BULLYING IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

THE ROLE OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS AND TEACHERS IN PREVENTING BULLYING

By

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Abstract

Research suggests that bullying is a problem in schools throughout the nation. Children spend the vast majority of their life attending school. School counselors and teachers are in a unique position to identify, prevent and educate students about bullying. The purpose of this project was to examine the role of school counselors and teachers in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District (FNSBSD) in preventing bullying in their schools. The participants of this study were 8 school counselors and teachers from four middle schools in the FNSBSD. Data for this research was collected using an anonymous online survey utilizing www.SurveyMonkey.com. The results of the survey indicated that bullying is an issue in the four middle schools selected for the study in FNSBSD. Of the four major types of bullying discussed in my research (cyber, relation, physical, and verbal), there was a consensus among the participants that cyber and relational bullying were the most prevalent and problematic in their schools. Recommendations for future research include expanding on this study to include a larger sample of schools and participants, suggestions for strengthening staff training and implementing school based youth courts in FNSBSD schools as part of the bully intervention and prevention program.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of Problem

Bullying is a societal problem with far-reaching consequences. It impacts the victim, the perpetrator, and society. Adolescents spend the vast majority of their day in school. Since schools seem to be ground zero for bullying, the perspective of these professionals is crucial to understanding the detrimental consequences of bullying (Austin, Reynolds and Barnes, 2012). This study aims to examine bullying from the people on the front lines: school counselors and teachers. Research that reflects the perspective of middle school counselors and teachers in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District (FNSBSD) regarding bullying is scarce. Therefore, this project will shed some light on the important role of these professionals in combating bullying.

Research Questions

The following questions will be addressed in the literature review:

- What is bullying and how is it defined in an educational context?
- What are the different types of bullying prevalent among adolescents?
- What are the potential psychological impacts of bullying on adolescent mental health?
- What is the role of school counselors and teachers in preventing bullying?

Chapter 2: Rationale

While conducting preliminary research on bullying, I utilized the University of Alaska's Online Library database, as well as the Google search engine. I discovered that there was very little information available about bullying in the FNSBSD. The plethora of research available regarding bullying is widely explored internationally and in other parts of the United States. Additionally, these studies are usually explored from a quantitative perspective. I decided to conduct my research using a mixed approach. However, I was still unable to find any studies, quantitative or qualitative, regarding bullying or the role of school counselors and teachers in preventing bullying in FNSBSD middle schools. To my knowledge, this research would be the first of its kind on this subject, specifically focusing on school counselors and teachers with regards to bullying in FNSBSD middle schools.

Educational Rationale

The impact bullying has on the school atmosphere is far reaching. It hurts the victim, perpetrator, and overall school climate. Victims of repeated bullying are likely to engage in truancy, which can interfere with academic achievement. Perpetrators of bullying are likely to be victims of bullying in the past, have underlining issues at home, or suffer from psychological issues such as repressed anger (Roland, 2002). Teachers, schools, and administrators who have to deal with bullying and bullies on a daily basis are forced to reprioritize their focus. Bullying impedes learning by taking teachers' attention away from the learning environment, their students, and creates distrust in the schools' ability to provide a safe learning environment (Espelage and, 2001). For these reasons, bullying is an epidemic of magnificent proportions that has managed to linger and fester within school environments, that warrants immediate and definitive attention.

According to the Center for Disease Control, the most common types of school violence are fighting, gang violence, school shootings, and electronic or in-person bullying. Traditionally, bullying was somewhat contained to educational institutions and playgrounds, but advancements in technology have given rise to another type of bullying: cyberbullying. Research indicates that the prevalent types of school violence are in person and cyber- bullying (CDC.gov).

Unfortunately, bullying is something that most people encounter at some point during their lives. Bullying has become so embedded in society that it is considered a normalized distorted rite of passage. In surveys conducted by The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2016), it was found that "as many as half of all children are bullied at some time during their school years, and at least 10% are bullied on a regular basis." However, these numbers can be higher due to unreported incidences. In an effort to combat bullying in their schools, most schools in the U.S. have taken significant steps to address bullying in schools.

Fairbanks, Alaska is home to a diverse group of people. The Fairbanks North Star School District's policy regarding bullying is covered under the School Board Policy 1048.2 Intimidating Behavior/Bullying. The policy defines intimidating/bullying behavior as:

Intentional and generally unprovoked attempts by one or more individuals to inflict physical harm or emotional distress upon another person or group is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action. The misbehavior may be direct or indirect. Some examples include but are not limited to:

- Physical intimidation - punching, hitting, poking, choking, hair pulling, beating, biting, unwanted tickling, and encroachment of personal space,

- Verbal intimidation - teasing, tormenting, gossiping, spreading rumors, name-calling, ridicule, and insults,

- Emotional intimidation - rejection, terrorizing, humiliation, ostracizing, or the fearful anticipation by the victim of future attacks,

- Sexual intimidation - sexual propositioning, voyeurism, or escalation to physical contact. Includes but is not limited to indecent exposure, pulling down another's pants, etc.

Actions taken when intimidating behavior/bullying is committed may include:

Elementary Consequences:

1st Offense .... Principal's discretion

2nd Offense .... Up to 3-day short-term suspension, principal's discretion

3rd Offense............................ Up to 5-day short-term suspension, principal's discretion

4th Offense .... Up to 10-day short-term suspension, principal's discretion

Subsequent offense .... Recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion, principal's discretion

Secondary Consequences:

1st Offense .... Principal's discretion

2nd Offense .... Minimum 10-day short-term suspension, principal's discretion

Subsequent offense .... Recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion, principal's discretion

(Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, Administrative Regulations, pp. 70-71).

Since bullying often occurs during adolescence, it is especially problematic. During adolescence, major physical and mental changes take place in the body (Berger, 2014). Thus, bullying during adolescence can negatively affect mental development, stability, and lead to

negative psychological repercussions such as adolescent depression (Roland, 2002). Recently, the topics of bullying and adolescent depression have made their way to the forefront of American society. The tragic events of the Columbine High School shootings made society pay attention to the potentially deadly consequences of bullying. It was widely speculated that at least one of the teenagers involved in the Columbine High School shooting was the victim of school bullying and suffered from depression (Langman, 2009).

Personal Rationale

As an educator, student, and mother, I believe that the subject of bullying is an important topic that deserves immediate attention. I selected this subject as my research topic for that reason. Prior to conducting research on this topic, I was blissfully unaware of how devastating bullying is to adolescent mental health and society.

Reflecting back on my adolescent years, I remember being bullied relentlessly simply because I was an immigrant. However, I was able to pull through my experience seemingly unscathed. I did not shoot up a school, become a bully, or develop mental health problems as a result. The experienced humbled me and made me more aware and empathic toward individuals deemed the so-called "misfits and social rejects" in school and in my neighborhood. However, we live in a completely different society where the consequences of being bullied can lead to tragic events like school shootings or long-term psychological repercussions. Bullying has been considered the "norm" in our society for too long. Society has to take meaningful collective steps to make all forms of bullying unacceptable and an abnormal occurrence in our schools, communities, and lives. It is my intent that this study provides a platform from which future research will build upon.

