

Bullying in the Schools:
Identification, Prevention, and Intervention

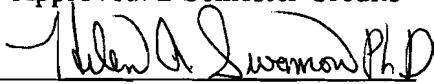
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper was to examine the means by which to identify bullying in the schools, and to examine prevention and intervention strategies. The topic of bullying was chosen due to the ongoing problem of this form of violence taking place in schools across the nation. This study was conducted through a review of literature. Sources were selected for their content on the characteristics of bullies and targets of bullying, the role of parenting styles, and short and long-term effects of bullying. Literature about possible prevention and intervention programs was also reviewed. It is important for parents and school staff to recognize identifying characteristics of both bullies and their targets. The environment that both bullies and their targets are exposed to plays a large role in the development of this form of violence. The incidence of bullying significantly decreases through the implementation of preventative programs that address social skills and set clear boundaries of what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Guidance from both parents and educators is required to enforce these boundaries.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Bullying is considered to be a form of school violence and is seen as a serious problem in schools today. A safe environment should be provided for all students who attend school. Bullying in the schools has made it a challenge to provide safety in this environment. Identification of bullying and prevention and early intervention are critical.

According to Bowman (cited in Whitted & Duper, 2005), 30% of students nationwide reported themselves as being either a bully, a target of bullying, or both. This statistic translates into one of four children being bullied and one of five children being defined as a bully (Whitted & Dupper, 2005). According to Nansel et al. (2001), that 30% translates into 5,736,417 who reported themselves as being the bully, the target of bullying, or both.

Research indicates that bullying has a weighty and invasive effect on the learning environment of a school (Whitted & Dupper, 2005). Teachers as well as administrators often take the effects of bullying too lightly, which results in failure to prevent or stop this behavior (Feinberg, 2003). Twenty-five percent of teachers reported that they did not believe it was vital to get involved with bullying (Feinberg, 2003). These statements indicate that a clear understanding of what bullying consists of is lacking, as is knowledge of which techniques have proven to be most effective in preventing or stopping it.

Research has explored the behavior of bullying to gain a better understanding of what the cause of bullying is and what interventions and preventions may correct it. Bullying is considered to be one of the most prevalent forms of school violence that has the potential of becoming serious (Elinoff, Chafouleas, & Sassu, 2004). It is important to have a clear understanding of what bullying consists of to aid in identifying, intervening

and preventing this behavior. Milsom and Gallo (2006) described a main characteristic of bullying as a need to gain power or control over their victim. This can be done by physical force, threats, verbal teasing, and/or exclusion from peers (Milsom & Gallo, 2006).

Many students who are the victims of bullies may fear going to school. The fear of ridicule, harassment, being threatened, and not accepted interferes with the student's capability of learning (Whitted & Dupper, 2005). Bullying falls under this category. Coloroso (2002) described bullying as "the conscious, willful, and deliberate hostile activity intended to harm, induce fear through the threat of further aggression, and create terror" (p. 13). Bullying is unprovoked and can be done by an individual and/or a number of students. This abuse can be either direct or indirect. Direct bullying includes verbal and/or physical aggression, while indirect bullying includes threats, insults, name calling, writing hurtful graffiti, or encouraging others not to play with certain students (Whitted & Dupper, 2005). Whitted and Dupper (2005) also included racial and sexual bullying as two other forms of bullying that may be present in the schools.

Smokowski and Kopasz (2005, p. 101) defined bullying "as a form of aggression in which one or more children intend to harm or disturb another child who is perceived as being unable to defend him or herself." Smokowski and Kopasz (2005) indicate that bullying is a form of aggression and there are distinct features that exist. One feature is that typically a power imbalance exists between the bully and the target. The bully is usually "either physically or psychologically stronger or more powerful" than the target (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005, p. 101). A bully will use these behaviors to establish control over the target. These bullying behaviors often occur over and over again (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). Bullying behaviors include name calling, teasing,

intentional exclusion, physically assaulting, threatening, stealing, vandalizing, slandering, and taunting (Beale, 2001, p.301).

Argenbright and Edgell (cited in Milsom and Gallo, 2006), defined four specific types of bullying that exist in schools today, including physical bullies, verbal bullies, relational bullies, and reactive bullies. The physical bully hits, kicks, or shoves (Milsom & Gallo, 2006). Verbal bullies use words as a means to harm their victims by name-calling, insulting, making racist comments, or teasing their victims (Milsom & Gallo, 2006). The relational bully harms their victim by focusing on the exclusion of one or more persons from their peer group and usually does this by using verbal threats and/or by spreading rumors (Milsom & Gallo, 2006). The reactive bully may be considered the most difficult type of bully to identify (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). The reactive bully is considered to be impulsive and taunts his/her victim into fighting with them and when their victim fights with them, they will fight back and later claim that it was self defense (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005).

Due to the recent school violence that has occurred in our nation, it is essential to examine these situations and how bullying may pertain to them. An extreme example of bullying behavior may include the Virginia Tech or Columbine shootings. These instances of school violence have drawn attention to the problem and have shown the need for knowledge in the area of prevention and intervention. Bullying is not a problem that is going to just disappear. It is an unacceptable behavior that needs to be dealt with to ensure a safe environment in our schools.

Educating parents, teachers, students, and administrators is necessary to aid in the identification of bullies and their victims. Education is also an essential aspect in learning the proper techniques to intervene with this behavior.

