CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

TO ENHANCE AWARENESS
REGARDING THE CAUSES AND PREVENTION OF BULLYING

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Counseling, Marriage and Family Therapy

By

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# Table of Contents

Signature Page .......................................................................................................... ii

Acknowledgements .................................................................................................... iii

Abstract .................................................................................................................. vi

Chapter I: Introduction .............................................................................................. 1
  Statement of Need ................................................................................................... 1
  Purpose of the Project ............................................................................................ 2
  Significance ............................................................................................................. 2
  Definition of Terms ............................................................................................... 2

Chapter II: Review of Literature ............................................................................. 5
  Definition of Bullying ............................................................................................ 6
  Different Forms of Bullying .................................................................................. 6
  Characteristics of Bullying ................................................................................. 6
  Factors Related to Bullying ............................................................................... 8
  Gender ................................................................................................................... 9
  Age ...................................................................................................................... 11
  Ethnicity ............................................................................................................. 11
  Personal Characteristics ..................................................................................... 11

Chapter III: Reasons for Bullying and Overview of Anti-Bullying Programs ........ 14
  Bullying and Suicide .......................................................................................... 14
  Parental Styles ................................................................................................... 14
  Attachment ........................................................................................................ 15
  Social Factors ..................................................................................................... 16
Role Modeling and Empathizing.................................................................17
The Influence of Family and Peers.........................................................17
Environmental Factors...........................................................................18
Consequence of Bullying..........................................................................19
Curriculum...............................................................................................21
Restorative Justice Approach.................................................................22

Chapter IV: Intervention and Prevention..................................................23
Anti-Bullying Programs............................................................................24
Intervention Programs.............................................................................24
Peer-Led Interventions............................................................................25
Whole-School Interventions.................................................................26
Intervention in the School Setting.........................................................27
Prevention Programs..............................................................................28

References...............................................................................................31
ABSTRACT

TO ENHANCE AWARENESS
REGARDING THE CAUSES AND PREVENTION OF BULLYING

By

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Marriage and Family Therapy

Bullying is a serious problem that can dramatically affect the ability of students to progress academically and socially. As a result of the increase of bullying among adolescents, there has been an increase need in prevention and intervention programs to reduce bullying and to create a bully-free environment.

Since the topic of bullying has become a national concern in our schools and society, I would like to understand bullies, the underlying factors driving bullying behaviors, and to understand what might be done to alleviate the problem of bullying. A comprehensive intervention plan that involves all students, parents, and school staff is required to ensure that all students can learn in a safe and fear-free environment.

Therefore, I am choosing to create a brochure to enhance awareness regarding the caused
and prevention of bullying. The purpose of this project is to better understand the problem of bullying, to investigate variety of reasons why children bully and to bring awareness and prevention to those bullies. This Project can be used by other counselors or therapists for further understanding of why there is a problem with bullying and what can be done to prevent it.
Chapter I

Introduction

Following several severe cases wherein children died or were seriously impaired, there is growing concern about bullying. A 12-year-old boy who hanged himself in his East Harlem apartment was driven to suicide by bullies who mercilessly teased him for being short and brainy.

The final tipping point, relatives said, came after a boy teased Joel Morales about his dead father. Joel’s mother found the boy’s body hanging from a shower rod in the bathroom of their apartment at the Jefferson Houses on Second Ave. about 11:30 p.m. Tuesday. “I’m tired of all this bullying,” Joel, who was 4 months old when his dad died, told a friend just hours before taking his life, according to his aunt (New York Daily News).

Bullying behavior is defined as an imbalance of power between two individuals, where the stronger individual repeatedly causes harm to the weaker individual (Olweus, 1993). Adolescent bullying is a significant international problem (Pepler & Craig, 2008) with as many as 100–600 million adolescents directly involved with bullying worldwide, each year (Volk, Craig, Boyce, & King, 2006).

Statement of Need

We need to understand what might be done to alleviate the problem of bullying. Family therapists need to understand bullies and the underlying factors driving bullying behaviors. Once the situation is assessed, therapists can use a variety of therapeutic approaches with children depending on the age of the child and the nature of the problems. At times, a combination of different psychotherapeutic approaches may be
needed, including psychotherapy and medication. Bullying is a complex and multidimensional issue that may require the therapist to provide referrals, consultations, and resource coordination to deal with related problems of family preservation, dropout recovery, special education needs, and finding services for severe chronic psychosocial, mental, and physical health issues.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to better understand the problem of bullying, to investigate a variety of reasons why children bully and to bring awareness and prevention to those who bully. Furthermore, it is necessary to explore the growing epidemic of bullying and to determine the necessary interventions required to create a bully-free environment.

Significance

The topic of bullying was chosen for this project because it has become a national concern in our schools and society. This Project can be used by other counselors or therapists for further understanding of why there is a problem with bullying and what can be done to prevent it. In order to better understand this issue, it is necessary to review previous studies and research regarding why children bully.

