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Bullying in elementary schools

Abstract

Bullying is a serious problem in today's schools. The history of bullying goes back as far as humans have been living and will continue if schools do not take action. Parents, teachers, administrators, counselors, and school staff are all involved in preventing bullying and intervening when necessary. This paper will define bullying, risk factors, and the effects of bullying on the bully, the victim, and the bystander. Interventions as well as how to prevent bullying will be addressed with emphasis on a whole school approach.

BULLYING IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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A Research Paper

Presented to

The Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling,

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

————

by

Jessica J. Wass

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Bullying is a serious problem in today's schools. The history of bullying goes back as far as humans have been living and will continue if schools do not take action. Parents, teachers, administrators, counselors, and school staff are all involved in preventing bullying and intervening when necessary. This paper will define bullying, risk factors, and the effects of bullying on the bully, the victim, and the bystander. Interventions as well as how to prevent bullying will be addressed with emphasis on a whole school approach.

The history of childhood bullying goes back as far as humans have been on the earth. One of the first reports was of Cain, a jealous man who murdered his brother Abel (Beane, 1999). As this example illustrates, bullying is not just a 20th century occurrence (Ross, 1996). In the late 1960's and early 1970's in Sweden, bullying was referred to as "mobbing" (Harris & Petrie, 2003, p. 1). Today it is often referred to as harassment. People can call it what they want, but it all means the same thing. It is not how children should be treated, especially while they are at school trying to learn.

Although bullying goes back far into history, children are being bullied more than ever now (Ross, 1996). A review of the literature concluded that the prevalence is increasing each day and school personnel are either not seeing it, denying it, or they are seeing it and not doing anything about it because they do not know what to do. Most bullying goes unnoticed and out of the way of adults (Beane, 1999).

According to Espelage and Swearer (2004), approximately 5% to 10% of children repeatedly attack their peers. Approximately 10%-15% of children persistently serve as the target of peer harassment. Espelage and Swearer also noted that 81% of males and 72% of females reported being bullied during their school years. Beane (1999) reported that "approximately one in seven schoolchildren is a bully or a victim, and the problem directly affects about five million elementary and junior high students in the United States" (p.5). Beane

also noted that 22% fourth through eighth graders reported academic problems

caused from peer abuse.

Based on these statistics, it is obvious that schools must start doing something

about the increase in bullying. Although many schools are currently working

towards a safer environment for their children, every school should provide a safe

environment for the students. Children should not have to fear going to school

everyday.

Bullying starts as early as preschool and the effects can last a lifetime (Beane,

1999). This is why it is important to start educating students as early as possible

to prevent bullying from continuing. The purpose of this paper is to define

bullying and describe the effects of bullying, as well as the risk factors. Bully

prevention and interventions for teachers, administrators, and the school as a

whole will be addressed. The "I survived it" attitude most adults today have is

not going to work for children (Sagarese & Giannetti, 1999, p. 8). Students must

learn, and it must be reinforced repeatedly, that bullying will not be tolerated in

schools. Schools must work together for the safety of students. Because the

counselor plays an important role in prevention and intervention, this paper will

address the counselor's role as well.

<div align="center">What is Bullying?</div>

Bullying is as simple as teasing, but is much more than that as well. Clore and

Hibel (as cited in Beane, 1999), described bullying as "one or more individuals

inflicting physical, verbal, or emotional abuse on another-includes threats of bodily harm, weapon possession, extortion, civil rights violation, assault and battery, gang activity, attempted murder, and murder" (p. 5). Often sexual harassment is added to the list as well. Olweus, one of the world's leading authorities on bullying, stated that bullying is "intentional, repeated, and involves an imbalance of power" (Macklem, 2003, p. 1).

For boys, bullying is usually physical abuse, while for girls it is usually quiet and hidden. Teachers and students will often be able to see the physical abuse, but it is much more difficult to see the abuse between girls. Girls will purposely exclude each other and talk behind the backs of one another. These words are very hurtful and it is often difficult for teachers and counselors to detect and intervene, especially when it is one girl's word against another.

