, despite counseling efforts. This suggests a limitation in achieving sustainable outcomes in addressing TDV within school settings. Additionally, economic barriers in Title I schools pose challenges in forging partnerships with parents, potentially limiting the extent of family involvement in addressing TDV concerns. These economic constraints may hinder the effectiveness of intervention programs and limit the resources available to support students experiencing TDV. While participants noted instances where parents provided referrals to school counselors, indicating a willingness to engage, the overall economic challenges in Title I schools remain a significant barrier to comprehensive support for students experiencing TDV.

Theme 3: Equipping Teens for Healthy Relationships

Utilizing Evidence-based Programs. Participants discussed utilizing evidence-based programs to empower students and promote healthy relationships. Hahn et al. (2002) discuss the effectiveness of universal school-based programs in preventing aggressive behavior. One participant shared her district's recent acquisition of an evidence-based social-emotional learning curriculum, which will be implemented in K-12 starting next school year. She notes the importance of consistency in implementing such programs, mentioning the integration of Second Step, a program focused on social-emotional skills, from elementary through high school. The Second Step program aims to enhance children's behavior regarding conflict and aggression by altering their perceptions of social issues and offering opportunities to practice this revised mindset, with a specific emphasis on nurturing empathy, refining social problem-solving skills, and strengthening impulse control (Frey et al., 2000; Grossman et al., 1997). The school is considering incorporating a freshman seminar that would include social-emotional learning lessons, aiming to further enhance students' skills in navigating relationships.

Creating Rapport with Students. Participants spoke of investing time in understanding each student's background and needs to help build rapport, through various methods. Extensive research has shown that school connectedness serves as a crucial predictor for favorable student outcomes and also plays a role in reducing students' engagement in risky behaviors (Bryan, 2005; Monahan et al., 2010; Oelsner et al., 2011). Participants shared their experiences conducting background research, asking questions, and using humor to create a comfortable environment for discussions. Participants also shared efforts to create a safe space for students to open up about their issues. Some participants spoke of the intrinsic openness of students, which

facilitated easier relationship-building. Others felt the need to conduct thorough assessments to understand students' personal and social lives before meeting with them.

Building Communication Skills. Participants' experiences included empowering students to automatically foster healthy relationships by focusing on building their communication skills. These results are consistent with prior research (Antle et al., 2011) indicating that effective school-based programs can provide various communication and interpersonal skills, thus nurturing healthy relationships and acting as a preventative measure against TDV. Participants shared experiences actively teaching students how to express themselves assertively and respectfully. They shared how they utilized strategies such as sentence starters and journaling to help students navigate difficult conversations. Participants also shared the importance of communication in all relationships, not just romantic ones, and shared their experiences providing students with skills for healthy interactions. They brought students together in groups to learn effective communication methods, and taught students, especially males, how to express their feelings without resorting to aggression.

Increasing Positive Self-esteem. Participants shared their experiences in working with students to increase self-esteem. This is supported by previous research that low self-esteem has been linked to TDV victimization (Chen et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2018). Participants encouraged students to practice daily affirmations in front of a mirror, emphasizing the importance of self-love and self-acceptance. Participants shared their experiences encouraging students to use their voices and assert boundaries in relationships. They also reminded students of their worth and the importance of self-respect.

Theme 4: Empowering Students Amid Childhood Challenges

Participants discussed their efforts in supporting students dealing with adverse childhood experiences, particularly in the context of TDV. The need to make these considerations is supported by a prior study (Davis, et al., 2019) addressing the buffering effect protective factors can have on the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and TDV. Participants shared experiences building resilience in students who may have faced trauma such as abuse, neglect, or household dysfunction. Participants highlighted the significance of teaching students about healthy relationships, recognizing that their perceptions may be influenced by what they have observed or experienced at home. They emphasized the need to help students understand that their experiences may not always reflect healthy dynamics and that they deserve better, aiming to nurture growth and resilience despite their challenging circumstances.

Nurturing Growth Beyond Academic Struggles. Participants discussed their efforts to empower students living with adverse childhood experiences by focusing on resilience-building beyond academic struggles. Previous studies have shown that TDV can harm academic performance (Basch, 2011; Chronister et al., 2014). Participants revealed proactive interventions for academically low-performing students, including classroom support and weekly group sessions. Other participants noted a significant increase in academically low-performing students opening up about TDV at their Title I schools. They contrasted this with their experiences at other schools where students were less likely to disclose personal issues and focus more on academic counseling.

Breaking Economic Barriers. Participants shared the impact of economic barriers in association with students experiencing TDV and the strategies they employed to address these challenges. Participants shared their experience working with students from economically

disadvantaged communities and emphasized the importance of meeting families where they are comfortable, including public housing and community centers. Another participant shared the challenges faced by economically disadvantaged families, such as parents working multiple jobs or students returning home hungry due to lack of adult supervision. Additionally, another participant discussed working with a transient student population, including those without stable living arrangements, highlighting the complexities of addressing TDV within this context.

Managing Family Dynamics. Participants in this study discussed strategies for empowering students living with adverse childhood experiences by addressing family dynamics. Participants shared various challenges faced by students, including domestic violence, lack of adult supervision, homelessness, and strained relationships with parents. A previous study by Foshee et al. (2016) has identified inadequate maternal responsiveness and ineffective mother-child communication as risk factors for TDV. Understanding the impacts of home and community can aid school counselors in structuring a comprehensive program to ensure the needs of students are addressed (McKillip et al, 2012). Participants highlighted the significance of building healthy relationships with fathers, particularly for girls, to foster a sense of love, care, and safety. Participants described conducting background research to understand students' family dynamics, including partnerships with foster care and probation officers. Additionally, another participant discussed the importance of addressing household dysfunction by offering family counseling and creating a comfortable environment for families to engage in supportive activities outside of the school setting.

Theme 5: Culturally Responsive Counseling

Embracing Cultural Norms. Participants in the interviews discussed the importance of considering cultural norms when providing school counseling for students experiencing TDV.

Two participants emphasized the significance of learning the language and communication styles of the students with whom they worked. They noted that understanding and using the students' lingo helps create a sense of inclusivity and connection. Another participant highlighted the cultural diversity of their school and emphasized the need to be mindful of different cultural backgrounds and norms. This participant stressed the importance of staying informed about various cultural models to better support students from different cultural backgrounds. However, not all participants felt that cultural considerations played a significant role in their work with students experiencing TDV. One participant expressed uncertainty about the impact of cultural factors on their experiences, while another emphasized the importance of considering everyone's culture, especially in a diverse school setting. Overall, the interviews highlighted the varied approaches and perspectives on integrating cultural norms into school counseling practices for students experiencing TDV.

Employing Diverse Counseling Resources. While discussing considerations made while working with students experiencing TDV, participants shared the need for additional resources to support Latinx students, acknowledging the language barriers present in the school community. A notable 19.5% of Hispanic teenagers encounter various types of dating violence before turning 18 (Sabina & Cuevas, 2013), a contrast to the 7.5% rate among all US teenagers (Underwood, 2020), underscoring the imperative of directing attention towards Hispanic youth. Participants also discussed needing to find ways to communicate with this community effectively. Another participant emphasized the significance of aligning counseling resources with the cultural norms of the student population. With a predominantly African American school community, this participant stressed the importance of finding materials to which students

can relate. Because it's essential to recognize the implications of the chosen data collection method on the depth and credibility of the findings, limitations will be discussed next.

Limitations of the Study

The study utilized a single data collection method, involving virtual semi-structured interviews lasting about 60 minutes each with the participants. This approach might pose as a limitation by inhibiting the depth and breadth of the data obtained, as participants may provide different insights through other methods such as observations or document analysis. Second, virtual interviews may pose challenges in capturing non-verbal cues and nuances, potentially impacting the richness and accuracy of the data collected. Additionally, participants may feel less comfortable expressing themselves fully in a virtual setting compared to face-to-face interactions, affecting the depth of the insights shared. Moreover, utilizing a single data collection method may limit the researcher's ability to triangulate findings and verify the credibility and trustworthiness of the data.