Definition of Terms

-Bullying: is the use of force or coercion to abuse or intimidate others. The behavior can be habitual and involve an imbalance of social or physical power. It can include verbal harassment or threat, physical assault or coercion and may be directed repeatedly towards particular victims, perhaps on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexuality, or ability.
-Types of Bullying:

- Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:
  - Teasing
  - Name-calling
  - Inappropriate sexual comments
  - Taunting
  - Threatening to cause harm

- Social bullying, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone’s reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:
  - Leaving someone out on purpose
  - Telling other children not to be friends with someone
  - Spreading rumors about someone
  - Embarrassing someone in public

- Physical bullying involves hurting a person’s body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:
  - Hitting/kicking/pinching
  - Spitting
  - Tripping/pushing
  - Taking or breaking someone’s things
  - Making mean or rude hand gestures

-Parenting Styles: is a psychological construct representing standard strategies that parents use in their child rearing. There are many differing theories and opinions on the
best ways to rear children, as well as differing levels of time and effort that parents are willing to invest. Parental investment starts soon after birth.

**Authoritarian parents:** They have high expectations of their children and have very strict rules that they expect to be followed unconditionally. According to Baumrind, these parents "are obedience- and status-oriented, and expect their orders to be obeyed without explanation." People with this parenting style often utilize punishment rather than discipline, but are not willing or able to explain the reasoning behind their rules.

**Attachment theory:** It describes the dynamics of long-term relationships between humans. Its most important tenet is that an infant needs to develop a relationship with at least one primary caregiver for social and emotional development to occur normally. Attachment theory explains how much the parents' relationship with the child influences development. Attachment theory is an interdisciplinary study encompassing the fields of psychological, evolutionary, and ethological theory.

**Empathy:** It is the capacity to recognize emotions that are being experienced by another person. One may need to have a certain amount of empathy before being able to experience accurate sympathy or compassion.

The next chapter will discuss the literature related to this topic and the related findings.
Chapter II
Review of Literature

School bullying and peer victimization are major social problems affecting children and adolescents in all parts of the world. The serious consequences of bullying and peer victimization have generated considerable amount of attention from the media and the public, as well as educators, school officials, researchers, practitioners, and lawmaker in recent years (Phillips, 2007).

The national center for Education Statistics reported that more than one fourth of the 12-18 years old U.S. students surveyed indicated that they had been bullied at school during the previous 6 months (Dinkes, Forrest-Cataldi, 2007). Bullying behavior begins slowly in elementary school, peaks in middle school, and then decreases significantly but never disappears (U.S Department of Education, 2003). Bullying is a continuous, relentless activity and is a learned behavior which can be identified, unlearned and changed (Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004). Bullying is especially painful in the middle school years because of the school building transitions, awkward physical growth of students, and increased interest in peer relationships, which are most important and fragile at this time (Pepler et al., 2006)

Olweus (1995) estimated that roughly five million schoolchildren in grades 1–9 were involved as either bullies or victims in the United States. More recent surveys have shown that up to 42% of children between nine and thirteen report that they engage in bullying behavior (Brown, Birch, & Kancherla, 2005), and according to the Department of Justice, roughly one-fourth of all children will be victims of bullying by a schoolmate (Larsen & Dehle, 2007).
Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as repetitive, intentionally hurtful acts of physical, verbal, and emotional abuse that occur over a prolonged period of time and involve an imbalance of power (Nordahl, Poole, Stanton, Walden, & Beran, 2008). The most commonly used definition of bullying includes three components (Olweus, 1993): doing harm, repetition, and imbalance of power.

Different Forms of Bullying

The most prevalent type of bullying was verbal, followed by physical, emotional, racial and sexual (De Moura, Cruz & Quevedo, 2011). Bullying is widespread in American schools and has been identified as a major concern by schools across the U.S. (National Education Association, 2003), with more than 16 percent of U.S. school children saying they had been bullied by other students during the current term, according to a survey funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). According to the April 24, 2001 (National Institutes of Health) statistical reports, 77% of students are bullied mentally, verbally, and physically. Thirty percent (30%) of U.S. students in grades six through ten are involved in moderate or frequent bullying — as bullies, as victims, or as both — according to the results of the first national survey (NIH) on this subject.

Characteristics of Bullying

Research on students who frequently bully reveals some common characteristics. Perpetrators of bullying behavior tend to lack empathy (Olweus, 1993), misattribute their peers’ actions as being the result of hostile intentions, demonstrate impulsivity, perceive aggression as an acceptable way to resolve conflict, and exhibit a high need for
dominance (Graham & Juvonen, 1998; Olweus, 1993). Whereas students who are frequently victimized are generally unpopular with peers, perpetrators of bullying tend to have above-average popularity in primary grades and declining popularity in junior and senior high school.