Bullying is a serious problem and affects everyone, including the bully, the victim, and the bystander (Beane, 1999). Beane noted that adults are protected by the law, and children deserve that protection as well. Children see people on television getting beat up or teased and it is depicted as comedy, which allows them to think it is funny, acceptable, and not harmful. Children may see bullying as "just having fun" (Beane, 1999, p. 8).

Forms of Bullying

The following seven forms of bullying that are reported in the literature will be described in this section. Of those seven types, physical, verbal or relational, and sexual are the most common.

Physical bullying. This first form of bullying is what most people think of when they hear the word bully. It is the purposeful fighting, kicking, hitting, pushing, damaging belongings, and getting close enough to invade a person's personal space (Suckling & Temple, 2001; Barton, 2003).

Verbal or relational bullying. This second form is using words to cause a person to feel uncomfortable, invaded, and abused (Lajoie, McLellan, & Seddon, 1997). Verbal bullying includes threatening, teasing, name calling, swearing, put-downs, and even repeated phone calls to home (Barton, 2003; Rigby, 2001b). The relational bullying can be indirect, using manipulation, spreading rumors, and excluding someone from a social group (Barton, 2003). One form of relational bullying is deliberate exclusion and ignoring, which is used most often by girls and can be very devastating (Suckling & Temple, 2001). This form of exclusion can be difficult for a teacher to directly see, especially if it occurs at recess.

Extortion. This is blackmailing or threatening a person. One example of this type of bullying is when a bully pressures a victim to do his or her homework and if the victim refuses, the bully threatens to beat the victim up. Although the act is

common, most adults and children are not familiar with this term (Suckling &

Temple, 2001).

Visual bullying. This form of bullying includes things such as graffiti on the

bathroom walls or stalls, passing degrading letters or putting them in the victim's

desk or bag. The victim may or may not know who is writing these hurtful things

(Suckling & Temple, 2001).

Gestural. This from of bullying is when a person intentionally stares, blows

kisses, or uses insulting finger gestures (Rigby, 2001a). Not only is the hurtful to

the victim, but embarrassing as well. It is also difficult for an adult to catch this

act.

Sexual bullying. Although it is hard to believe, sexual bullying does happen in

elementary schools. This type of bullying involves making sexual comments or

asking questions intended to embarrass the victim. It includes intentionally

brushing against someone, inappropriate touching, and threatening. Sexual

gestures and jokes are also an example (Suckling & Temple, 2001; Barton, 2003).

This form of bullying is hard to prove as it usually happens outside at recess or on

the bus and is one person's word against another.

Racial bullying. This form of bullying can be seen physically, socially, or

psychologically when a person is negatively tagged as different from others

because of his or her race (Suckling & Temple, 2001).

Profile of the Bully and Victim

Risk Factors and Characteristics of the Bully

The biggest influence in a child's life is his or her family and who the child was raised by. A child who comes from an abusive, violent, or neglectful family may show more aggression than a child who comes from a safe environment. (Harris & Petrie, 2003). Furthermore, in homes where there is lack of control, childhood bullies may grow up to be adult bullies. As Dilts-Harryman (2004) noted, "little bullies become big bullies" (p. 29).

Walker and Sprague (1999) noted that risk factors are in the contexts of family, school, neighborhoods, community, and the larger society. The five biggest factors are: the child with a history of antisocial behavior at an early age, the child who has been served by child protection, the child who has been involved with family transitions such as death, divorce, or trauma, the student who receives special education services, and if a child's mother or father has ever been arrested.

In *Bullying and Teasing: Social Power in Children's Groups,* Macklem (2003) listed two motivations for bullying. The first is for a payoff. If the bully is looking for payoff, he or she will choose someone who will give in easily. The second motivation is for power. A bully looking for power will choose a person who is disliked by peers, and may give a fight, but would still be easy to

dominate. These bullies tend to gain satisfaction from hurting others and causing them to suffer.