Chapter 3: Review of Literature

The subject of bullying is multifaceted. In order to understand bullying and the role school counselors and teachers play in preventing bullying in educational institutions, there has to a general idea of: why bullying occurs in the educational setting, how bullying is defined, the different types, and why the subject is important. The research in this literature review is broken into several categories: the various types of bullying, its definition, the impact of bullying on adolescent mental health, and the role of school professionals in preventing bullying.

The research was compiled from a variety of resources to include books, websites, and the UAF online library databases Academic Search Premiere, PsycINFO and Psychology, Masterfile Premier and Behavioral Science Collection.

Theoretical Perspective
Interactionist and Social Cognitive Theories

While conducting the research on bullying and examining the theological frameworks that seek to make sense of its cause, I came across several theories that resonated with my research. The predominant theory often used to understand bullying in the educational setting is the social ecological theory. This theory explains how the individual is directly influenced by external factors such as: peer groups, family, community, school and culture (Bosworth and Judkins, 2014). However, I wanted to explore bullying through a more specific lens. Since bullying is a complex issue, it requires multifaceted theoretical perspectives to help understand it. The two theological paradigms that best help explain bullying in educational settings for my research and the role of school counselors and teachers in its identification, intervention and prevention are: the interactionist and social cognitive theories.

Interactionist Theory

The interactionist theory of sociology views social behavior as best understood in terms of interaction between individuals and groups. The school is the one place where at least three major agents of socialization converge: peers, media, and schools. As a major agent of socialization, the school is a powerful conduit for passing on socially acceptable behaviors. In structured settings like schools, peer groups or cliques thrive and are constantly interacting and learning from each other (Schaefer, 2012, pp. 94-95).

Peer groups have an unprecedented degree of influence over individuals. Therefore, if members of peer groups are engaging in a negative behavior like bullying, it's likely that other members will be influenced by this negative behavior and either join in or be complacent. According to sociologist Edwin Sutherland, "people learn how to behave in social situations whether properly or improperly" (Schaefer, 2004, pp. 182-185). This view is consistent with the social cognitive theory.

Social Cognitive Theory

Bullying is an act of aggression, and individuals are not born bullies. Bullying is learned through observation, reinforcement, and tolerance (Sherer and Nickerson, 2010). According to the social cognitive theory, youth learn and engage in certain behaviors through observational learning and positive reinforcement. In short, observing a behavior and getting away with it, or being praised, encouraged or rewarded for the behavior, will likely lead to it being repeated. Research suggests there is a link between observational factors and bullying behaviors. (Swear, Wang, Berry and Myers, 2014). Youth that is exposed to violence at home are more likely to bully others than youth who are not exposed to violence at home. The same is noted regarding

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youth who associate with violent peers consequently becoming violent themselves (Swear, et al.).

Youth that engage in bullying do so because it yields rewards, whether those rewards are peer or societal acceptance or adult tolerance. Adult tolerance occurs in the school setting by default, usually through inaction. Research indicates that overall, school atmosphere including staff attitude and school policies are vital factors in the prevalence or frequency of aggressive youth behavior (Espelage, Polanin, and Low, 2014). Thusly, if the school environment is unsupportive or negligent regarding the prevalence of aggressive behaviors like bullying in their schools, then it is likely to persist. However, schools with knowledgeable, attentive staff, strong anti-bullying strategies and curriculums, and zero tolerance for bullying help foster a bully-resistant school environment (Bosworth and Judkins, 2014).

The aforementioned paradigms, interactionist and social cognitive, are relevant to my research by addressing how interacting and observing others may lead to an undesired aggressive behavior such as bullying. Bullying is widely considered a cognitive-behavioral occurrence. In short, how an individual perceives information and interprets it results in the behavior (Swearer et al.). School level anti-bullying programs could benefit from focusing their efforts on cognitive behavioral interventions strategies.

Definition of Bullying

The common definition used in the educational and research circles to define bullying was coined by Dr. Dan Olweus. Olweus is considered a pioneer in bullying research for his years of research on bullying in Norway dating back to the 1970's. He defined school bullying as:

> A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. It is a negative action

when someone intentionally inflicts or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon

another basically what is implied in the definition of aggressive behavior in the social

sciences (Olweus, 1997).

This definition is similar to the one in an article by Slonje and Smith (2008), where bullying is

defined as an aggressive, intentional act or behavior that is carried out by a group or an

individual repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself.

Bullying is a form of abuse that is based on an imbalance of power; it can be defined as a

systematic abuse of power.

In their article titled *What is Bullying?* Volk, Dane and Marini (2014) defined bullying as

"an aggressive goal-directed behavior that harms another individual within the context of a

power imbalance". Using Olweus' original definition as a foundation, the Center for Disease

Control and Prevention in cooperation with the United States Department of Education

developed a "uniform definition of bullying as an intentional act to inflict harm by the (typically

more powerful) perpetrator (s) repeatedly on the victim over time" (Gladden, Vivolo-Kantor,

Hamburger, & Lumpkin, 2014).

Types of Bullying

Bullying is generally divided into two major categories: traditional and cyber. Types of

traditional bullying identified by the authors are: physical, verbal, and indirect or relational.

Physical bullying includes any array of physical aggression aimed to harm the victim. Verbal

bullying involves verbally aggressive behavior such as threats. In the early 1990's, the definition

of bullying was expanded to include indirect or relational: "indirect (done via a third party); and

relational aggression (done to damage someone's peer relationships), or the similar social

aggression (done to damage self-esteem and/or social status)". Cyberbullying is bullying done

through electronic devices such as cell phones and computers. Some common types of cyberbullying that often occur are: text messages, email, social media platforms (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), phone calls, and picture/videos (Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007).

Prevalence of Bullying

The increase in school violence in the U.S. over the past 20 years has made people pay more attention to bullying (Ockerman, Kramer and Bruno, 2014). The public awareness bullying has received over the years has led to a slew of research, anti-bullying programs in schools, and, as of 2016, anti-bullying legislation in all 50 U.S. states (Hinduja and Patchin, 2016). However, information varies regarding the exact number of bullying incidences in U.S. middle schools.

According to Jansen et al., 2012, 27% of middle school students are involved in some form of bullying. Research of elementary, middle and high school students by Limber, Olweus, and Luxenberg (2014), revealed that overall 15% of students are victims of bullying. Their research also indicated that bullying is highest in elementary schools at 23%, reduces to 15% in middle schools and decreases drastically by high school at 8%. Whereas an article by Shea et al., (2016) included the results of a national survey of middle and high school students which indicated that 30% of students are involved in bullying, either as bullies or victims. However, later research showed an increase in that number to 33% among the same population (2016)

Recent statistics from the National Center for Educational Statistics (2016), indicated that 20.8% of school-aged students are victims of bullying. However, these numbers may be grossly underestimated due to underreporting.