Moreover, bullies have been characterized as those who behave aggressively (Smith, P. K., Shu, S., & Madsen, K. (2001) have positive attitude toward violence (Bosworth, K., Espelage, D., & Simon, T.R, 1999); seek to dominate others (Ireland, 2000); act impulsively (Ahmed, 2001); do not empathize with those whom they have wronged (Ahmed, 2001); and tend to ascribe hostile meanings to ambiguous situations. Other researchers have characterized bullies as belonging to a subculture that seek to dominate others in order to bolster what they perceive as their own self-worth (Ireland, 2000); lack of sense of empathy may be what allows bullies to inflate their self-esteem from bullying (Ahmed, 2001). Previous research established that certain personality traits, such as impulsivity (Ahmed, 2001), and a lack of empathy (Ahmed, 2001) are associated with being bully.

Bullies, and bully victims have different psychological and social profiles. Adolescent bullies tend to have high emotionality and low self-control (Haynie et al., 2001). Although they are both proactively and reactively aggressive, bullies appear to use proactive aggression to establish dominance and leadership in their peer group (Juvonen et al., 2003). Bullies may enjoy social status among their peers, perhaps partly because they challenge adult norms and encourage exploration of new adolescent roles (Juvonen et al., 2003), but their friendships are primarily with other bullies (Pellegrini et al., 1999). They show little empathy for their peers (Bernstein & Watson, 1997) and low social
anxiety (Juvonen et al., 2003), and they view bullying as a way to get what they want (Griffin & Gross, 2004). Bullies are more likely to hold antisocial beliefs or values and show acceptance for antisocial behaviors (Haynie et al., 2001). They are also more inclined to be disengaged from and do poorly in school (Juvonen et al., 2003).

Generally, male bullies are aggressive, tough, impulsive, lacking in empathy, of average popularity but below average school attainment (Olweus, 1993). Less is known about characteristics of female bullies. School is the context where most bullying behavior takes place, but bullying emerges from a complex set of factors related to the individual, the family, the school system, and other aspects of the child’s sociocultural environment (Olweus, 1993).

Factors Related to Bullying

Researchers have found that there are distinct differences in how bullying is experienced by children, depending on these various characteristics (Macklem, 2003). Several U.S. researchers have found that bullying becomes particularly problematic in early adolescence (Hoover et al., 1992) and then rates of bullying decline (Hoover et al., 1992). Other researchers suggest that bullying may serve as an adaptive function for young boys as they try to fit into a new peer group where the older boys have already established their place among their peers (Dodge, Coie, Pettit, & Price, 1990).

Bullying is a systematic problem, therefore, assessment of bullying needs to extend beyond the individual child to encompass the family, peer group, school, and community. Bullying is a relationship problem in which power and aggression are used to cause distress to a vulnerable person. To assess and address bullying, we need to
understand the nature of problem, how the problem changes with age and differs for boys and girls, and the relevant risk factors.

Longitudinal studies on pathways to delinquency have shown that youngsters who develop a deviant career are more likely to have parents who are abusive towards their partners, compared to those not exposed to interparental violence (Steinberg, 2000). Bowers, Smith, and Binney (1994) also found that in England children who bully others or who are victimized at school have parents who tend to be violent to each other and also to them.

A significant strong association between maladjustment and exposure to domestic violence was found also by the Canadian National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (Dauvergne & Johnson, 2001) that showed that according to the mothers’ accounts, children witnessing violence perpetrated by their partners were nearly three times as likely to be involved in physical aggression at school (fighting, bullying, or threatening others) compared to those who did not witness violence (28.1% vs. 11.3%) and over twice as likely to be involved in indirect aggression (nonphysical forms of aggression, such as rallying friends against someone, spreading gossip, excluding someone from a group, or setting up another child for punishment).

Gender

Research indicates that most children who bully tend to be boys (Bosworth, Espelage, & Simon, 2001). This may be because society is more accepting or tolerant of boys being involved in bullying than girls. Boys engage in bullying behavior and are victims of bullies more frequently than girls (Olweus, 1995). While boys typically engage in direct bullying methods, girls who bully are more apt to utilize these more subtle
indirect strategies, such as spreading rumors and enforcing social isolation (Ahmad & Smith, 1994).

According to Limber (Limber, Flex, Nation, & Melton, 1998), there are many ways to bully another individual, including physical aggression (e.g., hitting, shoving, and kicking), making verbal assaults (e.g., taunting, teasing, and verbal threats), and using indirect forms of harassment (e.g., manipulating, excluding, and ignoring). Verbal aggression is the most common type of bullying found in the United States (Hoover, Oliver, & Hazler, 1992), nonphysical forms of bullying predominate among both boys and girls, but boys are more likely than girls to have been physically bullied by being hit, slapped, or pushed (Harachi et al., 1999).

Crick and Grotpeter (1995) suggested that these gender differences reflect girls’ preference for relationship enhancing goals during social interaction. Girls manipulate relationships with indirect bullying rather than overt aggression, because openly aggressive behaviors damage social goals that are particularly important to them.