Statement of the Problem

Bullying in the school has been an ongoing concern for parents, counselors, teachers, and students, and continues to affect adolescents in the schools today.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this comprehensive literature review is to document ways to identify bullying as well as examine prevention and intervention programs for adolescent bullying.

Rationale

The reason this study is important is because bullying is considered to be a form of school violence that must be stopped. Bullying has an impact on many adolescent's lives. It also impacts the school environment, teachers, and the community. However, if identification, intervention, and preventive methods are not looked at more closely in detail and utilized in our schools today, the problem will continue. This study will aid in identification of bullying as well as the methods to prevent and intervene in bullying.

Research Objectives

This study includes three objectives that will be addressed. The first objective is to identify what bullying is and identify characteristics that are included in bullying. The second objective is to examine how people involved in the bullying process are impacted. The third and final objective is to identify methods of prevention and intervention.

Assumptions of the Study

It is assumed that the literature reviewed clearly identifies characteristics of the different types of bullying, and in addition, how bullying impacts schools, teachers, and the community. Finally, it is assumed that the literature identifies preventative methods and intervention for bullying to be employed in our schools today.

Definition of Terms

For clarity of understanding, the following terms are defined:

Bullying: “the unprovoked physical or psychological abuse of an individual by one student or a group of students over time to create an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse” (Whitted & Dupper, 2005, p. 168).

Physical Bully: “often hit, kick, or shove their victims” (Milsom & Gallo, 2006, p. 12).

Reactive Bully: “individuals who are often both a bully and a victim” (Milsom & Gallo, 2006, p. 12).

Relational Bully: “focus on excluding one person from their peer group and usually do so through verbal threats and spreading rumors” (Milsom & Gallo, 2006, p. 12).

Verbal Bully: “use words to harm others through name-calling, insulting, making racist comments, or harsh teasing” (Milsom & Gallo, 2006, p. 12).

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study is that, although several sources of literature are reviewed, all aspects of literature related to bullying are not included.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Bullying has become a prevalent issue in our schools today as well as a cause for great concern. Prevention and intervention strategies need to be considered in order to address the issue of bullying in our schools. Bullying should be addressed by both the school and community as well as the students' parents. In order for this to be done a clear understanding of bullying must exist, as well as ways to intervene as early as possible and prevent this behavior from occurring. This chapter includes information about bullies, victims of bullying, and bully-victims. This chapter also includes information about how bullying impacts schools and parents. Finally, this chapter includes strategies for prevention and intervention.

It is evident that bullying is a learned behavior. Parents, schools, and the community need to work together to teach students preventative measures against bullying. Beginning at an early age, children should be encouraged to develop positive relationships. Parents and schools should be aware of the characteristics of bullying and should be able to recognize these characteristics. It is important for the community, parents, and the school to distinguish between bullying behavior and what is considered to be natural or typical childhood behavior. Effective intervention and prevention techniques should be viewed and implemented in our schools. The parents must also play a role in implementation of effective techniques in order to ensure success in preventing bullying behavior.

In recent years violence in our schools has become a cause for great concern. The concern for violence in schools today has led many schools to adopt policies where violence is not tolerated. A safe and productive environment for children to learn is what schools want to achieve. Creating a policy where violence is not tolerated is the first

step. Schools must also consider how to teach children to correct their violent behaviors. Bullying is considered to be a form of violence and should also not be tolerated in schools. Schools and parents should work together to model appropriate behavior and send the message that bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

The community, parents, and schools have the ability to create a positive climate by modeling and demonstrating acceptance. Modeling behaviors such as respect, compassion, and sympathy for others will provide an example of what is expected of them. The community, parents, and schools should also set clear rules that define expectations of what acceptable behavior consists of.

Bullies

It may be difficult to distinguish between a bully and someone who is displaying aggressive behaviors or appears to be gossiping or spreading rumors. Research indicates that bullying is often times dismissed as a normal part of childhood and/or adolescence (Elinoff et al., 2004). Although the behaviors listed here may be mistaken for bullying, they may also be an indication that bullying exists. It is important to remember that bullying is taking place when someone intentionally and frequently tries to gain power over an individual with the intent of being hostile or malicious (Lumsden, 2002). For example, a student may hit another student one time because they were angry. This would not be considered bullying because the act was not done repeatedly. It happened on only one occasion.

It is important to remember that bullying includes repeated acts with intention to harm their victims. Liepe-Levinson and Levinson (2005) identified bullying as the conscious, intentional, and hostile acts that are done with the intent to terrorize and harm others, and to make the victim feel threatened that it may lead to further aggression. It is

important to note the difference between some forms of gossip and aggression and the deliberate act of bullying. The definitions on page eight give a clear description of what bullying consists of and should aid in distinguishing the difference between gossip, normal childhood behavior, and an individual who is behaving like a bully.

The number of bullies has increased in recent years and bullying has become more of a problem in our schools today. In the 1980's a survey was conducted to determine an estimate of how frequently students were being bullied. The survey indicated that 6-7 percent of students were considered bullies (Olweus, 2003). According to Lumsden (cited in Whitted & Duper, 2005), approximately one of five students classify themselves as a bully. This indicates that an increased number of bullies are present in our schools today. It is important to be aware of the problem and how to identify what bullying behavior looks like in order to decrease the amount of bullying taking place.

Bullies may differ in the different types of aggression that they use against their targets, but many bullies have similar characteristics (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). Smokowski and Kopasz (2005) revealed characteristics that easily identify a bully, including: hot tempered and impulsive; low tolerance for frustration; difficulty processing social information; and often interpret other's behavior as being antagonistic when it is not (p. 102).