Another potential limitation concerns the identities of the primary investigator shared with participants of the study, specifically as school counselors working with TDV. First, there is a risk of bias or preconceived notions influencing data collection and analysis, as the investigator may inadvertently interpret participants' responses based on their own experiences and beliefs. Second, participants may feel pressure to conform to the investigator's expectations or perspectives, leading to social desirability bias and potentially affecting the authenticity of their responses. Additionally, the shared identity between the investigator and participants may create a power dynamic that inhibits participants from expressing dissenting opinions or experiences freely. This could result in a lack of diversity in perspectives and potentially overlook important insights or challenges faced by counselors in different contexts. Overall, the shared identity

between the primary investigator and participants may compromise the objectivity and validity of the study findings. This concern was addressed by setting aside preconceptions, biases, assumptions, and personal experiences related to the phenomenon under investigation via the bracketing. Specifically, before beginning analysis of the data, the researcher engaged in self-reflection to identify biases, assumptions, beliefs, and prior knowledge about the phenomenon being studied. set aside preconceived notions, assumptions, and expectations about the phenomenon, created bracketing statements to explicitly document and acknowledge biases and assumptions, engaged in regular reflection while analyzing data, and identified new biases or assumptions, if applicable. To help ensure that the study provides a valid and reliable understanding of the phenomena under investigation, member-checking was employed. This method allows participants to confirm whether the researcher's interpretations align with their own experiences and perspectives, providing an opportunity to correct any misunderstandings or misrepresentations. Thick descriptions were also employed to mitigate potential shortcomings such as lack of context, shallow understanding, or oversimplification of findings. These detailed narratives allow readers to immerse themselves in the research context, enhancing the credibility, depth, and validity of the study's findings.

Another potential limitation of this study is the inadvertent uniformity of the participant sample, specifically in terms of racial classification. The fact that all participants self-identified as female, with five out of six being African American, contributes to this homogeneity. Consequently, the findings may not fully capture the range of experiences and viewpoints present in more diverse populations. This limitation underscores the need for future research to include a broader array of participants to enhance the richness and depth of the study's findings.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

The interviews offer theoretical implications for both SCT and ET concerning the prevention of TDV and the empowerment of students within Title I schools. Within the framework of ET, the constructs of autonomy and proactive behavior emerge as crucial elements in addressing the prevalence of TDV. Participants discussed their efforts to empower students to select healthy relationships and bring about social change concerning TDV. Additionally, participants highlighted the importance of support systems in meeting the financial needs of schools, showcasing the application of ET in navigating challenges related to resource allocation and budget constraints.

In connection with SCT, participants articulated various strategies employed to assist students in navigating TDV, emphasizing the role of counselors in serving as a safe harbor for students and fostering trusting relationships. Furthermore, participants discussed the importance of equipping students with communication skills and empowering them with positive self-esteem to assert boundaries and make healthy relationship choices, aligning with the constructs of observational learning, self-efficacy, and self-control within SCT. Moreover, the discussions around culturally responsive care and embracing diverse cultural norms within Title I schools highlight the intersection of SCT and cultural considerations, emphasizing the importance of understanding how cultural factors shape behaviors and self-efficacy in addressing TDV effectively. Overall, the interviews provide valuable insights into the practical application of SCT and ET in empowering students and preventing TDV within diverse school environments.

Implications for Practice

This study may inform the practices of school counselors working with students experiencing TDV prevention at Title I schools. As discovered, the collaboration between school counselors and social workers could possibly emerge as a significant strength in addressing the challenges of TDV prevention in Title I schools, despite concerns over limited funding. By pooling their knowledge and networks, these professionals can access crucial community resources such as mental health services and social support networks to better assist students facing academic, social, and emotional challenges. Moreover, the involvement of faith-based communities and nonprofit organizations could provide proactive interventions and support networks for students, further enhancing the comprehensive approach to TDV prevention within schools. Furthermore, school counselors should also consider including families in TDV prevention. Leveraging Title I funding could also significantly benefit TDV prevention efforts by allocating resources toward comprehensive education programs, personnel training, and partnerships with community organizations, ultimately contributing to the creation of safer and healthier school environments conducive to academic success and overall well-being.

However, participants in the study also highlighted several limitations and challenges in providing effective TDV prevention. One prominent issue is the lack of communication skills among students dealing with TDV, hindering their ability to navigate relationships effectively and address conflicts constructively. To address this challenge, school counselors may need to focus on instructing students in communication skills and providing evidence-based interventions and social-emotional learning curricula to equip them with tools for healthy relationship building. Additionally, economic barriers, cultural considerations, and challenges in building rapport with high-needs populations posed significant challenges in the implementation

of TDV prevention efforts. To circumvent these challenges, school counselors may seek a proactive approach to help students build resilience and empower students with the skills and knowledge needed for healthy relationships amid challenging circumstances.

Developing district-level school counselor professional development programs that align with the identified themes and subthemes can significantly enhance the support provided to students, particularly in Title I schools. To foster the proactive engagement of community partners and resources, training sessions could focus on collaborative practices such as collaborative counseling with school social workers and bringing in outside support from faith-based and non-profit organizations. Moreover, workshops can emphasize the effective utilization of Title I funding to maximize support services. Creating a safe harbor for students can be addressed through sessions that teach counselors how to cultivate environments where students feel emotionally and physically secure, including strategies for building rapport, partnering with families, and developing protocols for handling TDV cases. Equipping counselors with skills for promoting healthy relationships among students can be achieved through training modules centered on evidence-based programs, communication skill-building exercises, and interventions aimed at increasing students' positive self-esteem. Additionally, professional development sessions can address empowering students amid childhood challenges by providing counselors with tools to nurture resilience, breaking economic barriers, and managing family dynamics effectively. Finally, promoting culturally responsive counseling can be achieved by offering workshops that help counselors understand diverse cultural norms and utilizing a range of counseling resources tailored to meet the needs of students from various cultural backgrounds. By incorporating these themes and subthemes into district-level professional development

programs, school counselors can be better equipped to address the complex needs of students in Title I schools and foster their holistic development and well-being.

In conclusion, this section sheds light on implications for the school counseling practice. The potential for collaborative efforts between school counselors and social workers can serve as a cornerstone in Teen TDV prevention within Title I schools. Despite financial constraints, the pooling of resources and expertise can provide vital support networks for students facing TDV and related challenges. Additionally, the involvement of faith-based communities and nonprofit organizations offers proactive interventions, enriching the comprehensive approach to TDV prevention. Furthermore, the integration of families into TDV prevention efforts and the effective utilization of Title I funding can further enhance support services and create safer school environments conducive to academic success and overall well-being. While the study identifies challenges such as communication deficits among students and economic barriers, it underscores the importance of proactive approaches and tailored interventions to empower students and foster healthy relationships. Moving forward, the development of district-level professional development programs aligned with the identified themes and subthemes can equip school counselors to better address the multifaceted needs of students, not only in Title I schools but across diverse educational settings, ultimately contributing to their holistic development and well-being.

Recommendations for Future Research

The study sheds light on the experiences of school counselors as they navigate TDV in Title I schools. Given the complexity of this topic, several areas merit deeper exploration through additional research endeavors. Drawing from the study's findings, it is suggested that future researchers replicate the study with larger sample sizes, diverse methods of data collection, and

across varied geographical locations. By making these adjustments, researchers can potentially capture a wider range of experiences and perspectives, thus enriching our understanding of the multifaceted roles of school counselors in addressing TDV across different contexts.

Recommendations for future research also encompass employing qualitative methods or a research approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative methods within a single study to better understand the effectiveness of TDV interventions at Title I schools.