Studies have noted that while boys are more likely to bully, both boys and girls do bully (Beaty & Alexeyev, 2008). Boys are more likely to engage in physical aggression, whereas girls engage in more covert, subtle, or indirect forms of aggression (Beaty & Alexeyev, 2008).

Past findings also indicated that boys are commonly victims and perpetrators of direct forms of bullying, while girls experience indirect bullying (e.g., social rejection, relational aggression) (Varjas et al., 2009). U.S. researchers consistently report that boys are more likely than girls to be both the victims and the perpetrators of bullying.
(Bosworth et al., 1999). Boys typically are bullied by boys, but girls are bullied by both boys and girls (Olweus, 1993).

Age

It is important to assess youth characteristics in our understanding of bullying behavior. Socio-demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, and race/ethnicity are frequently examined predictors of bullying behavior in school. A number of researchers have found that the frequency of bullying increases during middle school years and decreases during high school years (Espelage & Horne, 2008). Elementary school students are also more likely to report being victimized by their peers in school than older students (Beran & Tutty, 2002). Children in late adolescence who victimize others do so because bullying has been established as a successful coping strategy, rewarding them with status and popularity (Smith, Shu, & Madsen, 2001).

Ethnicity

In the United States, one national study found no significant differences in the prevalence of bullying and victimization among African American, Hispanic, and Caucasian children (Nansel et al., 2001).

Personal Characteristics

Olweus, 1993, however, found that external characteristics such as obesity, wearing glasses, skin color, having red hair, dress, physical disability, problems with sight, hearing, or speech, are all unrelated to victimization. The only external characteristic he found to be associated with victimization was that victims tended to be smaller and weaker than their peers. Some of the antisocial traits associated with being a bully include a desire to socially dominate others (Ireland, 2000), a positive attitude
towards violence (Olweus 1993), a deficient ability to empathize (Ahmed 2001), a
tendency to ascribe hostile meanings to ambiguous situations (Slee 1993), and
impulsiveness (Ahmed 2001). In addition, bullies tend to have average to above average
self-esteem (Slee and Rigby 1993).

Male bullies generally do not suffer from insecurity or poor self-esteem (Olweus, 1994). Instead, bullies have aggressive personalities, positive attitudes toward aggression,
and trouble restraining their aggressive impulses. Bullies need to dominate others and
have little empathy for their victims. Bullies appear to be tough and confident.
Consequently, they often attract a small group of followers.

U.S. researchers also report that bullies are skillful in using social influence and
manipulation to avoid being blamed for their actions (Sutton, Smith, & Swetterham,
1999). Hara (2002) argues that most children tend to justify bullying at the expense of the
victims, including the victims themselves and those who are uninvolved in the bullying
incident. Gender differences were also found with regard to the justifications given by
bullies (Hara, 2002). Boys tended to blame the victims, whereas girls were more likely to
dismiss or ignore the incident (e.g., therefore, not noticing the effects it had on their
victims). These differences underscore the subtle and implicit nature of female bullying
and the tendency of girls to deny the negative consequences of their behavior (Hara,
2002).

The bully’s social skills are actively used for personal gain, often in socially
unacceptable ways (Smith & Brain, 2000). Bullies also use psychological or physical
violence to successfully manage difficult social situations (Hoover et al., 2003). Children
who lack negotiation and conflict resolution skills tend to resort to reactive aggression to
settle their disputes (Bosworth et al., 1999). Research shows that bullies rationalize their behavior. They are confident in what they are doing and rewarded for their behavior. Therefore, they see no reason to change (Woods & White, 2005). A review of the research (Arseneault, Bowes, & Shakoor, 2010) indicated that there are personal characteristics that increase a child’s risk of being bullied.

These personal characteristics include the following:

- Internalizing problems (including withdrawal and anxiety/depression)
- Low self-esteem (although some researchers indicated otherwise)
- Low assertiveness
- Aggressiveness in early childhood (which can lead to rejection by peers and social isolation).

In the following chapter reasons for bullying and overview of anti-bullying programs will be explored.
Chapter III

Reasons for Bullying and Overview of Anti-Bullying Programs

Bullying and Suicide

Bullying, and especially chronic bullying, has long-term effects on suicide risk and mental health that can persist into adulthood (Arseneault et al., 2010). One review of the research concluded that bullying can cause (or contribute to) “comparatively low levels of psychological well-being and social adjustment and to high levels of psychological distress and adverse physical health symptoms” (Rigby, 2003).

Both victims and perpetrators of bullying are at a higher risk for suicide than their peers. Children who are both victims and perpetrators of bullying are at the highest risk (Hay & Meldrum, 2010). All three groups (victims, perpetrators, and perpetrator/victims) are more likely to be depressed than children who are not involved in bullying. Bullying is associated with increases in suicide risk in young people who are victims of bullying (Kim, Leventhal, Koh, & Boyce, 2009) as well as increases in depression and other problems associated with suicide (Gini & Pozzoli, 2009).