It is important to keep in mind that bullies may not always be the outcast and/or they may not be disliked by most people. Bullies are usually disliked by their peers in adolescence, but they tend to be popular with other children in the lower grades who are aggressive (Pellegrini, 1999). Research indicates that bullies have greater ease when it comes to making friends than other children (Nansel et al., 2001).

The word bully usually creates thoughts of an enemy. Most targets do not think of a bully as a friend. According to Simmons (2002), often times the closest girlfriends are caught in a circle of emotional abuse. These perpetrators are usually unaware that they are crossing a line with their friends (Simmons, 2002). These girls are usually possessive and bossy toward their friends. According to Simmons (2002), both the target and the bully incorporate their behavior into their concept of friendship. This type of bully is usually attached to their target and looks at their target as a friend. According to Simmons (2002, p. 35), manipulation of friend relationships by bullying is a way to “establish central position and dominate the definition of the group’s boundaries.” This type of bully is attempting to gain power over the group of friends. They target their friends in order to be in control. Often times the bully is jealous of one of their friends and begins to target members of their social group to gain power over them.

Bullies can be divided into two subgroups in relation to popularity. The subgroups include popular aggressive bullies and unpopular aggressive bullies (Farmer et al., 2002). The popular aggressive bully socializes with other children who are considered to be popular. These bullies do not appear to run into considerable social stigma that stems from their aggression (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). Unpopular aggressive bullies are usually rejected or ignored by the other children and use aggression as a way to receive attention (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). The popular aggressive bully would not be considered an outcast, but would still be considered a bully.

Many bullies hold positive attitudes toward violence. They believe that violence can be used to solve a problem they may have or be used as a way to get what they want (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). Bullies are often rewarded, which in turn reinforces their bullying behavior. Smokowski and Kopasz (2005) discussed rewards that bullies may

receive for engaging in this type of behavior. Rewards include: cigarettes; money; prestige; and gaining and/or maintaining dominance over their victim.

Bullies are more likely to engage in other behaviors that may be considered a problem. Research indicates that bullies may be more likely to engage in drinking and smoking than their peers who are not considered bullies (Nansel et al., 2001). In most cases the bully demonstrates a lack of problem solving skills and often demonstrates poor achievement in school compared to the bully's peers (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). Bullying in childhood may lead to further problems in adulthood. Research indicates that adults who were considered to be childhood bullies are five times as likely to have a criminal record by the time they reach the age of 30 years, compared to their peers who were not considered bullies (Oliver & Oaks, 1994).

There is not one defining reason as to why children turn into bullies; however, research indicates that environmental factors may play a role in whether a child will become a bully. Smokowski and Kopasz (2005) indicated that bullies often come from families that are troubled. The environment that the child is raised in plays a huge role in how the child chooses to act.

Environmental factors that may contribute to the development of bullying behaviors have been examined. Parents are generally hostile, rejecting, and indifferent toward their children (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). The father figure is usually considered weak if his presence is noted at all and the mother tends to isolate, have few friends and may have a permissive parenting style (Curtner-Smith, 2000, p. 169).

Minimal supervision of their child is noted and too often parents do not know where their child is or what activities their child is engaging in (Roberts, 1988). Children should be sent a message at an early age that aggression is unacceptable. Aggression

toward siblings, peers, and/or teachers may develop if this is not taught. If the child is not told that bullying behavior is unacceptable the behavior will likely continue.

Inconsistent discipline and/or power assertive techniques may be used to discipline their child and manage their behavior at the time (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). This teaches the child to handle their frustrations inappropriately and may lead to bullying behavior.

Punishment of the child is physical or may be in the form of an angry, emotional outburst. This is often followed by long periods of time during which the child is ignored (Roberts, 1988). This results in the child learning that aggressive behaviors are acceptable and can be used to solve a problem. A bully will imitate these behaviors learned in their home environment to reach their goals.

According to the National Schools Safety Center (cited in Elinoff, et al., 2004), “boys are three to four times more likely than girls to engage in physical bullying” (p. 891). Although females bully less than their male counterparts their behavior should not be overlooked. According to Crick and Grotpeter (1995), female bullying behavior typically includes relational aggression. The type of bullying behavior is typically subtle and manipulative. Crick and Grotpeter (1995, p. 711) identified common female bullying behaviors as relational bullying and they include: purposefully withdrawing friendship in order to hurt or control; exclusion; purposeful manipulation; slander and/or name calling

Relational bullying may be more difficult to identify and may easily be overlooked. Although relational bullying is more common among females, males may also use this form of bullying on their victims. Relational bullying may take the form of the popular cheerleader who has started to spread rumors or the new girl in school being excluded because she does not have the right clothes to fit in. Bullying takes many forms and it

may be confusing to identify if the behavior occurring is actually bullying. It is important to remember that bullying is a repeated act that is done with the intention of harming someone else.

Children who bully may experience difficulties throughout their childhood and possibly even into adulthood. Children who exhibit bullying behavior frequently experience long-term effects because of their actions (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). Carney and Merrell (cited in Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005) report that a large number of bullies do not do as well academically as their non-bullying peers, and later in life bullies do not meet their potential in employment settings by showing poor performance on the job. Bullies may also suffer from other long-term effects, such as too much drinking or use of drugs. According to Kaltiala-Heino et al. (2000), bullies are more likely to engage in excessive drinking and use other substances than victims and/or bully-victims. It is important to be able to recognize bullying behavior and intervene with the behavior to prevent long-term negative consequences from occurring to our youth.