Research should be conducted to explore the efficacy of professional development workshops tailored for counselors to effectively address their workload challenges and alleviate stress. These workshops should aim to employ diverse coping strategies and reflective practices to mitigate work-related stress, establish boundaries, promote their professional responsibilities, and cultivate resilience to reduce role-related stress. Conducting a study to investigate the impact of frequent coordinated meetings of principals and counselors on student success is also needed. The purpose is to understand if such collaboration positively influences student outcomes. Providing education to both principals and counselors about school counseling can create a foundation for greater awareness, collaboration, and synergy between these professionals, ultimately benefiting the students they serve. The objectives of these collaborative meetings should center on assessing the effectiveness of the comprehensive developmental guidance program. Education provides a common understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and capabilities of both principals and counselors, fostering mutual respect and appreciation for each other's contributions. Principals gain insight into the unique skill sets and expertise of counselors, enabling them to set clear expectations for how counselors can support students and contribute to the school's overall mission. Through education, principals and counselors can also align their goals and priorities, ensuring that both are working towards common objectives such as

improving student achievement, enhancing school climate, and promoting positive student outcomes. Research in this area could potentially influence counselor education programs, principal education programs, and practitioners within schools.

Conclusion

This phenomenological study explored the experiences of school counselors providing support with TDV while working at schools identified as Title I. The study illustrated the essence of their experiences and what contributed to their ability to provide TDV prevention within their roles at Title I schools. The study sheds light on the experiences of school counselors grappling with TDV in Title I schools. Despite facing challenges such as busy schedules and limited local funds, school counselors highlighted areas where additional support was provided to meet students' needs and aid in TDV prevention. Collaborative efforts between school counselors and social workers emerged as a significant strength, allowing access to facilities, organizations, and support systems available within the community such as mental health services and social support networks. Moreover, partnerships with faith-based and nonprofit organizations supplemented school efforts, contributing to a comprehensive approach to TDV prevention. Leveraging Title I funding further supported initiatives such as hiring additional counselors and prioritizing TDV prevention programs, fostering safer and healthier school environments.

However, the study also unearthed limitations and challenges in TDV prevention efforts. School counselors noted issues such as students' lack of communication skills, economic barriers, and challenges in building rapport with high-needs populations. To address these challenges, school counselors may need to focus on providing evidence-based interventions, social-emotional learning curricula, and communication skills training. Additionally, cultural considerations and challenges in engaging families pose significant hurdles, necessitating a

proactive approach to empower students amid adverse circumstances. Overall, the study underscores the importance of collaborative efforts and proactive strategies in tackling TDV effectively within Title I school settings.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Semi-Structured Zoom Interview Protocol**Study Title:** Teen Dating Violence Prevention at a Title I School**Participant's Pseudonym:** _____**Researcher/Interviewer:** Cherice Artis**Date:** _____**Scheduled Time:** _____**Start Time:** _____ **End Time:** _____

Researcher: Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. As you know, the purpose of the study is to better understand factors that impact how school counselors provide teen dating violence prevention at Title I schools. Additionally, this study seeks to explore the strengths and limitations of existing teen dating violence intervention programs and to determine elements that may contribute to teen dating violence prevention.

Throughout this interview, I will ask you questions about your school counseling experiences. I may ask you to elaborate or clarify responses to questions. Please feel free to ask me for clarification at any point during the interview process if questions are unclear.

1. How did you come to work at a Title I school?
2. What has it been like working at a Title I school?
3. Please describe what it is like for you addressing TDV at a Title I school.
4. How do you make decisions related to TDV interventions?
5. Are there any cultural considerations that you consider and why?
6. What else do you want me to know?

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form for Participation in Research

Title of Study: The Role of School Counselors at Title I Schools in Teen Dating Violence Prevention: A Phenomenological Study

IRB Protocol: 26244

Principal Investigator(s): Cherice Artis, csartis@ncsu.edu, 252-714-1325

Funding Source: None

NC State Faculty Point of Contact: Dr. Stanley Baker, sbaker@ncsu.edu, 919-515-6360

You are invited to take part in a research study. Here are some important things to know:

- Your participation in this study is voluntary. You can choose not to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate and change your mind, you can stop participating at any time without penalty.
- The purpose of this research study is to better understand the teen dating violence prevention experiences of school counselors at Title I schools to understand their specific needs in comparison to school counselors at non-Title I schools. You will be asked to engage in a semi-structured individual interview via Zoom video conferencing. You will be asked questions about your beliefs and perspectives on working at a Title I school, your teen dating violence prevention experiences, and your cultural considerations while working as a school counselor at a Title I school.
- You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in this study. Research studies may pose risks to those who participate.
- You may want to participate in this research because it is designed to help improve the school counseling profession. Specifically, the information gathered will help school counselors better understand the strengths and limitations of existing intervention programs and determine elements that may contribute to teen dating violence prevention. You may not want to participate in this research because the process of recalling information from past experiences or discussing factors that positively and negatively impact a person's wellness could potentially evoke an emotional response from participants.
- If you have questions about your participation in this research at any time, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above or the NC State IRB office via email at IRB-Director@ncsu.edu or via phone at 1-919-515-8754

Please read the rest of this consent form for more specific details of this research. If you do not understand something, please ask the researcher for clarification or more information.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of the study is to better understand the teen dating violence prevention experiences of school counselors at Title I schools in comparison to school counselors at non-Title I schools. My participants will be school counselors at public schools that are classified as Title I. The study is designed to explore the strengths and limitations of existing intervention programs and to determine elements that may contribute to teen dating violence prevention.

How many people will be in the study?

There will be 6-10 participants in this study.

Am I eligible to be a participant in this study?

To be a participant in this study, you must agree to be in the study and be 21 years old or older, currently work at a Title I public school, and have worked with students who have experienced teen dating violence.

You cannot participate in this study if you do not meet the inclusion criteria or decline to participate in the study.

What will happen if you take part in the study?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do all the following:

1. You will be asked to complete a demographic screening survey and consent form before being officially considered for the study.
2. After inclusion and exclusion criteria have been assigned, you will be contacted to schedule an individual Zoom interview. Pseudonyms will be generated before beginning the interview.
3. Data will be collected through your participation in an individual semi-structured interview, conducted over Zoom video conferencing. It will last between 45 minutes and an hour.
4. After the interview, your responses will be transcribed, and you will receive an email with the full interview transcript for confirmation within two weeks for member-checking purposes. You can also indicate if there is any information or identifiers you want us to delete or not share.
5. Once you have confirmed its accuracy or made necessary changes to your interview transcript, you will be contacted individually so that you can be compensated for your participation in the study with a \$25 gift card.

The total amount of time that you will be participating in this study is 1 hour.

Recording in research

Participants will be audio and video-recorded. If you do not want this information collected, you cannot participate in this research.

We would like to use these recordings for transcription only. We will keep these recordings until transcriptions have been verified.

Benefits of participating in this research

There are no direct benefits to participating in the study.

Each participant will gain an indirect benefit from helping to improve the school counseling profession. The information gathered from the study will help school counselors who support students at Title I schools. Specifically, school counselors will better understand the strengths and limitations of existing intervention programs and determine elements that may contribute to teen dating violence prevention.

Risks to participating in this research

The risks to you, because of participating in this research, include the process of recalling information from past experiences or discussing factors that positively and negatively impact a person's wellness and could potentially evoke an emotional response from participants. These risks are mitigated through his risk will be mitigated by sharing the purpose of the study for participants to decide if they would like to participate. Additionally, within the study design, information for community-based resources and counseling agencies will be shared with participants for follow-up support. Data security measures will also be in place to protect the identity of participants. The Zoom interviews will be recorded via NC State's Zoom Web Conferencing cloud. Data collected will be saved and secured on an encrypted file without identifiable information to protect participants' confidentiality.

Researcher obligations

Due to my role as a counselor, I normally have an obligation to report a situation where a juvenile has been or is the victim of a violent offense, sexual offense, or misdemeanor child abuse. This means that if I observe instances of a situation where a juvenile has been or is the victim of a violent offense, sexual offense, or misdemeanor child abuse, I am obligated to report that.