Parental Styles

Parenting styles and how a child was disciplined at home can shed some light on why some children are bullies. Certain parenting styles may predict bullying behavior. The American Sociological Association reports that, "Children raised by authoritarian parents - parents who are demanding, directive and unresponsive - are the most prone to act out bullying behavior." Children, who have authoritarian parents and engage in bullying behavior might be impulsive, while showing no empathy for others or demonstrating a desire to be in control. Modeling of aggressive behavior at home can
lead to violence by the child against others at school and in later life. Kids who learn to be aggressive or dominating at home are more likely to repeat that behavior in the school.

A lack of attention, warmth and affection toward the child, together with aggressive behavior modeled at home and poor supervision of the child are all associated with bullying behavior (Olweus, 1995). Bullies often come from homes where there is very punitive and rigid discipline styles in which physical punishment is used. In such an environment, children are taught to strike back physically as a way to handle problems, where parental involvement and warmth are also lacking. Modeling of aggressive behavior may include use of physical and verbal aggression toward the child by parents, or use of physical and verbal aggression by parents toward each other. Children who witness violence at home exhibit an elevated level of aggressive behaviors (Baldry, 2003). Generally, parents of bullies tend to be lacking in warmth, authoritarian, using power-assertive disciplinary methods including physical punishment (Smith and Myron-Wilson, 1998).

Attachment

Furthermore, children with poor quality parental attachment relationships may be more likely to bully others than children with high quality attachments because of their negative expectations regarding social interactions. Children with insecure attachment styles, on the other hand, carry with them the expectation that others are unavailable and social exchanges are not positive or rewarding (Renken et al., 1989). This negative bias regarding social interactions may result in hostile interpretations of ambiguous behaviors and aggressive reactions to them.
Social Factors

Most researchers would agree that social or contextual factors are at least equally relevant. Connolly and O’Moore (2003), for example, have identified factors such as the father’s absence (physical or psychological), the presence of a depressive mother and incidents of domestic violence as factors enhancing bullying behavior in children. Parental style and other family practices are also named as possible correlates of such child behavior (Perren & Hornung, 2005).

Children who bully others at school usually have parents who teach them how to retaliate and to hit back when attacked (Demaray and Malecki 2003). Parenting techniques such as harsh and inconsistent punishment often lead to child aggression both in and out of the family (Hoeve et al., 2008). Parental practices characterized by absence of a warm relationship with the child, coldness, indifference or even hostility and rejection, as well as lack of effective monitoring are especially harmful.

Rigby (1993) found that children who perceived their parents as holding positive attitudes toward them were less likely to be involved in bullying. Bullying peers at school is associated with parental rejection, weak parental supervision and inadequate involvement with the child (Espelage et al., 2000).

Researchers found that bullying has been related to maternal anger (Curtner-Smith, 2000), maternal depression (Curtner-Smith, 2000), low parent-child involvement (Curtner-Smith, 2000), and harsh forms of discipline (Curtner-Smith, 2000).

Bullying behavior is commonly blamed on maladaptive or inadequate parenting practices, that is harsh, neglectful, absent, and rejecting (Ireland 2000); that is lacking in
positive emotional affection (Ahmed 2001); and that does not teach and demonstrate appropriate behavior (Ahmed 2001) has been associated with being a bully.

Role Modeling and Empathizing

Bullies tend to be impulsive and hot-headed, with a need to dominate others and an aggressive approach toward other people (Olewus, 1995). Primary caretakers of children who become bullies tend to be low in empathy and warmth, permissive about aggressive behavior, prone to use power-assertive disciplinary measures, and have poor problem-solving skills (Olewus, 1995). Twemlow and Fonagy (2005) found that in schools that report a great deal of bullying, teachers are also prone to bullying their students, and may therefore be acting as role models.

The Influence of Family and Peers

Many of the characteristics of bullies and their victims can be traced to family influences and peer relationships. Therefore, it is important to understand how characteristics of families and peers contribute to the behavior of bullies.

Family characteristics that appear to be the most critical in the development of bullying behaviors include a lack of affection and warmth from the child’s primary caregivers, lack of consistent discipline when the child displays aggressive behavior, and parents’ use of aggressive child-rearing practices, including physical punishment (Stevens, De Bourdeaudhuji, & Van Oost, 2002). These characteristics, in turn, tend to be more common in unstable families disrupted by marital conflict, divorce, or remarriage. Children in conflict-ridden homes, those who observe a strong power imbalance between the father and mother (the fathers being more powerful; Bowers, Smith, & Binney, 1994),
and/or destructive forms of parental problem solving (Stevens, De Bourdeaudhuji, & Van Oost, 2002) have learned aggressive behaviors that they take out on their peers.

Parents in unstable or hostile relationships also are likely to express a lot of negativity to the child and sibling relationships are likely to be competitive and ambivalent (Connolly & O’Moore, 2003), which further adds to the problem. Children, therefore, learn their aggressive response patterns from hostile parents, caregivers, and siblings who physically abuse (slap, hit, or punch) them or from witnessing parental violence (Hoover et al., 2003).