Targets and Bully-Targets

Targets are the recipients of abuse from their peers (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). Targets of bullying are repeatedly exposed to various forms of aggression over time. Bullying targets can be classified into different categories. According to Smokowski and Kopasz (2005), there are three different categories, including the passive target, the submissive target, and the aggressive target. The majority of targets of bullying are either the passive or submissive type. Passive or submissive targets of bullying account for 80-85 percent of all targets (Olweus, 2003).

The passive target is considered to have compliant behavior and is considered to be non aggressive for the most part (Brockenbrough, Cornell, & Loper et al., 2002). The

passive target may be aggressive at times but is usually not aggressive toward others. The submissive target also shows compliant behavior and is considered to be non aggressive (Brockenbrough et al., 2002). The submissive target is not aggressive toward other at all. The aggressive target is far less common than the passive or submissive target. Almost two-thirds of bullying targets are either passive or submissive; the remaining one-third of bullying targets are labeled as aggressive targets (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005).

Like bullies, targets of bullying come in different shapes and sizes (Coloroso, 2003). According to Coloroso (2003), “targets can be big, small, bright or not so bright; some may be attractive and some may not be attractive; some may be popular and some may be disliked by almost everybody” (p. 43). Targets of bullying could be just about anyone. According to Coloroso (2003), targets of bullying could include: the kid who is new at school; the kid who is the youngest in the school and because of this is usually smaller; the kid who has been traumatized; the kid who avoids peers and is extremely sensitive; the kid who finds it hard to ask for help; the kid who is submissive; the kid who is anxious, lacks self confidence, and is easily influenced by doing things to please others; the kid who exhibits behaviors that easily annoy others; the kid who is unwilling to fight; the kid who is shy or the kid that is rich or poor; the kid who is of a race or ethnicity that is viewed or sexual orientation is viewed as inferior to the bully; the kid who wears braces or glasses; and the kid who has acne or other skin condition that is easily noticeable (pp. 43, 44).

Anyone could be a target of bullying, but children who possess certain characteristics may be more likely than their peers to become a victim of bullying abuse.

Targets of bullying tend to have identifying characteristics. According to Leff (2007), targets of bullying are likely to appear sad more often than their peers, anxious, withdrawn, and have a lower self-esteem than their peers. They also become increasingly maladjusted in school and avoidant as time goes on. Smokowski and Kopasz (2005) also identified characteristics that a target is likely to have, including: physically small stature; weak, and frail compared to bullies; unsuccessful at sports or physical activities; quiet, anxious, cautious, insecure, and sensitive; poor communication and problem solving skills; targets demonstrate poor social and emotional adjustment; greater difficulty making friends, fewer relationships with peers as compared to non-targets, and greater levels of loneliness; relate better to parents and teachers compared to their peers; and demonstrate poor self-esteem (pp. 103, 104).

Targets of bullying may not know how to react when they experience aggression from their peers. When a target is attacked, many may react by crying or withdrawing themselves. This is more likely to occur with elementary age children (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). As stated, targets of bullying tend to have poor communication and problem solving skills; this may result in targets being less likely to initiate a conversation as they lack the skills needed to be assertive (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005).

Targets also frequently view themselves negatively due to the abuse they suffer from bullying. They repeatedly view themselves as failures, unattractive, unintelligent, and insignificant (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). Due to the attitudes that targets hold when experiencing the abuse of bullying they often times blame themselves (Carney & Merrell, cited in Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005).

Due to the lack of self-esteem and assertiveness of many targets, they are not willing to stand up for themselves and the bullying will frequently go unreported (Carney

& Merrell, cited in Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). When a target does not report the abuse they endure, the bully is likely to continue targeting the individual. Unwillingness on behalf of the target to report what is going on may act as a signal for the bully to continue their victimizing and make the victim a target for further re-victimization (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). On the other hand, targets may also fall victim to bullying due to the fact that they are well liked and well adjusted. The bully may feel jealousy toward the target (Simmons, 2002).

When targets are attacked by bullies, they may react in different ways. When a bully strikes, many targets react by crying or withdrawing (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). This is more likely to occur at the elementary level than the middle or high school level. As stated above, the targets of bullying tend to be quiet, cautious, insecure, and lack communication skills as compared to their peers. As a result, targets of bullying will be less likely to initiate conversation and they also lack the assertiveness skills their peers who are not bullied demonstrate (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). Adolescents who are less likely to initiate conversation and lack assertiveness skills will likely experience impact in other areas of their life as well. According to Smokowski and Kopasz (2005), targets of bullying are often times abandoned by their peers, have few friends, and in some cases no friends, and are often found alone during social times. This includes the playground and the lunch room.

“When a child gives in to the attack by the bully and gives the bully what he/she wants by showing distress, fear, or apathy, or fails to respond assertively the target changes both emotionally and physically” (Coloroso, 2003, p. 46). The target will become someone completely different than they were before the bullying began. According to Coloroso (2003), the target will become someone they were not before the

bullying began and will now be the target of future attacks due to the target showing the bully that they are weak. The target has now given their attacker the response they desire. The bullying will continue as long as the target gives the bully the response he/she desires. Coloroso (2003) also states that “the guilt, shame, and sense of failure that is felt by the target who is unable to cope with the bullying will add to the destruction of his/her well being” (p. 46). The target is likely to become more isolated from their peers, show a decrease in concentration on school work, and will likely develop survival skills rather than social skills (Coloroso, 2003). A child who is isolated from their peers and lacks social skills is an excellent target for a bully. Their inability to interact socially with their peers will contribute to isolation and make them an obvious target. Their lack of a social support system will be a clear signal for the bully to continue their behavior without anyone who will intervene and support the target.