What data will be collected about me and are there risks associated with that?

The data that is collected about you includes basic demographic information such as your gender, age, race, and years of school counseling experience. This data is not connected to your name or other information that could easily identify you. The risks to you as a result of collecting this information include being identified as a participant in the study. These risks will be mitigated through implementing data protection in accordance with NC State data protection standards.

How will my identity and the data about me be stored and protected?

After all, data is collected, the researchers will go through the data and remove all direct and indirect identifiers so that the dataset can no longer be connected to your identity.

Who can access my data and how will my data be shared and used in the future?

Your data will not be used or shared for future research studies. We will delete your data after transcriptions have been verified.

How will the data about me be reported to the public and are there risks associated with that?

We may quote you or share specific responses from you in our publications and presentations, but we will not include your name or any other information that could easily identify you. As a result, there are minimal risks to you as a result of how we report the data.

Right to withdraw your participation

Your participation is voluntary. Even if you agree initially, consent is an ongoing process. You can stop participating at any time for any reason. To do so, close your internet browser. You can also contact the student researcher, Cherice Artis, at csartis@ncsu.edu and 252-714-1325. Or you can contact the faculty advisor for this research, Dr. Stanley Baker, at sbaker@ncsu.edu and 919-515-6360.

If you withdraw, we will stop any procedures or data collection that may be happening. We will also delete any data that has already been collected from you whenever possible. We will not be able to delete your data if we cannot identify which responses are yours or if the data has already been published.

Compensation

For your participation in this study, you will receive a \$25 Visa gift card. If you withdraw from the study before it ends, you will not receive compensation.

What if you have questions about this study?

If you have questions at any time about the study itself or the procedures implemented in this study, you may contact the student researcher, Cherice Artis, at csartis@ncsu.edu and 252-714-1325. You can also contact the faculty advisor for this research, Dr. Stanley Baker, at sbaker@ncsu.edu and 919-515-6360.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact the NC State IRB (Institutional Review Board) office. An IRB office helps participants if they have any issues regarding research activities. You can contact the NC State University IRB office at IRB-Director@ncsu.edu, 919-515-8754, or [fill out a confidential form online](https://research.ncsu.edu/administration/participant-concern-and-complaint-form/) at <https://research.ncsu.edu/administration/participant-concern-and-complaint-form/>

Consent to participate

By signing this consent form, I am affirming that I have read the above information. All the questions that I had about this research have been answered. If I consent to participate, I understand that I can stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I am aware that I may revoke my consent at any time.

- **Yes, I want to be in this research study.**

Name _____

Today's Date _____

- **No, I do not want to be in this research study.**

Name _____

Today's Date _____

Thank you for your consideration.

Appendix C: Letter of Invitation to Participate

Greetings, Program Coordinators.

My name is Cherice Artis, and I am a doctoral candidate at North Carolina State University. I am reaching out to you as a program coordinator listed on the CACREP website for assistance in recruiting research participants to complete my dissertation. I am studying the teen dating violence prevention experiences of school counselors at Title I schools. I would greatly appreciate it if you were willing and able to share my call for participants (below) with **school counselors** within your professional network in the United States.

Potential participants may use the **highlighted link below** to access my interest survey which takes approximately 10 minutes to complete. I will need approximately ten participants, so if you could forward this to a few individuals that would be an enormous help! I hope to complete my data collection by October 1st. Thank you for your time and consideration, and I hope you have a lovely rest of the week.

Kind regards,

Cherice Artis, MS, EdS

Doctoral Student, Counseling & Counselor Education

Greetings, School Counselors!!

We are conducting a research study that explores how/if working at a Title I school affected the way Professional School Counselors provide teen dating violence prevention. If you are a professional school counselor, you are invited to participate in this study, entitled *The Role of School Counselors at Title I Schools in Teen Dating Violence Prevention: A Phenomenological Study*.

You are eligible to participate if you:

- Are 18 years or older.
- Currently work as a school counselor at a Title I school.
- Have worked with students who have experienced teen dating violence.
- Agree to be audio recorded for research purposes.

Your participation will involve completing an online screening consent form, demographic survey, and taking part in a one-on-one recorded interview via Zoom. All information will be handled confidentially.

Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time. **Participants in the study will receive a \$25 Visa Gift Card upon completion of the interview.** In addition to this benefit, you might be able to help other school counselors like yourself by expressing your views about your professional experiences in the interview. There is minimal risk in participating in this study.

If you are interested in participating in this research study, please complete the online screening/demographics survey and [consent form](#).

You are free to direct questions to all members of the research team:

Cherice Artis (csartis@ncsu.edu) and Dr. Stanley Baker (sbaker@ncsu.edu)

In addition, questions and concerns can be directed to NC State University IRB office at IRB-Director@ncsu.edu, 919-515-8754, or [fill out a confidential form online](#) at <https://research.ncsu.edu/administration/participant-concern-and-complaint-form/>

Thank you for your consideration! Please keep this email for your records.

Appendix D: Member Checking Email

Greetings,

Thank you for participating in my research study. Attached to this email, please find the full transcript of your interview for review. Please reply by email to confirm the accuracy of the transcript or to make necessary changes. Upon receipt of your review, you will be compensated with a \$25 Visa gift card.

Kind regards,

Cherice Artis, MS, EdS

Doctoral Student, Counseling & Counselor Education

Appendix E: Recruitment Flyer

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Greetings, School Counselors!!

We are conducting a research study that explores how/if working at a Title I school affected the way Professional School Counselors provide teen dating violence prevention. If you are a professional school counselor, you are invited to participate in this study, entitled *The Role of School Counselors at Title I Schools in Teen Dating Violence Prevention: A Phenomenological Study*.

You are eligible to participate if you:

- Are 18 years or older.
- Currently work as a school counselor at a Title I school.
- Have worked with students who have experienced teen dating violence.
- Agree to be audio recorded for research purposes. |

Your participation will involve completing an online screening consent form, demographic survey, and taking part in a one-on-one recorded interview via Zoom. All information will be handled confidentially.

Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time. Participants in the study will receive a \$25 Visa Gift Card upon completion of the interview. In addition to this benefit, you might be able to help other school counselors like yourself by expressing your views about your professional experiences in the interview. There is minimal risk in participating in this study.

If you are interested in participating in this research study, please complete the online screening/demographics survey and consent form.

You are free to direct questions to all members of the research team:
Cherice Artis (csartis@ncsu.edu) and Dr. Stanley Baker (sbaker@ncsu.edu)

In addition, questions and concerns can be directed to NC State University IRB office at IRB-Director@ncsu.edu, 919-515-8754, or fill out a confidential form online at <https://research.ncsu.edu/administration/participant-concern-and-complaint-form/>

Thank you for your consideration! Please keep this email for your records.

North Carolina State University IRB# 26244 Approved

Appendix F

Analysis and Preliminary Themes Sample

Janie

Section I: Delineating Units of Meaning

Highlight significant statements in the transcript below.

Transcript

Question 1: How did you come to work at a Title I school?

Janie: I've always worked as a teacher in Title I school, and that was kind of my why, to be with students in need. So I taught for 12 years. And then, of course, I said, Well, if I'm gonna teach in a Title I school, I would also want to be a counselor in a Title I school, because that population seems to need me and I need them.

Question 2: What has it been like working at a Title I school?

Janie: It is very busy. Because it is Title I, the students have high needs. So my day is packed with all kinds of things. From mediations to fights, mediations-to-referrals, and DSS reports, and then communication skills. The students a lot of times don't know how to communicate, so I just have to teach them how to get their point across without using their hands. So my day is very busy. We have three counselors because of the population itself, who work at the particular school that I work. So yeah. And all 3 of us are busy all day.

So not only that we have a Title I school, but we are a high-need Title I school. So because we are high needs on the Title I spectrum, and our population is so needy, we have 3 counselors in one building for middle school, and that is unheard of.