Boys tend to become bullies, if parenting styles are hostile and aggressive. Girls react by becoming shy and anxious, which makes them prone to victimization (Perry, Hodges, & Egan, 2001). Poor parenting skills, coercive parenting, and an authoritarian parenting style also contribute to children’s bullying (Perry, Hodges, & Egan, 2001). Parents of bullies discourage autonomy and provide their children with few opportunities to express their feelings and opinions (Hoover et al., 2003). They also use rules that reinforce aggressive behavior (Oliver, Hoover, & Hazler, 1994). Poor parental monitoring also contributes to bullying behavior. Children who spend a lot of time without adult supervision tend to feel neglected and lonely (Espelage & Home, 2008). Bullies, more than other children, report that their parents do not care about them and that their parents are not involved in their lives.

**Environmental Factors**

Causes of bullying are multiple and are related to the individual, but also to the socio-family environment. Violent homes are among the highest risk factor for the
development of antisocial behavior; bullying, in this regard, has been found to be associated with violence within the family context (Farrington, 1993).

Wilczenski et al. (1997) claims that being directly or indirectly victimized at home brings the child to ‘learn’ this behavior and signal to others that weakness has been learned and accepted as a stable personal trait. Poor family functioning and especially domestic violence might promote bullying in several ways (Rigby, 2003). Parents might show very little care for their children and not consider their feelings. As a result, a child develops a low empathy towards others. Badly functioning families might be characterized by a clear imbalance of power and aggression between members; children start to learn to dominate others and might even be encouraged in doing so (Baldry, 2003). Domestic violence in this regard is relevant in explaining aggressive behavior among children as a learned behavior (Jaffe, Wolfe, & Wilson, 1990).

Consequence of Bullying

There are many adverse short and long term consequences for children involved in bullying. Victims may develop a variety of psychological as well as somatic symptoms, some of which may persist into adulthood (Sansone & Sansone, 2008). Physical symptoms of being bullied can include headaches and migraines, ulcers, panic attacks, irritable bowel syndrome, and frequent illness (Aluede et al., 2008). Depression, anxiety, loneliness, and decreased self-esteem are just some of the common psychological outcomes of being victimized (Drake, 2003), which often persist into adulthood (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005).

Children who bully others can also suffer the negative consequences of their actions. They often feel lonely and lack close friendships. Bullying is also associated with
other problem behaviors, including smoking and underage drinking (Nansel et al., 2001). Furthermore, children who bully others are at risk for antisocial and violent behavior (Rigby, 2003); thus, bullying may represent a first step toward a life of criminal activity (Aluede et al., 2008). Bullying is increasingly viewed as an important contributor to youth violence, including homicide and suicide attempts (Meltzer et al., 2011), delinquency and other antisocial behavior in adulthood (Bender & Lösel, 2011).

Bullies show poorer school adjustment (i.e. academic achievement, perceived school climate) and are more likely to be involved in other problem behaviors (e.g., heavy alcohol drinking, smoking, and marijuana use) (Kim et al., 2011).

In one study, 60% of those characterized as bullies in grades 6-9 had at least one criminal conviction by age 24 (Olweus, 1995). Chronic bullies seem to maintain their behaviors into adulthood, negatively influencing their ability to develop and maintain positive relationships (Olweus, 1995; Batsche & Knoff, 1994).

Bullies continue to have significant interpersonal problems, well into adulthood (Hoover et al., 2003). Habitual use of power in relationships can set the stage for a lifetime of maladjustment. Although bullies may have several close friends in elementary school, overall they tend to be less popular than other students and their popularity decreases with time. By the time bullies enter high school, most other students try to avoid them (Olweus, 1993).

Bullies, therefore, are at greater risk for delinquent behavior (Baldry, 2003) dropping out of school and abusing drugs and alcohol (Byrne, 1994). Bullies also are more likely to commit antisocial acts including vandalism, fighting, theft, substance abuse, and truancy (Olweus, 1993). Without intervention, bullies have more arrests in
young adulthood than their peers and they are at greater risk for mental health, legal, and job-related difficulties across the life span (Olweus, 1993). Olweus (1993) concluded that the negative effects of bullying are so strong that, despite the real and significant trauma experienced by chronic victims, childhood bullies actually suffer greater adulthood adjustment problems than their victims.

There are countless anti-bullying programs that target one or more levels without addressing the whole school. Interventions must include peers and with the support of adults must restructure children’s roles in bullying interactions (Pepler, 2006). Peers are integral both to bullying problems and to bullying solutions. Compelling evidence highlights the roles of peers in bullying interactions (Salmivalli, 1999).

Utilizing peers to lead interventions can benefit students in all grades and particularly adolescents, who may be more likely to accept the guidance of same-age or high-status peers than adult direction and authority (Englander, 2007). When there is awareness throughout the school community, bullying problems can be identified and effectively addressed early (Olweus, 1994).