A large number of youth may fall into the category of both bully and target. These adolescents would be classified as bully-targets. Bully-targets have been victimized themselves by either peers or adults. These individuals take their frustrations to the other end of the spectrum and become bullies themselves. Becoming a bully will allow them to escape being victimized by others as they now become the person who has been tormenting them, the bully themselves.

According to Leff (2007), a substantial number of children can be classified as bully-targets. Holt et al. (2007) report that six percent of students fall under the category of bully-targets. Children who are considered to be bully-targets had the highest rates of bullying and the highest rates of victimization (Leff, 2007). It is important to have an understanding of the challenges that these children face as well as what they are experiencing in their day to day lives.

The bully-targets had the highest rates of victimization as well as the highest rates of bullying as compared to their peers. This is a group of students that should not be overlooked. According to Leff (2007), bully-targets experienced high rates of victimization that included child maltreatment and sexual abuse. In many cases bully-targets come from unstable households. According to Sarazan (2002), bully-targets live in a household where there is minimal supervision, parents or guardians and discipline are not consistent, and parental affection is lacking. Bully-targets do not get help from home when they themselves are victimized. In many cases the home environment of the bully-target contributes to their victimization and they choose to escape this problem by becoming a bully themselves.

Bully-targets are considered to be more aggressive than their peers who are considered to be bullies alone. According to Pellegrini (1999), bully-targets are frequently considered to be hot-tempered and react with antagonism against other students who unintentionally aggravate them. Bully-targets are more likely to have an attitude that supports aggression than their non-bullying peers. They are more likely to carry weapons and be involved in a physical fight than their peers (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005).

Bully-targets may be difficult to identify due to their dual role. There are certain characteristics that bully-targets may possess. According to Andreou (2001), they are usually not accepted socially by their peers and most have low self-esteem. They are considered to be highly neurotic, and show a lack of ability to solve problems.

Short and Long Term Effects of Bullying on Targets

Targets of bullying may experience both short and long term effects from the abuse that they have endured. Several short term effects of bullying are possible.

According to Smokowski and Kopasz (2005) a short-term effect of bullying may include targets increasingly see themselves as outcasts and failures. According to Brockenbrough (2002) and Kaltiala-Heino et al. (2000), a positive correlation with anxiety and depression may exist for victims of bullying. The development of an eating disorder may also occur (Bond et al., 2001). According to Beale (2001) and Roberts (1996), chronic absenteeism, decrease in academic performance, increase in apprehension, increase in loneliness, feelings of abandonment, and possible suicidal ideation may occur.

According to Smokowski and Kopasz (2005, pp. 104, 105), targets may experience physical injury such as bruises, cuts, and scratches; torn clothing and damaged property.

Targets are often victimized during school hours. Many targets of bullying are reluctant to go to school due to the abuse they endure and how it makes them feel to be the target of bullying. According to Foltz-Gray (1996), seven percent of eighth graders in the United States stayed home from school on at least one occasion during the month due to being the target of bullying. Glew et al. (cited in Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005), stated that it has been reported that more than one in five students at the middle school level avoid the bathroom due to fear of being bullied. According to Hazler et al. (1992), approximately 20 percent of students are scared throughout much of the school day.

Unfortunately, targets may also experience long-term effects from bullying. Several possible long-term effects may occur. According to Coloroso (2003), one effect of bullying targets may experience is that they show a sudden lack of interest in school or possibly even refusal to attend school. This will ultimately lead to lower levels of achievement than their peers. According to Seals and Young (2003), targets of bullying are found to be more depressed than their peers who do not experience bullying.

Depression may lead to self defeating behaviors and interpersonal problems (Seals & Young, 2003). Targets who have children may be overprotective parents leading to their children lacking conflict-resolution skills (McNamara & McNamara, cited in Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005).

From this long list of short and long-term effects of victimization, it is evident that bullying behavior needs to be identified and stopped to prevent any more targets falling subject to this abuse. It is important to recognize behaviors that are considered to be bullying and not just stand by and watch children in our schools today become the target of this behavior.

Parents

Parents can play a large role in the prevention/intervention of their child being involved in bullying. It is important for parents to be aware of the warning signs indicating that their child is either a bully or a target of bullying. Parents who recognize this behavior will be able to intervene with the bullying and possibly prevent their child from being further targeted or targeting others.

Parents should take a closer look at their child's behavior to determine if a cause for concern is necessary. Coloroso (2003) identifies some warning signs for parents to be aware of in order to determine if their child is a bully or has the potential to become a bully and they include: likes to dominate others; uses other people to get what they want; has difficulty seeing other peoples point of view; concerned with their own wants and pleasures, not caring about the needs, rights, and feelings of others; commonly hurts other kids when no parental or adult supervision is available; view weaker siblings and/or classmates as prey; uses blame, criticism, and false allegations as a way to protect their own faults onto others; refuses to accept responsibility for the way they act; inability to

consider the short and long-term effects of their behaviors as well as the unintended consequences of their current behavior; and craves attention (p. 20). If parents identify these characteristics in their child, they should take a closer look at their child's behavior to determine the potential for bullying. The child who exhibits these behaviors may be bullying others when parents, guardians, or other adults are not present. Parents can be positive role models and teach their children positive ways to interact with others.