Cyberbullying

Bullying is an unfortunate reality in schools, and it has evolved through the years. There was a time when bullying was pretty straightforward. It mainly occurred in schools and the

schoolyard. With the rapid advancements in technology, bullying is no longer exclusive to the school grounds or schoolyards. Bullying has seeped out of the schools into homes by electronic media. In a study conducted by Juvonen and Gross (2008), they discuss the expansion of bullying from common places such as the schoolyard and playground to the many electronic media we as a society have become so dependent upon. The new problem of "cyberbullying" differs vastly from traditional forms of bullying in one specific way: it has the capability to follow the victim home.

Over a 3-month period from August to October 2005, the researchers conducted an anonymous online survey of youth in various states throughout the United States. The purpose of the online survey was to anonymously gauge the experiences of youth aged 12 to 17 with cyberbullying. In total, they received feedback from 1454 youth.

The results of the survey revealed:

- 72% reported being the victim of online bullying with the past year.

- 85% reported that they were victims of bullying at school

  (2008).

The most prominent form of bullying reported both in school and electronically was name-calling or insults, and the type of cyberbullying was in the form of text messages or instant messages; 2/3 of the adolescents also reported that they knew their perpetrators. The results of the study found that face-to-face and cyberbullying (all types) victimizes adolescents more frequently than older children, and cyber bullying was more prominent than face-to-face bullying.

A similar study into the prevalence of cyberbullying among Swedish adolescents by Slonje and Smith from the Department of Psychology at Goldsmith College (2008) yielded

similar results: cyberbullying was more common than traditional bullying. In some cases, it was found to be more damaging and demeaning to the victim. According to one adolescent participant in their study:

> I believe that cyber bullying most often can be worse for the victim. Partly because the bullies spend so much energy on the bullying, but also because the bullying takes place outside of school, in other words when the victim is at home. Home is usually a sanctuary for most people. But the bullies take this sanctuary away from the victims by cyber bullying them." Cyberbullying is problematic to society and its victims because it is so diverse (Slonje and Smith, 2008).

A major problem with cyber bullying is that it affords the perpetrator/s anonymity, and has the capability to reach a vast audience with a single click of a mouse or button.

Impact of Bullying on Adolescent Mental Health

There is growing concern regarding the psychological impact school bullying has on adolescents. Bullying and suicide behavior are associated with psychological problems Jacobsen and Bauman (2007) suggest that victims of bullying can suffer from a multitude of health issues such as "diminished psychological well-being, poor social adjustment, psychological distress and physical symptoms". Furthermore, adolescent victims of bullying display symptoms of social isolation, truancy, suicidal feelings, and depression. A later study by Mayes, Baweja, Calhoun, Syed, Mahr and Siddiqui (2014) supported this view. According to Mayes et al. (2014), numerous psychological problems are associated with bullying and suicide in children. The psychological profiles of adolescent bullying victims indicate an increase in internalizing problems such as anxiety and depression in addition to external ones such as conduct issues. Among adolescents ages 12-19, suicide is the third leading cause of death according to the CDC

(2010).

Psychiatric Doctors West and Salmon (2000) found evidence linking depression referrals to child and adolescent bullying. Their personal approach to bullying examines its detrimental effects on the individual. The qualitative study highlights the chronic psychological problems encountered by a 13-year-old boy they refer to as "A". In their case report, they assert that "children and adolescents who are repeatedly bullied are at risk for developing psychotic depression". The results of the study supported this idea.

The subject of the study referred to as "A" was a victim of bullying from age nine. As a result, his depressive symptoms progressed. He was referred to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team (CAMHS) with psychotic depression at the age of thirteen for exhibiting symptoms of depression, suicidal thoughts, low self-esteem, bullying at school, dyslexia and special educational needs. Doctors discovered that "A" had been the victim of verbal and physical bullying since he was nine.

Consequently, "A" suffered from a range of psychological issues. Based on "A"s diagnosis and information compiled from children that were referred to CAMHS, adolescents that experience bullying can suffer from;

- Poor Self Image
- Depression
- Social Withdrawal
- Insomnia and Anxiety
- Eating Disorders
- Suicidal Thoughts
- Mood Changes

- Headaches

- Schizophrenia

(West and Salmon, 2000).

Juvonen and Gross (2008) supported this assertion in their research, noting that bullying which entails emotional or physical intimidation is associated with numerous mental health problems in adolescence, making it a public health issue diversely impacting adolescents. A cross-sectional research study of 1082 middle school adolescents in Ohio conducted by Bhatta, Shakya and Jefferis (2014) found a definitive link between suicidal thoughts, planning or attempts and being bullied.

The Role of School Counselors and Teachers

School counselors and teachers are formidable allies in identifying, intervening, and preventing all types of bullying in the school setting. In many ways, they are the first line of defense against bullying. Children spend a vast majority of their adolescent lives attending school, so that is the place where prevention, identification and intervention strategies can be most effective (Stopbullying.gov).

Identification

Research suggests that identifying and recognizing bullying is a critical first step to preventing it in schools (Jacobsen and Bauman, 2007.) Most school staff readily understand and recognize physical bullying; however, other forms of bullying are just as prevalent in schools and can be more damaging (Ockerman and Kramer, 2014). Teachers and counselors need specialized training in order to identify different types of bullying so they can intervene. Jacobsen, a school counselor and Bauman, an associate professor at the University of Arizona (2007) examined school counselor's responses to several types of bullying in schools.

The purpose of the study was to determine if school counselors responded differently to three types of bullying: physical, verbal and relational based on their years of experience and level of training. One hundred sixty-three school counselors from various elementary, middle, high and charter schools throughout the United States participated in the study. The study found that school counselors were more likely to intercede in physical or verbal bullying than relational bullying. However, school counselors that participated in some level of anti-bullying training considered relational bullying as more serious than those who had not received any training. Research by Espelage, Polanin, and Low (2014) concluded that most school faculties are uninformed regarding the severity and intensity of bullying that occurs in their schools thus, they are unable to discern incidences of bullying.

Intervention

In the article, *School Counselors and the Cyberbully: Interventions and Implications*, Chibbaro (2007), examined the crucial role of school counselors specifically in cyberbullying interventions. As highly trained professionals, school counselors and psychologists are subject matter experts regarding the detrimental impact of bullying on the school atmosphere, the mental health of victims as well as perpetrators. They also serve as a link between the school, students, parents and the community. School counselors can aid in drafting school-wide policies, promoting awareness, training staff and providing resources to bully victims, bullies and their families (Chibbaro, 2007).