So most of our kids, of course, Title I is income-based. But we have I wanna say, and I don't quote me on this. But probably 80% of our students are below performing and then we have a high rate of fighting. And at the school. So we are like a high-need school in the county.

And it's hard to get people to work there, too. That's another weakness, cause a lot of times beginning teachers work there, and they don't stay. So it's a high-needs school to employ as well because of the population.

Question 3: What is it like for you to address teen dating violence at a Title I school?

Janie: The way our system is, the students typically request to talk to the counselor, or they write a referral for themselves. Or if the teacher sees anything they write a referral. Parents also can write referrals or call in and ask for help. So, depending on how the referral comes in for the student is depending on how we kind of approach the situation.

If the student comes and feels comfortable and gives us insight on the relationship or violence, then we kind of take it as a build that bond with them and just take it one step at a time, and then we kind of teach them what is a good, healthy relationship. How do you communicate other than fighting? And just do those building those coping skills with the students to either get them out of the situation or to help them mend through the situation. If it's more so an unhealthy relationship, if it's physical, then we do get parents involved. And we do a referral to the parents and DSS and all those kinds of things if we think that the student is in direct harm's way. But it all depends on how the referral comes in, how we handle it all.

Question 4: How do you make decisions related to teen dating violence interventions?

Janie: So we have 2 programs that come in. We have some outside resources that come in and do a boy's group and a girls' group. And then those through those 2 groups, they kind of hit on those things. Max Factor is the boy's group and Daughters of Worth is a girl's group. And so, they hit on those topics for us, and we kind of piggyback on them, but they handle relationships, leadership, self-esteem, sexual abuse, and substance abuse. They handle a lot of those topics. So they're the more of the proactive side of things, and they give those little lessons and stuff like that. And then we kind of are more on the side of reactive. I hate to say that, but that's kind of how it works.

They design their program. Max Factor is like a local place that has come up with it. It's a church that has created Max Factor. So their curriculum comes through them. And then Daughters of Worth is also a local organization that puts out positive influences for girls. They have interns and stuff, and they come in, and all their curriculum comes from them. And they build it themselves.

Question 5: Are there any cultural considerations that you have when it comes to teen dating violence interventions?

Janie: Yes, our school is predominantly African American. And so we have to take into consideration cultural norms for that population. And we also have to take into consideration the minorities in our school.

So that everybody feels included a lot of times what we do, and this sounds weird, but I learned their lingo. I learned who they are, you know, and so we use what they use. That's been a lot. This is my first year there. I learned their relationship lingo. As the 3 counselors, we kind of do some background research on like what the norms are and how relationships are formed. And a lot of our parents and students don't have father figures, or they're living with somebody else outside of their home. So, we dig and do that research, we kind of find material that they can relate to. We also have to watch how we communicate with them because you can't say, what does your mom say? And that sounds so simple, but a lot of them don't live with their mom. They may live with an aunt or grandmother. So that research and we kind of inform each other. Okay, the student may be in foster care right now. So we do a lot of partnership with foster care and the probation and parole officers because we also have a lot of students with that as well. So just digging, you know, and learning the student who they are and learning their population, and where they come from. I'm big on how we get to the relationship process. Because you don't want to say, "Well, you should be married before you have a kid, or you should do this" because it doesn't relate to them as much. But just getting to know them is the biggest thing on how we get started building those relationships.

Question 6: Is there anything else that you would like for me to know about your work as relates to teen dating violence prevention?

Janie: We take the intervention part very seriously when it comes to academics. We do a lot of data like I said before digging with data, and a lot of our students because they are low performing, we do a lot of interventions proactively meaning, we have people come in the classroom for support. I do a group in my office every week. I do a great check-in with the students.

We have mediation groups that we meet with regularly because of that and we also do a lot of mentoring with the girls and small mediation groups for just communication, because that is our biggest thing. Our students don't know how to communicate. So in order for them to be in

relationships, we have to teach them how to communicate their needs and their wants. And to show them how to ask for help. For instance, I had a student come in recently and was in an unhealthy relationship. She just didn't know how to say no. She didn't know how to say stop. She wanted the situation, I won't say abuse because it wasn't considered abuse, but she wanted the behavior to stop, but she just didn't have the words or the means to do so. So just teaching her coping skills and teaching her strategies to be able to use your words and use your voice and know that you are important. And you are important enough to be able to love yourself enough to say, I don't like this. I need this to stop. So just, you know, talking to them, communicating with them, showing them some skills. We do a lot of sentence starters to help them to create those conversations, those difficult conversations. And using journaling is another thing we do to just write it all down so that you can speak about it freely.

Section II: Clustering of Units of Meaning

- 1) Paste the highlighted significant statements (units of meaning) below.
- 2) Strike through and remove any redundant statements.
- 3) Group units of meaning together to form clusters. (Place them in no particular order.)

Significant Statements:

- Always worked as a teacher in Title I school
- That was kind of my why, to be with students in need
- I taught for 12 years
- I would also want to be a counselor in a Title I school
- That population seems to need me
- ~~I need them~~
- ~~It is very busy~~
- The students have high needs
- My day is packed with all kinds of things
- Mediations-to-fights, Mediations-to-referrals, DSS reports, then communication skills
- ~~Students a lot of times don't know how to communicate~~
- ~~I just have to teach them how to get their point across without using their hands~~
- ~~My day is very busy~~
- We have three counselors because of the population itself
- All 3 of us are busy all-day
- ~~We are a high-need Title I school~~
- ~~Our population is so needy~~
- We have 3 counselors in one building for middle school, and that is unheard of
- Title I is income-based
- Probably 80% of our students are below performing
- We have a high rate of fighting
- We are like a high-need school in the county
- It's hard to get people to work there
- That's another weakness, cause a lot of times beginning teachers to work there
- They don't stay
- ~~It's a high-needs school to employ~~
- The students typically request to talk to the counselor
- ~~They write a referral for themselves~~
- If the teacher sees anything they write a referral

- Parents also can write referrals or call in and ask for help
- Depending on how the referral comes in for the student is depending on how we kind of approach the situation
- If the student comes and feels comfortable and gives us insight on the relationship or violence, then we kind of take it as a build that bond with them
- We just take it one step at a time
- We kind of teach them what is a good, healthy relationship
- How do you communicate other than fighting
- Building those coping skills with the students
- Get them out of the situation
- ~~Help them mend through the situation~~
- If it's physical, then we do get parents involved
- ~~We do a referral to the parents~~
- DSS and all those kinds of things, if we think that the student is in direct harm's way
- It all depends on how the referral comes in, how we handle it all
- ~~We have 2 programs that come in~~
- ~~We have some outside resources that come in and do a boys group and a girls' group~~
- ~~They kind of hit on those things~~
- Max Factor is the boy's group
- ~~Daughters of Worth is a girl's group~~
- ~~They hit on those topics for us~~
- We kind of piggyback on them
- They handle relationships, leadership, self-esteem, sexual abuse, and substance abuse
- ~~They handle a lot of those topics~~
- They're more of the proactive side of things
- ~~They give those little lessons and stuff like that~~
- We kind of are more on the side of reactive
- I hate to say that, but that's kind of how it works
- They design their program
- ~~Max Factor is like a local place that has come up with it~~
- It's a church that has created Max Factor
- ~~Their curriculum comes through them~~
- Daughters of Worth is also a local organization that puts out positive influences for girls
- They have interns and stuff
- ~~All their curriculum comes from them~~
- ~~They build it themselves~~
- Yes, our school is predominantly African American
- We have to take into consideration cultural norms for that population
- We also have to take into consideration the minorities in our school
- So that everybody feels included
- I learned their lingo
- ~~I learned who they are~~
- ~~We use what they use~~
- That's been a lot
- This is my first year there
- I learned their relationship lingo