Parents should also be aware of the warning signs that their child is being victimized. Coloroso (2003) identified warning signs that a child is being victimized and they include: shows an abrupt lack of interest in going to school or refuses to go to school; takes an unusual route to school from what is normal or takes a path to school that is out of the way and more time consuming; drop in academic performance and/or drop in grades; withdrawal from family and school activities and wanting to be left alone; increased appetite after school claiming they were not hungry at school or they lost their lunch money; takes parents money and makes excuses for where the money went; rushes to the bathroom immediately upon arrival at home which may be an indication the child is afraid to use the bathroom at school due to fear of being bullied in the bathroom; sad, sullen, angry, or scared after receiving a phone call or email; use of derogatory or demeaning language when talking about peers or stops talking about peers in general; comes home with disheveled, torn, or missing clothing; and injuries are not consistent with the explanation provided by the child (pp. 50-52).

These signs indicate that a closer look should be taken at what goes on at school with the child. These warning signs indicate that a child may be a victim of bullying and they are not getting the help they need to prevent this abuse from happening to them.

Simply spending more time with children and their friends may clue parents into reasons why their child behaves the way they do.

In some cases parents or guardians may encourage this behavior. Parenting style and home environment play a role in the behavior of a child. Environmental characteristics that encourage bullying behaviors have been identified. Oliver and Oaks (1994) identified these characteristics and they include: cool to cold environment or lack of warmth and lack of involvement in the child's life by the primary caregiver; very few rules and lack of structure in the family which shows a permissive attitude toward the child's behavior; clear limits are not set for the child's behavior; social isolation and lack of involvement in the community is frequent; conflicts and discord are frequent in the household; ineffective child management techniques are employed; rigidity is frequently used to maintain order in the household by using domineering, authoritarian childrearing methods; and use of physical punishment and angry emotional outbursts (p. 200). This type of environment fosters the bully's behavior and teaches them that this type of behavior is acceptable. Parents can work toward changing this environment and teaching their child how to interact in a positive manner that does not lead to abusive behaviors.

Parents should be positive role models for their children by modeling behaviors they want their children to exhibit. According to Coloroso (2003, p. 106), there are ways for parents to prevent their children from acting in an abusive manner. There are things parents can do and they include: intervene immediately with discipline; create opportunities for their children to "do good"; nurture empathy; teach children friendship skills, and assertive, respectful, and peaceful ways to relate to others; and closely monitor what your child watches on TV, the music they listen to, video games they are playing, and what they are doing on the computer. These tips will help parents to have a better

understanding of what is going on with their children and will teach them proper ways to interact that do not enforce violent behaviors.

Prevention/Intervention

There are several prevention and intervention strategies that may be effective in reducing bullying in our schools. Several recommendations exist in regards to approaching the problem of bullying. Agreement has been reached on the fact that a holistic approach should be employed to ensure greater success. According to Milsom and Gallo (2006), effective bullying programs are comprehensive. A comprehensive approach includes targeting the students, schools, families, and the community. According to Whitted and Dupper (2005), the most effective approaches for prevention and minimization of bullying in the schools target bullies, targets, bystanders, families, and communities. All parties should have an understanding of bullying and be willing to participate with prevention and intervention programs in the school. Gaining cooperation from key personnel in the school is an important first step in the successful intervention of bullying (Milsom & Gallo, 2006).

Students should understand that they play a huge role in the prevention and intervention of bullying. Students should be made aware that they have the responsibility to intervene if they observe another student being bullied (Whitted & Dupper, 2005). Students who witness bullying taking place should tell an adult immediately so that situation can be dealt with properly. Some students may not want to tell an adult they have witnessed bullying. In order to make sure that students have a way to report bullying they see in the school there should be bully boxes in different areas of the school. Students can anonymously drop a note in the box about what they have seen. With this option students can say as much or as little as they choose.

In order to determine the severity of the problem a survey may be distributed. According to Rigby (cited in Whitted & Dupper, 2005), the distribution of a needs assessment is a crucial step toward the prevention of bullying taking place in our schools. A needs assessment will allow for increased awareness among school staff. Increased awareness regarding the prevalence, nature, and consequences of bullying will exist if the needs assessment is utilized (Whitted & Dupper, 2005).

According to Greene (2006), interventions that are effective in reducing bullying in the school include collaboration efforts at the individual, classroom, school, and community levels. As mentioned above, this also includes collaboration between the school, parents, and community members. The more people that are involved in the process of preventing and intervening with bullying the greater the chances for increased success.

Interventions must be designed to aid in changing the overall climate of the school (Whitted & Dupper, 2005). Partial implementation of bullying prevention programs will likely hurt the process and decrease the success rate. A common mistake made by schools is partial implementation of bullying prevention programs due to time constraints (Whitted & Dupper, 2005). Not implementing bully prevention programs fully could result in little or no improvement. It is important to make sure that enough time is available in order to implement the program chosen. Several options for intervention and prevention of bullying are available. Two of these options are discussed here.

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program may be considered to prevent bullying in the school. This program is comprehensive and the target age group is for elementary and middle school students (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). The program is implemented

by teachers and school staff. The intervention and prevention program was created with the intention of impacting the school and classroom environments, students, teachers, and parents (Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004).