As previously stated, bullying is considered a cognitive behavioral issue and being as such, school intervention programs that focus on reducing aggressive behavior can be effective (Swear at el.). The Target Bullying Program or T-BIP is an individualized bully intervention program. The program is specifically tailored toward youth who have been identified as bullies

or have exhibited aggressive behaviors. Once youth are identified they work one on one with school counselors, therapists or psychologists to understand and correct aggressive behavior. Research has shown considerable success with this program due to its personalized approach (Strawhun, Fluke, and Peterson, 2013).

Another method of intervention that has been effective throughout the U.S. is Restorative Justice in the form of school based Youth Courts. The remedies most schools have implemented in response to behavioral infractions in schools including bullying is suspension, detention or expulsion. There is substantial research that indicates these types of harsh punishments do not work to correct undesired adolescent behaviors in schools.

In fact, they have the opposite effect and increase the likelihood that negative behaviors will increase and even intensify. An alternative approach to punishing adolescents is to hold them responsible for their actions and implement strategies that change negative behaviors. That is the premise of school based youth courts. School based youth courts help adolescents understand that certain behaviors have serious consequences and involve them in the restorative process of repairing damages caused by their actions (Teasely, 2014, pp. 131-133).

Prevention

Research by Bauman (2008) supported Chibbaro's article citing school counselors as idealistic proponents of anti-bullying efforts in their schools. The article mentions the responsibility of school counselors in providing both direct and indirect services to students, parents, faculty members and the community. This view is consistent with the American School Counseling Association National Model which outlines the duties and functions of school counselors (Bauman, 2008). Austin, Reynolds, and Barnes (2012) noted cooperation between all school personnel as a pinnacle component in preventing the occurrence of bullying in schools.

By profession, school counselors are the paragons of spearheading bullying prevention efforts in schools. Stopbullying.gov identifies mental health professionals working in the school setting as the most knowledgeable school personnel in the battle against bullying. Their extensive training gives them insight into the myriad of ways bullying impacts the school atmosphere and youth.

School staff, administrators, parents and counselors working cooperatively can create a school atmosphere that discourages all types of bullying. Preventing bullying in schools is detrimental to establishing and maintaining a safe the learning environment. Yipper and Nickeson (2010) identified the following methods as most effective in preventing bullying in schools:

- School-wide positive behavior support curriculum and anti-bullying policies

- School staff immediately responding to incidences of bullying

- Increased staff supervision during structured activities and less structured locations

- Extensive anti-bullying training for school staff

(2010).

Another bullying prevention program that has proven to be effective is, "Steps to Respect". The program was conducted in 33 California elementary schools with positive outcomes. The results from this study suggest that schools can take proactive steps even in the short run to address bullying in schools" Brown, Low, Smith, and Haggerty (2011).

The articles contained in the literature review present concrete evidence that different types of bullying are occurring in middle schools across the U.S. and have a debilitating impact on adolescent mental health. They also outline the important role of school counselors and

teachers in bully identification, intervention and prevention. The dynamic between teachers and

school counselors is vital to an educationally conducive atmosphere. This study considers

bullying from two paradigms: the sociological and behavioral cognitive perspectives. It also

provides possible school level intervention strategies that utilize the social cognitive approach.

Chapter 4: Statement of Bias

I have lived in Fairbanks for over 10 years and my children have attended schools in the FNSBSD. Also, as an educator, I have prior knowledge of the bullying policies and incidences of bullying in FNSBSD middle schools. However, I do not stand to gain professionally or personally from the outcome of this research.

Chapter 5: Methodology

Research Design

The method utilized for conducting this study was a mixed methodology of web-based surveys and in-person interviews. These methods were chosen because of the population being studied: middle school counselors and teachers. I included interviews as an option because of the sensitive nature of the topic. Although none of the participants elected to be interviewed the option was provided.

In a study titled, *School Counselors' Response to Three Types of Bullying Incidences*, by Jacobsen and Bauman (2007), the researchers used internet surveys in their study. The study yielded successful results. In a later study titled, *No Safe Haven: Locations of Harassment and Bullying Victimization in Middle Schools*, researchers Perkins, Perkins and Craig (2014), self-report anonymous surveys were implemented with successful results.

With these two studies in mind, I had a good foundation about which method to use for my research. I also considered possible pros and cons of utilizing internet surveys. As mentioned in Creswell, web-based surveys offer some possible issues such as; low response rates, bias in response and connectively issues just to name a few. However, the strengths of this method include the ability to reach a large population, confidentiality, and anonymity (Creswell, 2012, pp.383-384).

Since I have worked in the school setting for many years I understand that two factors are a consideration for this population with regard to participating in a study: time and confidentiality. After speaking with a school teacher last year regarding the best method for obtaining confidential uninhibited information for a study, it was suggested that an anonymous online survey would be an optimal choice.

I drafted the questions for the survey using the major sections of my study as a guideline. The survey consisted of a mix of fixed quantitative and open-ended qualitative questions. Afterward, I erected the e-mail and included a disclaimer that ensured the strict confidentiality of the participants. I then submitted the necessary information to the University of Alaska's Internal Review Board for approval (IRB). Once I received the required IRB approvals I went to the next step of the research.

Participants

The next step of the research was to select participants. This study included two specific types of people: middle school counselors and teachers in the FNSBSD. The school counselors were selected based on their positions in their respective schools. School teachers were selected from their school's website. The names of ten teachers from each school were put into the online random selector tool Random.org and five were selected from each school based on the top five results. There was no regard given to age, race or gender or years of experience. The participants were selected based on their profession as either a middle school counselor or teacher.

Procedure

After receiving IRB approval (See Appendix A) 50 potential participants all teachers and school counselors from the FNSBSD were sent an e-mail invitation on February 21, 2017 (See Appendix C) and survey link to participate in either a face to face interview or anonymous online survey created using www.Surveymonkey.com None of participants chose to be interviewed. A link to the survey and the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality for any potential participants was included in the email. All the participants were middle school counselors and teachers from the FNSBSD. After two weeks, a follow-up e-mail was sent on March 8, 2017, reminding potential participants to participate in the survey. I received a total of 8 responses.

Data Collection

The data for this research was collected using the online survey development tool; www.Surveymonkey.com. All responses for the research was collected, stored and recorded through www.SurveyMonkey.com. The survey closed on March 20, 2017, at 5:00 pm Alaska Standard Time (AKST).

Data Analysis

After the survey ended, the data was compiled into a table depicting the variables and opened ended responses to the survey questions.

Chapter 6: Findings

The study population comprised of middle school counselors and teachers in the FNSBSD. 48 invitations were sent out to middle school teachers and counselors at four middle schools in the FNSBSD. Of the 48 invitations sent out, I received 8 completed survey responses. The survey was anonymous with no identifying questions regarding, race, age, gender or years of experience. To preserve the confidentiality of the participants they were assigned letters and numbers (P1-P8) for the purpose of reporting the results of the survey in this research project.