- We kind of do some background research
- ~~What the norms are~~
- ~~How relationships are formed~~
- Lot of our parents and students don't have father figures
- They're living with somebody else outside of their home
- ~~We dig and do that research~~
- We kind of find material that they can relate to
- We also have to watch how we communicate with them
- You can't say, "What does your mom say?"
- And that sounds so simple
- A lot of them don't live with their mom
- They may live with an aunt or grandmother
- We kind of inform each other
- The student may be in foster care right now
- We do a lot of partnership with foster care
- Probation and parole officers, because we also have a lot of students with that as well
- ~~Learning the student who they are~~
- Learning their population, and where they come from.
- I'm big on how we get to the relationship process.
- You don't want to say, "Well, you should be married before you have a kid, or you should do this"
- Because it doesn't relate to them as much
- Getting to know them is the biggest thing on how we get started building those relationships
- We take the intervention part very seriously when it comes to academics
- We do a lot of data like I said before digging with data
- ~~They are low performing~~
- We do a lot of interventions proactively meaning
- We have people come in the classroom for support
- I do a group in my office every week
- I do a great check-in with the students
- We have mediation groups that we meet with regularly
- We also do a lot of mentoring with the girls
- Small mediation groups for just communication
- ~~That is our biggest thing~~
- Our students don't know how to communicate
- In order for them to be in relationships, we have to teach them how to communicate their needs and their wants
- Show them how to ask for help
- I had a student come in recently and was in an unhealthy relationship.
- ~~She just didn't know how to say no~~
- She didn't know how to say stop
- ~~She wanted the situation, I won't say abuse because it wasn't considered abuse~~
- She wanted the behavior to stop
- ~~She just didn't have the words or the means to do so~~
- Teaching her coping skills

- ~~Teaching her strategies to be able to use your words~~
- ~~Use your voice~~
- Know that you are important
- ~~You are important enough~~
- Be able to love yourself enough to say, I don't like this
- ~~I need this to stop~~
- ~~Talking to them, communicating with them~~
- ~~Showing them some skills~~
- ~~We do a lot of sentence starters~~
- Help them to create those conversations, those difficult conversations
- Using journaling is another thing we do
- ~~Just write it all down so that you can speak about it freely~~

Clusters of Meaning:

- Partnering with the Community
- About the School
- About the School Counselor
- The Student Population
- Academic Interventions
- Role of the School Counselor
- Intervening in TDV Relationships
- Positive Self-esteem
- Counselor Referrals
- Cultural Considerations
- Building the Counselor Student Relationship
- Teaching TDV Prevention Skills

Section III: Form Preliminary Themes

Based on the clusters of meaning above, complete the table below:

<p>Theme: Partnering with the Community</p> <p>Codes: We have people come in the classroom for support</p> <p>They design their program</p> <p>They handle relationships, leadership, self-esteem, sexual abuse, and substance abuse</p> <p>A local organization that puts out positive influences for girls</p>	<p>Theme: About the School</p> <p>Codes: Title I is low-income</p> <p>It's hard to get people to work here</p> <p>They don't stay</p> <p>A lot of times beginning teachers work here</p> <p>We have three counselors because of the population</p> <p>Three counselors in one middle school building is</p>	<p>Theme: About the School Counselor</p> <p>Codes: That was kind of my why, to be with students in need</p> <p>I also want to work to be a counselor in a Title I school</p> <p>This is my first year</p> <p>I taught for 12 years</p> <p>I always worked as a teacher at a Title I school</p>
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<p>We kind of piggyback on them</p> <p>They are more on the proactive side of things</p> <p>They have interns and stuff</p> <p>It's a church that created Max Factor.</p> <p>Max Factor is the boy's group.</p>	<p>unheard of</p> <p>We are a high-needs school in the county</p> <p>We have a high rate of fighting</p> <p>Our school is predominantly African-American</p>	
<p>Theme: About the Students</p> <p>Codes: A lot of them don't live with their mom</p> <p>The students are high-needs</p> <p>They are living with an aunt or grandma</p> <p>Probation and parole offices, because we also have a lot of students with that as well.</p> <p>The students may be in foster care right now</p> <p>Lots of our parents and students don't have father figures</p> <p>Our students don't know how to communicate</p> <p>They are living with somebody else outside their home</p> <p>Probably 80% of our students are low-performing</p>	<p>Theme: Academic Interventions</p> <p>Codes: We do a lot of digging with the data</p> <p>We take the intervention part very seriously when it comes to academics</p>	<p>Theme: Role of the School Counselor</p> <p>Codes: We do a lot of partnership with foster care</p> <p>Mediations-to-fights, mediations-to-referrals, DSS reports, then communications skills</p> <p>I hate to say it but that's how it works</p> <p>We have mediation groups that we meet with regularly</p> <p>We kind of are more on the side of reactive</p> <p>I do a group in my office every week</p> <p>My day is packed with all kinds of things</p> <p>It's been a lot</p> <p>All three of us are busy all day</p>

<p>Traditional families doesn't relate to them as much</p>		<p>We inform each other</p> <p>I do a great check-in with the students</p> <p>We do a lot of mentoring with the girls</p> <p>We do a lot of interventions proactively meaning</p> <p>We do small groups just for mediation</p>
<p>Theme: Intervening in TDV Relationships</p> <p>Codes: I had a student come in recently</p> <p>She wanted the behavior to stop</p> <p>She didn't know how to say stop</p> <p>If it's physical, then we do get parents involved DSS and all those kinds of things, if we think that the student is in direct harm's way</p> <p>Get them out of the situation</p> <p>Teaching her coping skills</p>	<p>Theme: Positive Self-esteem</p> <p>Codes: Be able to love yourself enough to say, I don't like this</p> <p>Know that you are important</p>	<p>Theme: School Counselor Referrals</p> <p>Codes: If the teacher sees something, they write a referral</p> <p>The students typically request to talk to the counselor</p> <p>Parents can write referrals or call in and ask for help</p> <p>It depends on how the referral comes in, how we handle it all</p>

<p>Theme: Cultural Considerations</p> <p>Codes: So that everyone feels included</p> <p>I learned their lingo</p> <p>We kind of find material that they can relate to</p> <p>We take into consideration the minorities in our school</p> <p>You don't want to say, "Well you should be married before you have a kid or you should do this."</p> <p>That sounds so simple</p> <p>You can't say, "What does your mom say?"</p> <p>We have to watch how we communicate with them.</p> <p>I learned about their population and where they come from</p>	<p>Theme: Building the Counselor/Student Relationship</p> <p>Codes: Depending on how the referral comes in for the student is how we kind of approach the situation</p> <p>We just take it one step at a time</p> <p>I learn their relationship lingo</p> <p>I am big on how we get to the relationship process</p> <p>We kind of do some background research</p> <p>Getting to know them is the biggest thing on how we get started building those relationships</p> <p>If a student comes and feels comfortable and gives us insight on the relationship or violence, then we kind of take it as a build that bond with them.</p>	<p>Theme: Teaching TDV Prevention Skills</p> <p>Codes: Help them to create those conversations, those difficult conversations</p> <p>How do you communicate other than fighting</p> <p>How do you ask for help</p> <p>Building those coping skills with students</p> <p>We kind of teach them what a good healthy relationship</p> <p>We teach them how to communicate their needs and wants</p> <p>Using journaling is another thing we do</p>
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Section IV: Summarize Interview

Interview #1 revealed twelve significant themes pertaining to the role of school counselors in a Title I middle school. Firstly, "Partnering with the Community" highlights collaborative efforts between the school and external organizations, facilitating proactive programming. Secondly, the challenges of the Title I school, with a predominantly African-American population, were emphasized, including difficulties in teacher retention. Thirdly, the "Busy Role of the School

Counselor" delineates the counselor's reactive responsibilities, from meditations to student check-ins. The counselor's background and the profile of students, often low-performing and from non-traditional households, constitute the fourth and fifth themes respectively. Academic interventions, data mining, and addressing teen dating violence form subsequent themes. Furthermore, promoting positive self-esteem, managing referrals, and considering cultural nuances in student interactions were identified. The importance of building rapport and teaching TDV prevention skills rounds out the themes, underscoring the diverse responsibilities encompassed by the school counselor's position within the school.