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program has four key components, which involve creating a school and home environment that enforces non-violent behaviors. Olweus (2003) reports that the four key components of this program include: warmth, positive interest, and adult involvement; firm limits are set on unacceptable behavior; consistent application of non-punitive, non-physical sanctions for unacceptable behavior or rule violations; and adults who act as authorities and as positive role models (p. 15). These four key components have been categorized into methods to be used at school, in the classroom, and at individual levels (Olweus, 2003). Measures that can be taken at the school level include: administration of the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire which is filled out anonymously by students; formation of a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee; training staff and allotted time for discussion groups; and effective supervision during lunch and recess. Measures taken at the classroom level include: classroom and school rules about bullying; regular classroom meetings; and meeting with students' parents. Finally, measures taken at the individual level include: individual meetings with students who are identified as bullies; individual meetings with targets of bullying; meeting with parents of students involved; and development of individual intervention plans (Olweus, 2003, p. 16).

Implementation and success of this program largely depends on school staff and parental involvement. The more people that are aware and on board with the implementation of this program the greater the chance for its success. Implementation of this program leads to a restructuring of the social environment of the school, and allows

for fewer opportunities for bullying and fewer rewards for bullies (Olweus, 2003). The fewer rewards a bully receives the less likely they are to continue their behavior.

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program can lead to successful prevention and intervention. Feinburg (2003) identifies steps that schools should take to implement the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program and they include: school wide foundation that offers universal interventions; value system based on caring, respect, and personal responsibility; clear behavioral expectations and consequences for inappropriate behavior; skill development and increased adult supervision; parental involvement; early interventions that target risk factors as well as teach positive behavior which includes lessons, discussion, and parent meetings; and intense individual intervention that give both bullies and victims individual support which is done through meeting with parents and students and counseling (p. 10). Feinburg (2003) states that the goal is to create an environment where adults stop bullying immediately, students learn positive behaviors to replace abusive behaviors and become part of the anti-bullying solution, and needs of individual students are met. The steps listed here will aid in creating a warm environment and setting the example the bullying behavior will not be tolerated in our schools today.

Research has shown that the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is effective in reducing the amount of bullying occurring in the school. According to Olweus (2003), the amount of bullying behavior was reduced by 50 percent or more in Bergen, Norway after implementation of this program. According to Olweus (2003), replications of the program in the United States show similar results, although somewhat weaker, results were noted. Behaviors such as vandalism, fighting, drunkenness, and truancy were also reduced. This is an indication that anti-social behavior in general was decreased.

Improvements were also shown in the social climate of the classroom as well increased satisfaction with school life (Olweus, 2003).

Another option that may be considered is the Bullybusters program. This program has been proven to be a successful approach in the intervention of bullying (Milsom & Gallo, 2006). According to Beale (2001), an anti-bullying program was introduced to the counseling and drama staff to be presented to a middle school audience. Initially surveys were conducted that relayed information pertaining to students' and teachers' perceptions regarding bullying (Milsom & Gallo, 2006). The surveys produced shocking results. The results showed the teachers were in most cases unaware of bullying behaviors, whereas the students indicated that they believed bullying was a significant concern.

A drama called Bullybusters was written for the purpose of educating students on how to deal with bullies (Milsom & Gallo, 2006). Bullybusters was initially presented to sixth graders and later implemented at the elementary level (Beale, 2001). According to Milsom and Gallo (2006), Bullybusters includes: actors(students) performing realistic and common bullying situations; a discussion that follows the performance; students process their own feelings pertaining to the performance; and students discuss alternative ways of handling bullying situations (p.14).

When the Bullybusters drama is complete the principal is asked to speak. According to Milsom and Gallo (2006), upon completion of the play the principal reinforces the concepts that were addressed in the play by letting students know that a zero tolerance policy will be implemented regarding bullying in the school. Materials are provided to teachers so they could continue to reiterate the concepts that were introduced in the play in their classrooms.

Classroom discussions may be held after the play in order to have an understanding of how the students feel about the issue. The play reiterates the point that the school would like students to be actively involved. The school hopes that students will be actively involved in aiding the school's efforts to decrease bullying (Milsom & Gallo, 2006). Getting the students involved will aid in the intervention of bullying. The school's efforts in implementing the program will aid in prevention of bullying.

Students are made aware of the anti-bullying rules that will be enforced in the school and they are asked to sign an anti-bullying agreement (Milsom & Gallo, 2006). Signing this agreement means that students understand that they are not to bully and they should look for and report any bullying behavior observed (Milsom & Gallo, 2006). At this point students, teachers, and school staff are fully aware of what bullying consists of and that it will not be tolerated in the school. The final step is to involve and notify the parents of the school's bullying policy. This is done through newsletters and also by identifying steps for parents to take to help their child deal with bullying (Milsom & Gallo, 2006). Parents or guardians can also talk with their child about how they are feeling about the school's policy. They should encourage their child to talk with them about any bullying that they have experienced or seen.

The implementation of the Bullybusters program showed positive results. According to Beale (2001), a 20% reduction in the number of bullying incidents was observed at the middle school level. Other positive aspects of the Bullybusters program were also reported. Teachers reported having an increased awareness of what bullying consists of and teachers also said that more students began reporting incidents of bullying to them (Milsom & Gallo, 2006). The Bullybusters program is one

intervention/prevention that may be considered to reduce the occurrence of bullying in our schools today.