Results

Based on the survey responses, the types of bullying and frequency varies at the middle schools included in the survey. Questions one to three of the survey asked the participants about the types, frequency, and prevalence of bullying in their schools. The first question pertained to whether or not bullying was a concern at their middle school, five reported it was a problem, three indicated that it was a somewhat a problem. The same numbers were reported for the next question asking about the frequency of bullying occurrences, five stated it happened occasionally while three indicated that it was a rare occurrence. For the next question, the respondent's answers varied regarding the types of bullying that is problematic in their schools. Three selected relational, three cyber and two verbal.

The next four questions in the survey sought to understand the current methods utilized to identify, intervene and prevent bullying. As discussed in the previous section of the study a unified academic definition of bullying is a necessary element in the identification process. Counselors and teachers must first have the necessary training to be able to identify that bullying is occurring before intervention and prevention can occur. The first question in this set asked the participants to define bullying. All eight participants gave a definition that coincided with the

academic definition of bullying as defined previously in this research. One individual in the survey defined bullying as, "One student/kid (or group) with unusual or distinctive power over another[s] (size, age, numbers, etc.) who exhibits negative behaviors towards the victim". There was a consensus among the survey participants regarding the definition of bullying.

The next question which sought to ascertain how prepared teachers and school counselors were to intervene in bullying incidences showed that four participants received no specialized training, four reported that training was a requirement with one participant stating, "Yes, usually bully prevention carnivals, or in-service and incident/bully reports written and delivered to counseling/administration. Confidentiality is a premium". Since there were no identifying elements in the survey it cannot be specified if this response was from a teacher or school counselor. The answers to the next question gave a positive indicator in the area of bully prevention, with all 8 respondents stating that an anti-bullying curriculum was in place at their school.

In the final questions in this set, the methods for reporting bullying were explored. It was reported that all the middle schools included in the research had methods in place for reporting bullying. Methods included anonymous bully reporting forms, confiding in a teacher or counselor and parental reporting. One survey participant responded, "Personal reporting to a trusted adult, incident/bully reports (which all student are aware exist), peer mediation, teacher reports, parental reports, friend reports. Introduction to new students and our abuse recognition and awareness programs".

The final questions in the survey consisted of three open-ended questions that sought to ascertain the role of teachers and school counselors in preventing bullying in schools, possible factors associated with bullying and its impact on adolescents. For the first open-ended question,

the respondents were asked about their role in preventing bullying. In answering this question, one teacher/school counselor responded that their role was to be observant, receptive, responsive, proactive and educate. In addition, "To directly teach skills (social and bullying response), and to cultivate a climate that models' prosocial behavior". Another responded similarly, stating that their role is to be vigilant, report it and provide consequences. The other six participants gave answers that included prevention, intervention and keeping children safe as characteristics of teachers and school counselors in preventing bullying.

For the next question, aspects such as gender, race, ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status, disability and other were selections. This question was not answered by one respondent. One person selected gender as a circumstance in bullying incidences. 3 respondents marked the socioeconomic status as a contributing factor in bullying. The last 3 indicated other as their response and provided specific examples. In one answer the respondent stated,

> Boys try to get the attention of girls and vice versa over social media, and they can go too
> far in teasing or in spreading information when they feel rejected. Our neighborhood
> culture is tough with high poverty rates. That culture needs to be tempered by the school,
> but it becomes a more difficult task with budget cuts, large class sizes, and fewer
> resources for academic intervention supports and counselors.

Another respondent stated that all the above can be factors and included "weirdness" as contributors to bullying occurrences. The last response indicated that all the choices play a part in bullying but admitted that they haven't seen one being more of a factor than another.

The final question in this set and in the survey pertained to the mental health impacts bullying has on adolescents. Respondents seemed to be in agreement that bullying can lead to serious mental health consequences for adolescents. According to one respondent,

It adds to other evident stressors such as depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, rage, and

low self-esteem (cutting, experimenting with drugs, etc.). There can be positive

responses, such as groups or communities coming together when they see bullying and

they help the target feel more included. Observing it becomes the impetus for self-

reflection among bystanders so they are more aware of need around them. The possible

presence of bullying motivates staff to counter it with prosocial teachings that encourage

mental health.

The other 7 respondents gave answers consistent with the research findings in this study

including; suicide, suicide ideation, depression, low self-esteem, learning difficulty,

hopelessness, insomnia, self-mutilation, truancy and rage.

Conclusions

To summarize, the results of the survey concluded that bullying is prevalent in the four

middle schools included in this study. All four types of bullying discussed in this research were

reported by the respondents with cyber and relational being the most problematic. However,

verbal bullying was also acknowledged as occurring. The school counselors and teachers that

participated in this study have a unified definition of bullying but, only half reported receiving

specialized bullying training. The participants indicated that bullying reporting methods and an

anti-bullying curriculum were in place at their schools. They acknowledged the important role

they play in bullying identification, intervention, and prevention and acknowledged and

reiterated the detrimental impacts bullying has on adolescent mental health.

Chapter 7: Discussion

Substantial research has indicated that bullying is a problem in schools throughout the U.S. The purpose of this study was to examine the roles of middle school counselors and teachers in preventing bullying in FNSBSD. In order to address the role of middle school teachers and counselors in preventing bullying the following research questions were proposed:

- What is bullying and how is it defined in an educational context?
- What are the different types of bullying prevalent among adolescents?
- What are the potential psychological impacts of bullying on adolescent mental health?
- What is the role of school counselors and teachers in preventing bullying?

The research answered these questions.

What is bullying? To answer the first question in this study, a specific academic definition of bullying was identified by the Department of Education as, "an intentional act to inflict harm by the (typically more powerful) perpetrator (s) repeatedly on the victim over time" (Gladden, Vivolo-Kantor, Hamburger, & Lumpkin, 2014). The participants of the study gave the same generalized definition of bullying as defined by the Department of Education.

Types of bullying prevalent among adolescents. The research identified and examined four major types of bullying prevalent in today's society that impact adolescents; cyber, physical, relational and verbal.

The impact of bullying on adolescent mental health. Some of the consequences of bullying described in the literature review section of the study were suicide, depression, low self-esteem, and truancy. The participants of the study listed these along with: rage, drug experimentation, and problems sleeping.

The role of school counselors and teachers in bully prevention. The literature review explored the role of teachers and school counselors in identification, intervention, and prevention. These three factors work cooperatively to create a safe school environment. Results of the study indicated that teachers and school counselors concur that they play the role in bully identification intervention and prevention. As part of the bullying identification process, proper training was previously identified as an important part of identification. However, half of the research participants reported that they did receive specialized bully training.

Interactionist Theory. The interactionist theory of sociology asserts that individuals have a give and take relationship with society. In short, people both learn from and shape society through social interaction. In a controlled setting such as schools, adolescents learn how to behave and interact with the adults and peers based on what's acceptable or tolerated in the school environment. While the interactionist theory explains how bullying can be learned through interacting with others and how society responds or does not respond, the social cognitive theory considers how bullying is learned by observation, imitation and modeling.

Social Cognitive Theory. Social cognitive theory explains why aggressive behaviors such as bullying occurs in the school setting.