Appendix G: Display of Codebook Excerpt

A Priori Code (ET)	Description	Example
Proactive Behavior to Bring Social Change	Participants describe the impact of work	“It has actually been challenging but rewarding. Challenging in that our population is a high-needs population. However, it is rewarding when we get to see them accomplish their goals and walk that graduation stage especially.”
Autonomy	Participants share procedures used to teach students how to make informed, uncoerced decisions.	“I try to instill in my students how to have healthy relationships. So conflict resolution, peer mediation, self-regulation. We focus on those things and those key elements to help our students regulate their relationships.”
A Priori Code (SCT)	Description	Example
Observational Learning	Participant discusses how many of their students have learned behaviors from watching the behaviors of others	<p>“My kids have a lot of ACES, adverse childhood experiences. Their ACES and their environments influence their behaviors.”</p> <p>“Sometimes what they learned about relationships is what they've seen at home, whether it was their parents' relationship or aunties and uncle's relationship, and sometimes they need to understand that sometimes they're not always the healthiest that they have experienced through the adults in their lives.”</p>

Self-efficacy	Participant describes their capacity to execute the counseling necessary to produce positive outcomes among their students in relation to TDV	<p>“I don't know how successful I've ever been addressing it individually with students, just talking them through what a healthy relationship should be because if they're not ready to break up with that person or really make the change and move on...”</p> <p>“It's not just male-female relationships, it's same-sex relationships too and I have to be honest, I'm working on being more accepting of that.”</p>
Reinforcement	Participant discusses processes used to help establish and encourage positive behaviors to combat TDV.	<p>“I think it needs to be more consistent and bring it to the forefront more often for our students to know. And again, hopefully, something like Second Step where they're starting to learn about it in elementary, middle, and then continue in high school that it will be a continuance like... just like their English class. They learn that each year so that they understand the importance of being in positive relationships.”</p>
Self-control	Participant discusses witnessing the lack of the ability to control emotions in students involved in TDV	<p>“They acted out in front of everyone there, and there is no secrecy. They don't care who's around.”</p> <p>“I know that it leads to sometimes physical violence, too, between like kids like girls at school, especially.”</p> <p>“He became angry, and he just started shouting and throwing things at her from a distance. “</p>

Appendix H

Peer Review

Peer Reviewer Bracketing

Directions:

- 1) Before beginning your analysis of the data, engage in self-reflection to identify your own biases, assumptions, beliefs, and prior knowledge about the phenomenon being studied.
- 2) Consciously sets aside preconceived notions, assumptions, and expectations about the phenomenon. This involves recognizing that your own background and experiences may not fully align with the experiences of the participants.
- 3) In the space below create bracketing statements to document and acknowledge your biases and assumptions explicitly.
- 4) Engage in regular reflection as you complete this data analysis to monitor your adherence to bracketing.
- 5) Identify any new biases or assumptions you uncover here as well.

Biases and Assumptions before beginning data analysis:

Assumptions

- Most teens and young adults have experienced teen dating violence overtly (physical, emotional, harassment, or stalking) or covertly by watching it on social media/tv
- High school counselors have some training to help students who have experienced teen dating violence and are aware of the community resources to refer students

Biases

- BIPOC students experience teen dating violence at higher rates in comparison to White students.

New biases and assumptions that emerge during data analysis:

N/A - No new assumptions or biases emerged after reviewing the data

Janie Peer Review

Section I: Delineating Units of Meaning

Highlight significant statements in the transcript below.

Transcript

Question 1: How did you come to work at a Title I school?

Janie: I've always worked as a teacher in Title I school, and that was kind of my why, to be with students in need. So I taught for 12 years. And then, of course, I said, Well, if I'm gonna teach in a Title I school, I would also want to be a counselor in a Title I school, because that population seems to need me and I need them.

Question 2: What has it been like working at a Title I school?

Janie: It is very busy. Because it is Title I, the students have high needs. So my day is packed with all kinds of things. From mediations to fights, mediations to referrals and DSS reports, and then communication skills. The students a lot of times don't know how to communicate, so I just have to teach them how to get their point across without using their hands. So my day is very busy. We have 3 counselors because of the population itself, who work at the particular school that I work. So yeah. And all 3 of us are busy all day.

So not only that we have a Title I school, but we are a high-need Title I school. So because we are high needs on the Title I spectrum, and our population is so needy, we have 3 counselors in one building for middle school, and that is unheard of.

So most of our kids, of course, Title I is income-based. But we have I wanna say, and I don't quote me on this. But probably 80% of our students are below performing and then we have a high rate of fighting. And at the school. So we are like a high-need school in the county. And it's hard to get people to work there, too. That's another weakness, cause a lot of times beginning teachers work there, and they don't stay. So it's a high-needs school to employ as well because of the population.

Question 3: What is it like for you to address teen dating violence at a Title I school?

Janie: The way our system is, the students typically request to talk to the counselor, or they write a referral for themselves. Or if the teacher sees anything they write a referral. Parents also can write referrals or call in and ask for help. So, depending on how the referral comes in for the student is depending on how we kind of approach the situation.

If the student comes and feels comfortable and gives us insight on the relationship or violence, then we kind of take it as a build that bond with them and just take it one step at a time, and then we kind of teach them what is a good, healthy relationship. How do you communicate other than fighting? And just do those building those coping skills with the students in order to either get them out of the situation or to help them mend through the situation. If it's more so an unhealthy relationship, if it's physical, then we do get parents involved. And we do a referral to the parents and DSS and all those kinds of things. If we think that the student is in direct harm's way. But it all depends on how the referral comes in is how we handle it all.

Question 4: How do you make decisions related to teen dating violence interventions?

Janie: So we have 2 programs that come in. We have some outside resources that come in and do a boy's group and a girls' group. And then those through those 2 groups, they kind of hit on those things. Max Factor is the boy's group and Daughters of Worth is a girl's group. And so, they hit on those topics for us, and we kind of piggyback on them, but they handle relationships, leadership, self-esteem, sexual abuse, and substance abuse. They handle a lot of those topics. So they're the more of the proactive side of things, and they give those little lessons and stuff like that. And then we kind of are more on the side of reactive. I hate to say that, but that's kind of how it works.

They design their program. Max Factor is like a local place that has come up with it. It's a church that has created Max Factor. So their curriculum comes through them. And then Daughters of Worth is also a local organization that puts out positive influences for girls. They have interns

and stuff, and they come in, and all their curriculum comes from them. And they build it themselves.

Question 5: Are there any cultural considerations that you have when it comes to teen dating violence interventions?

Janie: Yes, our school is predominantly African American. And so we have to take into consideration cultural norms for that population. And we also have to take into consideration the minorities in our school.

So that everybody feels included a lot of times what we do, and this sounds weird, but I learned their lingo. I learned who they are, you know, and so we use what they use. That's been a lot. This is my first year there. I learned their relationship lingo. As the 3 counselors, we kind of do some background research on like what the norms are and how relationships are formed. And a lot of our parents and students don't have father figures, or they're living with somebody else outside of their home. So, we dig and do that research, we kind of find material that they can relate to. We also have to watch how we communicate with them because you can't say, what does your mom say? And that sounds so simple, but a lot of them don't live with their mom. They may live with an aunt or grandmother. So that research and we kind of inform each other. Okay, the students may be in foster care right now. So we do a lot of partnership with foster care and the probation and parole officers because we also have a lot of students with that as well. So just digging, you know, and learning the student who they are and learning their population, and where they come from. I'm big on how we get to the relationship process. Because you don't want to say, "Well, you should be married before you have a kid, or you should do this" because it doesn't relate to them as much. But just getting to know them is the biggest thing on how we get started building those relationships.