When considering an appropriate method for intervention and prevention of bullying for our schools today there are many options. Elinoff, et al. (2004) created a checklist for designing an anti-bullying program in the school and the steps include: become familiar with any relevant state laws and/or policies; and assess the school's bullying problem with a survey, and input from school staff, students, parents, and community members. The next step is to develop a policy that includes: a description of expected behavior; prohibit bullying on school grounds and at school events; define the procedure for reporting bullying for students, parents, and teachers; implement a procedure for investigation of reported incidents; and set clear consequences for bullying behaviors (p. 895). After a policy is developed the next steps to be taken include: create an awareness of bullying policies through handouts, assemblies, class and parent meetings, and include policy in student handbook; review empirically based programs to find one that fits the school needs; distribute policies to all school staff and provide training to all school staff; set goals for the school and make them known to the school and community; and continuously monitor the progress of bullying procedures and make adjustments as needed (p. 895).

It is important to make sure that a school is ready to begin implementation of an anti-bullying program before the process begins. Using the checklist provided here will allow leaders to identify what needs to be done in order to begin. Bullying prevention and intervention is crucial for our schools today, so that children may experience a safe and supportive learning environment.

Chapter Three: Summary, Critical Analysis, and Recommendations

Introduction

Bullying in the schools has been an ongoing concern for students, parents, teachers, counselors, and the community. Bullying is a problem that continues to affect children in our schools today. This chapter includes a summary of key points and a critical analysis of literature from Chapter Two. The conclusion of this chapter includes recommendations based on the analysis.

Summary of Key Points

A review of literature clearly indicated that bullying has a large impact on the school's environment, as well as all parties involved. Identification is the first step in reducing bullying. Many people brush bullying off as "normal" childhood behavior, which proliferates the problem. The identification of a bully will aid in prevention and intervention of the problem.

When a bully has been identified, it is important to promptly intervene. Prompt responses to bullying will reduce the chances of bullies believing that they are entitled to continue their behavior. The targets of bullying as well as schools, teachers, and parents should be involved in this process in order to ensure success.

Identifying targets and/or identifying the warning signs that a child is being victimized by a bully is an important aspect in decreasing violence in our schools. Preventing children in our schools from being bullied is an important part of teachers, administrators, and parents role. Targets should not be overlooked. Targets of bullying need as much attention as bullies themselves. If targets are given the attention they need they are less likely to become bully-targets.

Preventative methods should be viewed in depth for clarity of understanding. Prevention methods should then be employed to protect the safe environment of our schools. There are several different prevention methods that may be employed. The methods should be viewed by school personnel and decided upon together. It is important to have all people who may be involved with the prevention and/or intervention on board and aware of the policy being implemented. Schools, parents, and community members should all be aware of the policy that is being adopted. This awareness will help to ensure the success rate of the program and/or methods chosen to prevent and intervene with bullying.

Critical Analysis

Schools today need to be more educated and have a greater knowledge of how to deal with violent acts such as bullying. In several cases, bullying behaviors are overlooked and not taken seriously. Educators should serve as positive role models for our students. Overlooking bullying behavior does not set the example that should exist.

A clear understanding of the different types of bullying that may occur is imperative to prevent and intervene with this form of school violence. Recognizing the different types of bullying behavior is the first step in knowing what kind of action should be taken. Knowing how to deal with the threat of bullying, as well as identifying and acknowledging this form of violence, are both critical components to prevent this type of violence in the school.

Educators play a powerful role in the life of children. Educators have the responsibility to be positive role models. Ideally, educators should be involved in the implementation of effective anti-bullying programs, as well as set an example of the behaviors that they desire their students to imitate.

Prevention and intervention programs should be implemented by school personnel in our schools. It is important to make students aware that bullying will not be tolerated in the school and that it should be reported if anyone witnesses this abusive behavior. There are several different methods that may be employed to prevent and intervene bullying. All school personnel should be aware of the school's policy on bullying and should be part of the prevention and intervention process.

Preventing and intervening with violence in the schools is essential in our society. The policy on school violence should be clear to students, parents, and school faculty. The policy should be printed in the student handbook so that all students are aware of the policy and have easy access. With this policy in place there is no room for question. It is clear that violence in the school will continue if nothing is done to stop it. It is important to implement prevention and intervention programs in our schools when children are still at a young age. Implementing these programs at the elementary or middle school level will show students and parents that violence will not be tolerated. It is important for all schools to take a stand to prevent and to begin to intervene with bullying.

Recommendations

The formation of a committee that addresses violence in the school is one means to decrease bullying in the school. The committee should include various people that have an impact on students' lives, including an administrator, teachers, a school counselor or school psychologist, and possibly a community leader. Distributing a survey to determine the schools', parents', and community's view on the prevalence of bullying will give school staff members a better idea of the severity of the problem. It is important to ask students what they think about bullying in the school and if they believe that bullying is a problem. A holistic approach is the best way to address bullying in our

schools. A holistic approach includes the support from the entire school staff as well as parents.

The implementation of an anti-bullying program will likely lead to a decrease in the amount of bullying taking place in the school. The Olewus Bullying Prevention Program and Bullybusters are two methods of prevention/intervention that research suggests significantly decreases bullying. These are just two examples of the many options that can be used to prevent/intervene with bullying in our schools.

Prevention and intervention procedures should only be employed if enough time is available to carry out the program to the fullest extent. It is important to make sure that enough time is available to address all aspects of the prevention and intervention program. It is essential that educators make it known that bullying will not be tolerated in our schools. Choosing a method to prevent and intervene in this type of behavior is the first step. Students will understand that bullying is unacceptable when the program is fully implemented.

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