Limitations

This study had some limitations. It was conducted using a small sample of middle school teachers and counselors in the FNSBSD. Of the 48 potential participants, only 8 actually participated in the study. Since this was an anonymous survey, there is no way to identify the exact ratio of teachers or counselors that participated. Participants who participated did so voluntarily and it is assumed that the answers they provided were truthful and unbiased.

Chapter 8: List of Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were devised. Research into bullying in the FNSBSD should be expanded to include a larger sample of educators, school staff, and schools. The proper training of school staff and educators is an area that needs attention. A bullying required course would be beneficial for prospective educators and mandatory bullying training for all school staff. An effective alternative to suspension or expulsion for perpetrators of bullying is School based Youth Courts. School Youth Courts are already being implemented at the middle school level in Alaska and can be effective in the FNSBSD.

- Expand Bullying Research to Include More Schools in FNSBSD and Alaska

- Specialized Bully Training for All School Staff

- Implement School Based Youth Courts in the FNSBSD

Future Research

Future research should include a larger sample of schools i.e. middle, elementary and high schools in the FNSBSD, and eventually other school districts throughout Alaska. Future researchers should consider other paradigms to explore the topic of bullying in schools. It may also be valuable to include other members of the school facility in the research such as paraprofessionals, Parent and Teacher Association members and even adolescent bully victim, bullies and bystanders. It is the duty of everyone inhabiting the school environment to identify, intervene and prevent bullying.

Specialized Bully Training for Teachers, Counselors and School Staff

Alaska is home to a variety of diverse cultures. According to the FNSBSD Enrollment Ethnicity Report (Appendix F) the number of students enrolled in the FNSBSD during the 2015/2016 school year was 13,365. The ethnic breakdown was as follows:

- 13,765 Caucasian

- 653 African American

- 1,161 Hispanic

- 478 Asian/Pacific Islander

- 1,250 Alaska Native/American Indian

- 1,996 Two or More Races

    (https://www.k12northstar.org/Page/5816).

The racial, cultural and ethnic diversity in the FNSBSD mandates that educators be equipped to deal with the educational needs of a diverse population. Currently, under Alaska statue AS 14.20.020(h) to become a teacher in Alaska potential educators are required to take 3 semester hours in Alaska studies course work and 3 semester hours in Alaska multicultural coursework (Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, 2013). Incorporating an anti-bullying 3 semester credit course into the teaching certification requirements would be an important step in acknowledging the seriousness of bullying in schools.

Lack of anti-bullying training was identified as an area of consideration by the participants of this study. Half of the participants identified as not having received any anti-bullying training. The dynamic between teachers and school counselors is vital to an educationally conducive atmosphere. Proper anti bullying training was identified as an area of

consideration for improvement in this study. Half the survey participants identified as not receiving any specialized anti bullying training. Again, since this study was anonymous there is no way to identify whether the lack of training was reported the teachers or school counselors.

A credited bully course or specialized bully training can be completed as part of the teacher's certification process or incorporated as part of teacher professional development days. A prime training resource is available through www.stopbullying.gov. The website provides a variety of free anti-bullying information and resources. Some of the resources available in the Bully Prevention Training Center which is available on the website include:

- Bully Prevention Training Module

- Bully Prevention Continuing Education Course

- Community Action Toolkit

- Take Action Today Booklet

- Training tools for Educators and School Bus Drivers (www.stopbullying.gov).

Another training resource available to school staff is the Olweus Bully Prevention Program. This is a paid program that trains individuals to be bully specialists in their schools or communities. Specifically, the programs trains members of a schools Bully Prevention Coordinating Committee so that they are able to train and educate all members of school facility regarding bully prevention and intervention strategies. This program will be beneficial to middle schools in the FNSBSD as well as throughout Alaska. In addition, it would also benefit the schools to create Bully Prevention Coordinating Committees or a similar program specifically to address bullying in schools (www.violencepreventionworks.org).

Restorative Justice/School Based Youth Courts

The literature and survey results presented in this study highlight bullying as a serious problem impacting adolescents. Since school seems to be a breeding ground for bullying behavior it is the place where intervention and prevention strategies could prove effective. Research indicates that harsh punishment such as expulsion is not an effective remedy for school bullying (Swearer & Espelage, 2004). Instead, adolescents that bully need to be held accountable for their actions. School Based Youth Courts is a fairly new approach to dealing with bullying in schools. It is making a difference in schools across the U.S. and should be considered in schools in the FNSBSD. Bullying is a crime and should be treated as such at the school level so adolescents understand that there are serious consequences for engaging in bullying behaviors.

Restorative Justice is venue of addressing crime by holding the perpetrator directly accountable to the victim and community. The offender takes responsibly for his/her actions and works to repair the harm. According to the National Institute of Justice:

Restorative justice emphasizes the importance of elevating the role of crime victims and community members through more active involvement in the justice process, holding offenders directly accountable to the people and communities they have violated, restoring the emotional and material losses of victims, and providing a range of opportunities for dialogue, negotiation, and problem solving, whenever possible, which can lead to a greater sense of community safety, social harmony, and peace for all involved (2007).

With many schools working tirelessly to find viable solutions to combat bullying, the concept of restorative justice has been implemented on the school level in the form of youth courts throughout the U.S.

Youth Courts have been working on the community level as an alternative to incarceration for youth to alleviate the burden on the juvenile justice system for some time serving adolescents age 12-18 (Evans, Stokowski, Barbee, Bower, & Barefoot, 2016). Whether they are school or community based, these courts are set up like judicial courts. They have a presiding, judge, defendant, plaintiff, and jury. The participants of youth courts are predominately made up of peers with adult oversight (Center for Court Innovation, 2017).

Youth courts are already prevalent throughout Alaska in Anchorage, Kenai Peninsula, Ketchikan, Nome, Mat-Su, Wasilla, Sitka and the FNSBSD. School youth courts are also being utilized in middle schools throughout Alaska in Begich and Sitka (Global Youth Justice, 2017). Since school youth courts are already being utilized in Alaskan middle schools implementing them in the FNSBSD is plausible.

Chapter 9: Plans for Dissemination

The target audience of this study are educators, administrators, parents and the Fairbanks North Star Borough community. This study will be published on the University of Alaska institutional depository ScholarWorks as part of my graduate project requirements and on the website www.Academia.com. By publishing this study, it will be available to my target audience.

Chapter 10: Reflection

The role of middle school counselors and teachers in preventing bullying specifically in the FNSBSD has rarely if at all been researched. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to shed light on this topic. The results of this study were consistent with previous research about bullying. In understanding what bullying is, Olweus (1997) coined an academic definition of bullying which was later adopted by the Center for Disease Control and the U.S. Department of Education (Gladden et al., 2014). This study found that this basic definition of bullying is used by school counselors and teachers in the FNSBDS who participated in this research.