Curriculum

Many whole-school programs, beginning with the original program, the Olweus Bullying Prevention intervention, include anti-bullying curriculum as one component. It has been suggested that prevention programs are most effective when incorporated into the curriculum within a school’s regular program of studies (Tutty, 2002). Most curriculum-based programs uses principles of behavioral change and their aim is about changing students’ attitudes, altering group norms, and increasing self-efficacy (Heinrich, 2003).
Restorative Justice Approach

Restorative justice is the process of restoring relationships through forgiveness and reconciliation (Morrison, 2002). This approach is thought to strengthen self-regulation and the regulation of civil society through empowering the powerless and rebuilding relationships between the victimized and the victimizer. The restorative justice approach corresponds with the view that forgiveness reduces destructive behaviors (Morrison, 2002). The process of restorative justice involves members of the community—the victimized person and his or her family and support group, school community, and police when appropriate—to work through the problems created by the offender's behavior (Ahmed & Brathwaite, 2006). In the following chapter, intervention and prevention programs will be investigated.
Chapter IV

Intervention and Prevention

Bullying is a serious problem that can dramatically affect the ability of students to progress academically and socially. A comprehensive intervention plan that involves all students, parents, and school staff is required to ensure that all students can learn in a safe and fear-free environment. Smith and Sharp (1994) emphasize the need to develop whole-school bullying policies, implement curricular measures, improve the school ground environment, and empower students through conflict resolution, peer counseling, and assertiveness training.

The parents should set adequate limits for a child’s behavior at home and not allow aggression toward siblings, other family members, and peers. Nickerson, Mele & Princiotta (2008) also recommend teaching empathy towards others and involving parents as critical components in developing anti-bullying prevention programs.

Because effective bullying prevention and intervention strategies require targeting the multiple contexts, understanding the ecological system levels that influence and/or inhibit bullying and peer victimization in school is imperative (Espelage & Horne, 2008).

Schools can promote a supportive environment where problematic children can be helped to express their anger in a constructive rather than destructive way (Kumpulainen, Räsänen & Puura, 2001). Social workers, welfare agencies for the protection of children, school advisors, and counselors should work together to create an intervention and prevention plan that is broad in its aims and perspectives (O’Brien, 2001).

Bullying is damaging not only to the children involved but, more generally, to the school environment. Intervention/prevention programs should aim to tackle victimization
but also to improve school-life quality. In order to educate parents, teachers, and counselors regarding bullying, some effective intervention and prevention are investigated.

*Anti-Bullying Programs*

Whole-school anti-bullying programs typically use guidance lessons, such as drama (e.g., acting out scenarios), watching videos, and reading books as a means of addressing bullying in the classroom. The primary purpose of such activities can be viewed as sensitization to the problem of bullying (Crothers & Kolber, 2008). Drama, videos, books, and discussions about bullying can give children the language to identify and talk about the experience of bullying. Teachers of young children can act out bullying scenarios using puppets to play the roles of victim and bully.

According to Crothers and Kolbert (2008), as children mature into adolescence, teachers can encourage children to develop scripts that depict bullying and use puppets to act out the scenarios. Videos and books are also a helpful medium for educators to introduce awareness of bullying to their students. Furthermore, it is indicated that children who are actively engaged in learning are less likely to have the time and inclination to engage in bullying (Crothers & Kolbert, 2008).

*Intervention Programs*

Several studies have examined the impact of perceptions in social support (Demaray & Malecki, 2003), peer involvement (Menesini, Codecasa, Benelli, & Cowie, 2003) and the power of friendship on bullying behavior. It is also known that bystanders to bullying situations reinforce these behaviors by their presence and lack of intervention...
(Craig, Pepler, & Atlas, 2000). Furthermore, parental knowledge and attitudes about bullying behaviors are challenged.

A number of studies have indicated that parental styles play an important role in bullying (Baldry & Farrington, 2000). Therefore, the goal at this level is to develop an anti-bullying awareness program for parents, children, and school staff to communicate the desired message to children. Intervention should be introduced early in the curriculum beginning in kindergarten and elementary grades. Studies suggest that programs are especially effective with younger children as bullies and victims are more prone to violent behavior as they get older (Perrin & Alasker, 2006). In addition, interventions would be easier to implement in elementary schools due to their size and structure, and because students interact with fewer teachers, it is likely they will receive more consistent anti-bullying messages (Stevens et al., 2000).

Peer-Led Interventions

Peer support models focus primarily on improving student relationships and include such forms as peer counseling, peer mediation, befriending, and participant role approaches (Menesini et al., 2003). Peer-led interventions typically comprise teaching peer helpers skills such as active listening, empathy, problem solving, and support (Smith et al., 2005). These interventions involve creation of roles and structures that enable students to act responsibly and empathically. Peer-led approaches may be beneficial for teenagers who are less accepting of adult authority and direction than younger students (Pepler, 2006).

