“BULLY PREVENTION: ARE YOU PROMOTING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS IN YOUR CLASSROOMS AND SCHOOLS? ”

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University of Illinois Anti-Bullying Program

- **Indiana University Teen Conflict Survey** (Bosworth, Espelage, & Simon, 1999; Espelage et al., 2000, 2001)

- **University of Illinois Bullying Research Program**
  - INTERVIEW STUDY (Espelage & Asidao, 2001)
  - EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE STUDY (Espelage, 1998)
  - SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS STUDY (Espelage, Holt, & Henkel, 2003; Espelage, Green, & Wasserman, 2007; Espelage, Green, & Polanin, in press)
  - SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DATING VIOLENCE, & BULLYING STUDIES (Holt & Espelage, 2003; Holt & Espelage, 2005; Espelage & Holt, 2006)
  - ATTRIBUTION, COPING STYLES, & BULLYING (Kingsbury & Espelage, 2006)
  - THEORY OF MIND, EMPATHY, & BULLYING (Espelage et al., 2004; Mayberry & Espelage, 2006)
  - HOMOPHOBIA, SEXUAL VIOLENCE, & BULLYING (Poteat & Espelage, 2006; Espelage et al., 2008)
  - Sexual Orientation, Bullying, & Mental Health Outcomes (Espelage, Aragon, Birkett, & Koenig, 2008; Poteat, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009; Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009)

- **CDC Federally-funded Grants:**
  - Bullying & SV Overlap (2007 - 2010)
  - Randomized Clinical Trial of Middle School Second Step Program (Committee for Children, 2008) in Reducing Bullying & SV in 36 schools (2009-2013)
Social-Ecological Perspective

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Swearer & Doll, 2001; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Espelage & Horne, 2007)
Bullying happens when someone hurts or scares another person on purpose and the person being bullied has a hard time defending himself or herself. Usually, bullying happens over and over.

- Punching, shoving and other acts that hurt people physically
- Spreading bad rumors about people
- Keeping certain people out of a “group”
- Teasing people in a mean way
- Getting certain people to “gang up” on others
- Use of technology
Bully/Victim Continuum

- **Bully** — reports bullying others
- **Victim** — reports being bullied by others
- **Bully-victim** — reports bullying others & being bullied
- **Bystander** — reports observing others being bullied
- **No Status/Not involved** — does not report any involvement with bullying
Bullying Prevalence

Among 3rd – 8th graders:

- 15% Chronically Victimized
- 17% Ringleader Bullies
- 8% Bully-Victims
- 60% Bystanders

Only 13% intervene to help victim

(Espelage & Swearer, 2003)
Cyber-Bullying

“Cyber-bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others.”

(Bill Belsey: www.cyberbullying.ca)

Cyber-Bullying Prevalence

- National Statistics (Lifetime):
  - 10% - 33% youth (ages 11 to 19) have been the target of aggression/bullying online
  - 15% perpetrate the aggression/bullying online
  - 15% have been victims of sexual solicitation online (asked to talk about sex, perform a sexual act, or provide personal sexual information)

(Finn, 2004; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004)
Cyber-Bullying Prevalence

- Illinois Middle School Students

  - Online Victimization in Last Year:
    - 14.9% received rude comment
    - 7% had rumor spread about him/her
    - 2% threatened by a student
    - 11% received rude text message
      - 13% girls; 7% boys
    - 6% received sexually related text
    - 1% received sexual picture text
    - 1-3% rarely did someone solicit sex online
Openness to friends and schools (Poteat, Espelage, Koenig, 2009)

- To what extent are heterosexual youth willing to remain friends with lesbian and gay peers after disclosure?
  - This would reflect a removal of an already existing support system
  - This may differ from befriending someone already known to be gay or lesbian

- To what extent are heterosexual youth willing to attend school with lesbian and gay students?

- We expected gender and grade differences
"I would not remain friends with someone that came out to me"
"I would rather attend a school without lesbian and gay students"
Individual Correlates of Bullying Involvement

- Depression/Anxiety
- Empathy
- Delinquency
- Impulsivity
- Other forms of Aggression
- Alcohol/Drug Use
- Positive Attitudes toward Violence/Bullying
- Low Value for Prosocial Behaviors

For review (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Espelage & Horne, 2007)
## Family & School Risk Factors

### FAMILY
- Lack of supervision
- Lack of attachment
- Negative, critical relationships
- Lack of discipline/consequences
- Support for violence
- Modeling of violence

### SCHOOL
- Lack of supervision
- Lack of attachment
- Negative, critical relationships
- Lack of discipline/consequences
- Support for violence
- Modeling of violence

For review (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Espelage & Horne, 2007)
Sibling bullying is tied to school-based bullying in many countries (Espelage & Swearer, 2003 for review).

Study of 779 middle school students, association between bullying perpetration and sibling aggression perpetration was strongly associated (girls $r = .52$, boys $r = .42$; Espelage & Stein, in prep).
Bullying Prevention – Meta-analysis (Merrell et al., 2008)

- Evaluated effectiveness of 16 bullying efficacy studies across some six countries (six studies in US).
- Only two of six US studies published.
- All showed small to negligible effects.
- Small positive effects found for enhancing social competence and peer acceptance, and increasing teacher knowledge and efficacy in implementing interventions.
- Reality—No impact on bullying behaviors.

- Farrington & Tfoti (2009) – programs that are effective in European country include parents, use of multimedia, and target teacher’s competence in responding to bullying.
The Ship Has Sailed

US School-based Bullying Prevention Programs

Prevention Scientist & Teachers
Bullying Prevention – Why little success in US schools?

- Majority of the programs fail to recognize that bullying co-occurs with other types of aggression and other risky behavior (delinquency, AOD).
- Overlapping risk and protective factors need to be targeted in school-based programs in order to address spectrum of problem behavior (Cataliano et al., 2002).
- Very few programs target the shift in peer norms that are promoting bullying – the peer group.
- Focus on universal/primary programs, need more at secondary or tertiary level.
Bullying Prevention — Why little success in US schools?

- All programs fail to address the extent to which demographic variables (such as gender and race) impact efficacy.
- Need to recognize that adults are modeling much of the bullying behaviors we see in children and adolescents.
- Need to consider how classroom management skills and implementation levels impact a program’s effectiveness.
- Need to seriously consider how to motivate schools to engage in a serious conversation about bully prevention.
- REALITY—Social science MUST inform the next generation of prevention efforts; by contributing to modifications, enhancements, implementation issues, and must infuse INNOVATION into basic and applied scholarship.
Developmental Science: Research for Consideration

- Sibling Bullying
- Childhood trauma history & Efficacy of Programs
- Multiple Forms of Victimization
- Parental & Cultural Attitudes that Promote Retaliation
- Teacher-student relations
- Teacher, Administrator, & Paraprofessional Attitudes & Behavior
- Integration of Bullying Prevention into Curriculum
- Use of technology to advance basic and applied prevention efforts.
Looking Toward the Future

US School-based Bullying Prevention Efforts

Teachers