Ockerman, Kramer and Bruno (2014) identified the common types of bullying common in middle schools throughout the United States; relational, verbal, physical and cyber. Cyberbullying is considered a relatively new type of bullying and is on the rise especially among school age children (Juvonen and Gross, 2008).

Jansen et. al., 2012 asserted that at least 27% of middle school students are embroiled in some form of bullying. Based on the results of this study, the degree of bullying that is prevalent at the four middle schools included in this study varies from moderate to problematic. The study also found that at least three forms of bullying identified in this research were prevalent at these schools; relational, cyber and verbal. The negative consequences of bullying on adolescent mental health and function was discussed in the research.

Jacobsen and Bauman (2007) highlighted the myriad of psychological health problems associated with bullying, some of them were depression, social isolation, and anxiety. West and Salmon (2000) solidified this assertion in their case study of a middle school age adolescent male who was the victim of bullying. The results of their study highlighted the personal and potentially long term impact of bullying on adolescents. School counselors and teachers provide

stability to schools by being on the frontlines and leaders in the bullying identification, prevention and interventions efforts (Yipper and Nickeson, 2010).

Attempts to address the problem of all variations of bullying in society have to be on a societal level. As a society, there needs to be cooperation from societal groups that have the most influence on children and adolescents: the family, schools, the media, and peers. It's the responsibility of these groups to model behaviors that are help teach children and adolescents: culturally altruism, mentally adaptability, gender tolerance and respect, and social competence. According to Schultz (2012), "Because the lessons learned at an early age shape the behaviors that adults exhibit, it becomes critical to change our approaches to addressing and preventing childhood bullying."

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Appendix A IRB Approval

Institutional Review Board

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February 9, 2017

To:	Sean Topkok, Ph.D.
	Principal Investigator
From:	University of Alaska Fairbanks IRB
Re:	[1024356-1] Bullying in Middle School: The Role of Middle School Counselors and Teachers in Preventing Bullying in Fairbanks, Alaska Middle Schools

Thank you for submitting the New Project referenced below. The submission was handled by Exempt Review. The Office of Research Integrity has determined that the proposed research qualifies for exemption from the requirements of 45 CFR 46. This exemption does not waive the researchers' responsibility to adhere to basic ethical principles for the responsible conduct of research and discipline specific professional standards.

Title:	Bullying in Middle School: The Role of Middle School Counselors and Teachers in Preventing Bullying in Fairbanks, Alaska Middle Schools
Received:	February 3, 2017
Exemption Category:	*2*
Effective Date:	February 9, 2017

This action is included on the March 1, 2017 IRB Agenda.

Prior to making substantive changes to the scope of research, research tools, or personnel involved on the project, please contact the Office of Research Integrity to determine whether or not additional review is required. Additional review is not required for small editorial changes to improve the clarity or readability of the research tools or other documents.

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Appendix B IRB Approval

UAF
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909 N Koyukuk Dr. Suite 212, P.O. Box 757270, Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-7270

February 21, 2017

To: Sean Topkok, Ph.D.
                  Principal Investigator

From: University of Alaska Fairbanks IRB

Re: [1024356-2] Bullying in Middle School: The Role of Middle School Counselors and
                  Teachers in Preventing Bullying in Fairbanks, Alaska Middle Schools

Thank you for submitting the Other referenced below. The submission was handled by Exempt Review. The Office of Research Integrity has determined that the proposed research qualifies for exemption from the requirements of 45 CFR 46. This exemption does not waive the researchers' responsibility to adhere to basic ethical principles for the responsible conduct of research and discipline specific professional standards.

Title:	Bullying in Middle School: The Role of Middle School Counselors and Teachers in Preventing Bullying in Fairbanks, Alaska Middle Schools
Received:	February 21, 2017
Exemption Category:	*2*
Effective Date:	February 21, 2017

This action is included on the March 1, 2017 IRB Agenda.

Prior to making substantive changes to the scope of research, research tools, or personnel involved on the project, please contact the Office of Research Integrity to determine whether or not additional review is required. Additional review is not required for small editorial changes to improve the clarity or readability of the research tools or other documents.

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Appendix C Informed Consent
Informed Consent Form
The Role of Middle School Counselors and Teachers in Preventing Bullying

IRB #1024356
Date Approved: February 8, 2017

Description of the Study:

My name is Paula Nicole Palmer. I am conducting a study of middle school counselors and teachers' perception of bullying that occurs in their schools. This research study is being conducted as part of the requirements for the Master of Education at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. Your participation is requested because you are a middle school counselor or a teacher at your school. Please read this form carefully. We encourage you to ask questions and take the opportunity to discuss this study before making a decision on whether or not to participate.

If you choose to participate you will have the choice of either participating in an anonymous online survey (link will be provided via E-mail) or participating in a 15-minute in-person interview about bullying at your school. If you prefer, I can E-mail the interview questions to you or conduct the interview by phone. Please note that if you opt to participate in the online survey then this informed consent form is not necessary (see Note 2).

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
There are no potential risks associated with this study, however; some questions specific to my research may trigger uncomfortable thoughts and or feelings. Furthermore, you will receive no financial benefit for your participation in this study. However, you may benefit from knowing that you have contributed to the academia and helped broaden the understanding of this subject particularly in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District. My intent is for this research to add to the understanding of bullying from the perspectives of school counselors and teachers.

Confidentiality:

Strict confidentiality will be maintained. Your identity will be protected, as names and identifying information will be changed in the reporting of the data. Your name will never be associated with the information you provide in the survey or the interview. The data will only be used in my Masters Thesis:

- Any information obtained about you from the research will be kept confidential.
- Any information with your name attached will not be shared with anyone outside the research team.
- We will code your information with a number so no one can trace your answers to your name.
- We will properly dispose paperwork and securely store all research records.
- Your name will not be used in reports, presentations, and publications.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Your decision to take part in the study is voluntary. You are free to choose whether or not to take part in the study. If you decide to take part in the study you can stop at any time or change your mind and ask to be removed from the study.

Contacts and Questions:
If you have questions now, feel free to ask me (us) now. If you have questions later, you may contact me by E-mail pnpalmer@alaska.edu or 907-371-4591 or Dr. Sean Topkok at the University of Alaska at 907-474-5537 or by E-mail at cstopkok@alaska.edu.

The UAF Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a group that examines research projects involving people. This review is done to protect the rights and welfare of people involved the research. If you have questions

or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you can contact the UAF Office of Research Integrity at 474-7800 (Fairbanks area) or 1-866-876-7800 (toll-free outside the Fairbanks area) or uaf-irb@alaska.edu.

Statement of Consent:
I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I am 18 years old or older. I have been provided a copy of this form.

_____
Signature of Participant & Date

_____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent & Date

<u>Note 1:</u> If the informed consent form is the only thing connecting the participant to the study and the only risk to the individual participating is the risk of their participation or responses becoming known outside the research team, you may request a waiver of the requirement to document informed consent from the IRB.