Question 6: Is there anything else that you would like for me to know about your work as relates to teen dating violence prevention?

Janie: We take the intervention part very seriously when it comes to academics. We do a lot of data like I said before digging with data, and a lot of our students because they are low performing, we do a lot of interventions proactively meaning, we have people come in the classroom for support. I do a group in my office every week. I do a great check-in with the students.

We have mediation groups that we meet with regularly because of that and we also do a lot of mentoring with the girls and small mediation groups for just communication, because that is our biggest thing. Our students don't know how to communicate. So in order for them to be in relationships, we have to teach them how to communicate their needs and their wants. And to show them how to ask for help. For instance, I had a student come in recently and was in an unhealthy relationship. She just didn't know how to say no. She didn't know how to say stop. She wanted the situation, I won't say abuse because it wasn't considered abuse, but she wanted the behavior to stop, but she just didn't have the words or the means to do so. So just teaching her coping skills and teaching her strategies to be able to use your words and use your voice and know that you are important. And you are important enough to be able to love yourself enough to say, I don't like this. I need this to stop. So just, you know, talking to them, communicating with them, showing them some skills. We do a lot of sentence starters to help them to create those conversations, those difficult conversations. And using journaling is another thing we do to just write it all down so that you can speak about it freely.

Section II: Clustering of Units of Meaning

1) Paste the highlighted significant statements (units of meaning) below.

students in need

It is very busy

The students have high needs. So my day is packed

So my day is very busy.

because of the population itself, who work at the particular school where I work. So yeah. And all 3 of us are busy all day.

Our population is so needy, we have 3 counselors in one building for middle school, and that is unheard of.

80% of our students are below performing and then we have a high rate of fighting.

And it's hard to get people to work there.

Depending on how the referral comes in for the student is depending on how we kind of approach the situation.

then we kind of take it as a build that bond with them

then we kind of teach them what is a good, healthy relationship.

But it all depends

We have some outside resources

So they're the more of the proactive side of things

And then we kind of are more on the side of reactive.

Yes, our school is predominantly African American. And so we have to take into consideration cultural norms for that population.

But I learned their lingo. I learned who they are, you know, and so we use what they use.

we kind of do some background research on like what the norms are and how relationships are formed.

So, we dig and do that research, we kind of find material that they can relate to. we communicate with them

So just digging, you know, and learning the student who they are and learning their population, and where they come from

But just getting to know them is the biggest thing on how we get started building those relationships.

our students because they are low performing

we have people come in the classroom for support.

Our students don't know how to communicate.

So in order for them to be in relationships, we have to teach them how to communicate their needs and their wants

She just didn't know how to say no. She didn't know how to say stop

teaching her coping skills and teaching her strategies to be able to use your words and use your voice and know that you are important.

2) Strikethrough and remove any redundant statements.

~~that population seems to need me and I need them~~

3) Group units of meaning together to form clusters. (Place them in no particular order.)

Clusters:

- Counselors who serve in Title I Schools are busy.
 - It is very busy
 - The students have high needs. So my day is packed
 - So my day is very busy.
 - because of the population itself, who work at the particular school that I work. So yeah. And all 3 of us are busy all day.
 - Our population is so needy, we have 3 counselors in one building for middle school, and that is unheard of.
- Multicultural Empathy/Competency is important for school counselors to address teen dating violence
 - Yes, our school is predominantly African American. And so we have to take into consideration cultural norms for that population.
 - But I learned their lingo. I learned who they are, you know, and so we use what they use.
 - we kind of do some background research on like what the norms are and how relationships are formed.
 - So, we dig and do that research, we kind of find material that they can relate to. we communicate with them
 - So just digging, you know, and learning the student who they are and learning their population, and where they come from
- Differentiation in interventions is needed to support students who encounter teen dating violence (with a focus on communication skills)
 - Depending on how the referral comes in for the student is depending on how we kind of approach the situation.
 - But it all depends
 - We have some outside resources...So they're the more of the proactive side of things
 - And then we kind of are more on the side of reactive.
 - So in order for them to be in relationships, we have to teach them how to communicate their needs and their wants
- Importance of Rapport/Relationship Building
 - But just getting to know them is the biggest thing on how we get started building those relationships.

Section III: Form Preliminary Themes

Based on the clusters of meaning above, complete the table below:

<p>Theme: High Workload</p> <p>Codes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Needy Population ● Being busy all-day ● More counselors were hired to address student needs 	<p>Theme: Importance of Multicultural Empathy/Competency</p> <p>Codes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Knowing students' cultural background ● Understanding their language ● Finding ways to relate to students who have a different background from you 	<p>Theme: Relationship Building</p> <p>Codes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learning about students, their background, and their interest
<p>Theme: Differentiation of Interventions</p> <p>Codes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understanding the unique needs of students to determine an intervention ● Awareness of the different community resources to help students ● Teaching communication skills 	<p>Theme:</p> <p>Codes:</p>	<p>Theme:</p> <p>Codes:</p>

Section IV: Summarize Interview

Summarize all the themes elicited from the significant statements.

The lived experiences of a school counselor in a Title I school who addresses teen dating violence include the following:

- Having a demanding workload
- Spend time building relationships with students
- Are culturally competent
- “Meet students “where they are” by having different interventions for their unique needs

Peer Reviewer Final Themes

Directions: Place your themes and statements of meaning in the chart below. Include subtheme(s), if applicable.

<p>Theme: Heavy Workload</p> <p><u>Definition:</u> A heavy workload is when the amount of responsibilities one has pushes the boundaries of what can realistically be done in a given role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School counselors who work in Title I Schools are typically busy all day serving their students ● The students at Title I schools are typically underprivileged and need more attention, reassurance, and academic needs. This results in added responsibilities for school counselors to serve the needs of students. ● Some school counselors respond to the heavy workload by “taking work home” and unconsciously thinking about students (ie. dreaming about students) 	<p>Theme: Importance of Multicultural Empathy/Competency</p> <p><u>Definition:</u> Multicultural competence can be described as “the ability to understand, appreciate, and interact with people from cultures or belief systems different from one's own.”</p> <p>Multi-cultural empathy is the capacity to understand the experiences of people from different cultures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School counselors who work in Title I Schools intentionally try to understand the cultural background of their students ● School counselors also find ways to relate to students (ex. Learn their language, cultural norms, foods, etc.) ● School counselors also review literature and attend conferences to stay current with cultural models and information 	<p>Theme: Relationship Building</p> <p><u>Definition:</u> Relationship building centers on a combination of soft skills that a person applies to connect with others and form positive relationships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School counselors who work in Title I Schools intentionally try to build relationships with students and families by listening and learning about students' backgrounds, and their interest
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<p>Theme: Differentiation of Interventions</p> <p><u>Definition:</u> Differentiation means tailoring interventions to meet the individual needs of students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School counselors who work in Title I Schools typically assess the needs of students to determine effective interventions that include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improving communication skills ○ Individual counseling ○ Small group counseling ○ Classroom guidance ○ District Programming (ie. Second Step) ○ Teaching positive self-esteem ○ Teaching journaling ○ Role-playing problem-solving skills ○ Finding a trusted adult ○ Learning coping skills to deal with increased emotional responses ○ Conflict 	<p>Theme: Challenging Workload</p> <p><u>Definition:</u> Challenging work includes a task or job that requires great effort and determination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School counselors who work in Title I Schools typically serve students who don't have parental supervision after school, have little parental involvement, and who lack communication skills. ● The work is also challenging due to limited funding, the lack of a PTO/PTA, and students who experience Adverse Childhood Experiences ● Students also have a lack of understanding about healthy relationships since they may not have seen an example within their family (ie. dysfunctional family background) 	<p>Theme:</p>
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<p>Resolution skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Self-regulations skills○ Teaching Boundaries○ Debunking stereotypes○ Peer mediation skills○ Understanding commitment/consequences of “cheating” in a relationship○ Spiritual growth○ Lowering your body posture when meeting with students		
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