Peer mediation provides students with important tools and skills, including cooperation, communication, tolerance, positive emotional expression, and conflict
resolution with the overall goal of developing a peaceful and respectful school (Tutty, 2002).

Helping students acquire anti-bullying roles involves activities such as awareness-raising and the opportunity to self-reflect as well as to practice behaviors that differ from previous ways of acting and responding (Salmivalli, 1999).

**Whole-School Interventions**

Anti-bullying prevention programs that target the whole school have long been advocated to reduce school bullying (Pepler, 2006). Dan Olweus (1991, 1992, 1993) developed the original whole-school anti-bullying program, which was a nationwide campaign in response to the suicides of several children in Norway during the early 1980s, in which bullying was considered an important factor (Smith & Ananiadou, 2003). His program, entitled the *Bullying Prevention Program*, was a comprehensive whole-school program from kindergarten through grade 12. School-based anti-bullying programs that have been developed in a number of countries are typically informed by Olweus’ program (Pepler et al., 2006).

According to a meta-analysis of 12 interventions implemented and delivered between 1986 and 2001 in various countries, the programs had on the whole significant but relatively small effects in decreasing victimization and little or no effect in reducing the rate at which children bully others (Rigby, 2003).

Perhaps it is not surprising that the evidence regarding the effectiveness of anti-bullying prevention/intervention programs is inconclusive because the phenomenon of bullying is a complex social issue that is influenced by myriad diverse factors (Hunt, 2007).
Bullying prevention programs must be ongoing and integrated into the school curriculum throughout the year, formally and informally. This involves holding formal classroom discussions about bullying when the school year begins followed by frequently revisiting bullying issues. Aims are to reinforce and broaden students’ understanding and to keep bullying issues front and center. Maintaining a positive climate is vital and occurs through an ongoing effort rather than a single classroom discussion or school-wide assembly (Cummings et al., 2006).

**Intervention in the School Setting**

Bullies could benefit from interventions that aim at increasing their commitment to academic and behavioral expectations because they indicate less commitment to performing well academically and to following school rules (Cunningham, 2007). Interventions that aim at increasing successful interactions with prosocial peers could increase their feelings of belonging in the social environment of the school and help promote prosocial behaviors. Providing skills as well as opportunities to interact successfully in both academic and social situations can help bullies, victims, and bully victims bond more strongly to school (Cunningham, 2007). Creating environments that provide clear and consistent norms for healthy behavior, opportunities for meaningful participation, skills to participate effectively, and recognition for success can help students feel physically and emotionally safe in school and support the development of behaviors that promote academic and social success (Cunningham, 2007).

One component of Olweus’ program consists of teaching student bystanders how to intervene to stop bullying. In contrast, peer support models, which include befriending, conflict resolution, and peer counseling approaches, focus primarily on improving the
relations between students (Menesini et al., 2003). The use of comprehensive bullying prevention programs (Olweus, 1993), which include a considerable emphasis on training and relying upon teachers in preventing bullying. In such programs, teachers typically deliver the anti-bullying curriculum, which often involves helping students to define and identify bullying, increasing students’ understanding of the factors that motivate children to bully as well as the impact that bullying has upon victims, teaching students assertiveness skills to confront bullying, and encouraging students to develop coping mechanisms to help them when bullying occurs (Crothers et al., 2006).

**Prevention Programs**

Prevention programs have used school-wide (Olweus, 1993), classroom management (Roland & Galloway, 2002), peer support, playground aggression reduction (Frey et al., 2005), and cognitive-behavioral (Jenson & Dieterich, 2007) strategies to reduce bullying behavior and victimization.

Parent training, playground supervision, school conferences, disciplinary practices, videos, and classroom management approaches were associated with reductions in bullying. Program elements that emphasized cooperative group work, skill training, peer interventions, parent training, and multimedia strategies were associated with a decrease in victimization. In general, school-wide interventions targeting school and classroom norms about aggression had a greater effect on reducing bullying (Olweus, 2004).

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Utilizing peers to lead interventions can benefit students in all grades and particularly adolescents, who may be more likely to accept the guidance of same-age or high-status peers than adult direction and authority (Smith et al., 2005).

The objectives of school-based anti-bullying programs should go beyond the children who are victimized or who bully but rather, aim to shift the school culture, and include some activities and programs that involve individual students, the classroom, peers, parents, and the entire school community (Heinrich, 2003).

It is important to raise awareness of teachers, students, and parents regarding the bullying. The more students know about bullying, the better equipped they are to stop it in its tracks. Bullying prevention brings many important benefits such as:

• Promoting positive and caring relationships among students, staff, parents and communities.
• Raising awareness of the problem.
• Promoting a sense of belonging and acceptance in students.

The most effective anti-bullying intervention program starts with educating others about this issue. Therefore, this brochure is put together in order to educate parents, students, and educators regarding bullying and its prevention. The purpose of this project is to provide a brief overview of key points and issues to inform parents, students, and
clinicians about steps they can take to contribute to bullying prevention and intervention programs.
References


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