<u>Note 2:</u> An informed consent form is not required for anonymous surveys that are returned by mail or are conducted via the Internet by a survey tool (e.g. SurveyMonkey). However, the same information must be provided to potential participants. In the case of anonymous surveys, this is typically done in a cover letter or opening paragraph. You should include a statement (paper forms) or button (online) such as "By returning/completing this survey I agree to participate in the study".

Appendix D Interview Questions
Interview Questions for School Counselors and Teachers

1. Is bullying a concern for your school?

2. How often does bullying (any type) occur at your school? Can you give examples?

3. What is the most prevalent type of bullying that occurs at your school?

   a) Physical
   b) Verbal
   c) Relational
   d) Cyber

4. As a counselor/teacher, how do you define bullying?

5. Does your school require any specific training for staff to help them understand how to identify, respond and prevent bullying at your school?

6. Is there an anti-bullying curriculum in place at your school?

7. What are the current methods of reporting bullying in place for students at this school in the FNSBSD?

8. In your professional opinion, what is the role of school counselors/teachers in preventing bullying at your school or in schools in general?

9. From your perspective, are factors such as race, gender, culture, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity, disability a factor in incidences of bullying?

   a) Race
   b) Gender
   c) Ethnicity
   d) Socioeconomic Status
   e) Disability
   f) Other
   g) None of these is a factor in bullying incidences

10. How (in your professional experience) do the different types bullying impact adolescent mental health

Appendix E Survey Results

The Role of School Counselors and Teachers in Bully Prevention

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Q1. Is bullying a concern at your school?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Somewhat	Somewhat	Yes	Yes	Somewhat
Q2. How often does bullying (any type) occur at your school?	Occasionally	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Occasionally	Occasionally
Q3. What is the most prevalent type of bullying that occurs at your school?	Relational	Relational	Relational	Cyber	Cyber	No Response	Verbal	Verbal
Q4. What is your professional definition of bullying?	An act of intentional repeated aggression meant to cause harm	Bulling is a act of aggression against someone perceived as weaker by the aggressor	Repeated unkind behavior targeted at a person or group of people	Unwanted behaviors directed at a person repeatedly where there is a power imbalance.	One student/kid (or group) with unusual or distinctive power over another[s] (size, age, numbers, etc.) who exhibits negative behaviors towards the victim.	Actions conducted in a manner that results in fear or intimidation	No Response	When one person or group of people repeatedly ridicule or intimidate another person or groups. This may be non-verbal, verbal, or physical.
Q5. Does your school require specialized training on bully prevention, identification and response?	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes, usually bully prevention carnivals, or in-service and incident/bully reports written and delivered to counseling/administration. Confidentiality is a premium.	No	Yes
Q6. Is there an anti-bullying curriculum in place at your school?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Q7. What are the current methods of reporting bullying in place for students at this school in the FNSBSD?	Tell teacher or adult, see counselor, fill out form	Tell an adult, report anonymously	Students are instructed to report bullying to a teacher, adult or school counselor	We have bullying reports students can fill out. They can talk to a teacher or counselor.	There are bullying report forms easily accessible in the office and student can take the clipboards to a private area to fill them out. Teachers and admin are always communicating over email and in person. Instances of bullying are responded too very rapidly. Parties are spoken with privately, parents are called, reteaching and follow-up occurs.	Personal reporting to a trusted adult, incident/bully reports (which all student are aware exist), peer mediation, teacher reports, parental reports, friend reports. Introduction to new students and our abuse recognition and awareness programs.	anonymous, speak to counselors, have parents call administrators	Report the incidence to a teacher or counselor
Q8. What is the role of school counselors/teachers in preventing bullying at your school or in schools in general?	Teachers and counselors are overseers in the school environment we are responsible for keeping students safe so they can learn.	Teachers and counselors are overseers in the school environment we are responsible for keeping students safe so they can learn.	Keep our eyes and ears open for it, address it, report it and provided consequences. Teach students to be proactive in preventing, addressing it and stopping it.	To be observant, receptive, responsive, and proactive. To directly teach skills (social and bullying response), and to cultivate a climate that models prosocial behavior.	Monitor student interaction; intervene, if and when, it occurs.	We are here to keep the children safe and intervene asap.	To be observant, receptive, responsive, and proactive. To directly teach skills (social and bullying response), and to cultivate a climate that models prosocial behavior.	Our most important priority is ensuring the safety of all students and creating an environment conducive to learning for all.
Q9. Are factors such as race, gender, culture, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity, disability a factor in incidences of bullying?	Socioeconomic Status	Socioeconomic Status	Socioeconomic Status	I'm sure they are but I haven't seen any of these being targeted more than the other.	Gender and Culture. Boys try to get the attention of girls and vice versa over social media, and they can go too far in teasing or in spreading information when they feel rejected. Our neighborhood culture is tough with high poverty rates. That culture needs to be tempered by the school, but it becomes a more difficult task with budget cuts, large class sizes, and less resources for academic intervention supports and counselors.	All can be factors-relationships are big. "weirdness" is considerable, at times.	No Response	Gender
Q10. How (in your professional experience) do the different types bullying impact adolescent mental health?	Suicide, depression, rage, truancy	It's a terrible thing that hurts adolescents in many ways. Contemplating suicide is a huge issue so is hopelessness and depression	Bullying is damaging to student mental health in all ways period. Its no fun being picked on by anyone, it can damage self esteem, lead to depression and even suicide or self mutilation.	It leads to focus problems, sleep problems, anxiety, depression and in extreme cases suicide.	It adds to other evident stressors such as depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, rage, and low self esteem (cutting, experimenting with drugs, etc.). There can be positive responses, such as groups or communities coming together when they see bullying and they help the target feel more included. Observing it becomes the impetus for self-reflection among bystanders so they are more aware of need around them. The possible presence of bullying motivates staff to counter it with prosocial teachings that encourages mental health.	I remember in 8th grade another student spat in my face. NOT cool, and by today's standards he would be a bully.Geez, go figure. I'm a good deal older now but I still have a memory of the incident. I suppose that incident affected my mental health, but did it do it in a positive way or a negative way-either way it had an effect.	Negative effect on self-esteem, self-worth, makes learning difficult, can lead to depression or worse.	It can be devastating causing students to question their self-worth resulting in a lack of self-confidence and positive emotional well-being.

Table 1. 2015 Enrollment/Ethnicity Report for the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District

https://www.k12northstar.org/Page/5816

Enrollment/Ethnicity Oct 1, 2015

	Federal Reporting		INCLUDE Multi-Racial/Ethnic	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
District Total	13,765	100%	13,765	100%
Caucasian	8,227	59.8%	10,515	76.4%
African-American	653	4.7%	1,396	10.1%
Hispanic	1,161	8.4%	1,161	8.4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	478	3.5%	1,074	7.8%
AK Native/American Indian	1,250	9.1%	2,497	18.1%
Two or More Races	1,996	14.5%	2,621	19.0%

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