Rigby (2001a) listed more reasons why people bully, including that they enjoy the submission of others, that it seems like fun, that they have relatively low levels of empathy, that prejudice leads them to believe some kinds of people deserve to be bullied, that they have been influenced by aggressive models, and that they are chronically bored at school. There are many more reasons why a person bullies, depending on background of experiences and other influences. No matter what the reason, bullying is still wrong and school personnel need to intervene.

Bullies are usually average in popularity (Harris & Petrie, 2003). Most bullies do not act alone; rather they tend to be in a group, and although a certain bully may be the leader, he or she will have followers. Often people think the bully has low self-esteem and uses bullying as a way to feel better about him or herself; however that is not the case. A bully rarely deals with poor self-esteem and has little anxiety (Harris & Petrie, 2003). Bullies usually do not take responsibility for their actions and argue that they did not do anything wrong (Beane, 1999).

Risk Factors and Characteristics of the Victim

Bullying can start at any age, but younger children are often bullied the most (Macklam, 2003). Macklam reported that first through fourth graders are bullied more than any other age group. The victim tends to have low self-esteem, few

friends, is quiet, and has little sense of humor (Harris & Petrie, 2003). The victim usually will not tell about the bullying out of fear that it will only get worse. Although this victim is more passive, there is another type of victim who is more provocative (Harris & Petrie, 2003). The provocative victim has more confidence and is extremely annoying to other peers. He or she is usually the least popular student in the classroom. Both victims lack social skills, which is the cause of having few friends.

Along with the passive and provocative victims, there are four other types of victims (Suckling & Temple, 2001). The first is the classic victim, such as a new student. The second type is the colluding victim who takes on the victim role to obtain popularity and acceptance. The third type of victim is the false victim who complains unreasonably about his or her peers, over-exaggerates, and may dishonestly report incidents. The fourth and final victim Rigby mentioned is the bully/victim. This person will take on either role depending on the situation.

Just like the bully, the victim can also come from an abusive or neglectful home (Suckling & Temple, 2001). Family influences such as these affect children differently. The bully takes what he has learned and continues that life style and the victim is so used to being the victim at home that he or she becomes the victim at school. Although bullies and victims may have different personalities, they may have similar backgrounds.

People know that bullying is harmful, but often do not know how harmful it really is. The next section will discuss how damaging bullying can be both for the victim and the bully.

How Harmful is Bullying?

For the Bully

People frequently tend to think only of the effects on victims. There are many consequences for the bully as well. Olweus, as cited in Harris and Petrie (2003), reported that 60% of students identified as bullies in grades six to nine had criminal convictions by the age of twenty-four. Children who are bullies are also more likely to drop out of school or participate in delinquent acts (Harris & Petrie, 2003). Adults who were once bullies are more likely to suffer greater degrees of depression than someone who did not bully. Also according to Harris and Petrie (2003), adults who were bullies in school are likely to act with even more aggression towards their spouse and children. In fact, their children are likely to become bullies as well, continuing the cycle.

For the Victim

Ironically, much of the effects on the bully are similar to the effects on the victim. Because of bullying, the victim is more likely to suffer depression and thoughts of suicide, as well as drop out of school. Other effects on the victim are lowered self-esteem, sense of isolation, and poor academic performance due to a constant fear while at school (Harris & Petrie, 2003). The victim also has health

effects such as constant high levels of stress and anxiety, frequent viral infections,

aches and pains in the joints, headaches and migraines, irritable bowel syndrome,

poor concentration, sweating, trembling, shaking, palpitations, panic attacks,

hypersensitivity, tiredness and exhaustion, and anger outbursts (Garrett, 2003, p.

68).   Research on the abused shows that they are more likely to abuse their own

families, and, like the bully, the victim's children are more likely to become

bullies themselves (Harris & Petrie, 2003).   Once again, the cycle continues.

For the Bystander

   Classmates generally try to stop bullying 11% of the time (Craig & Pepler, as

cited in Macklem, 2003).   A bystander's reaction is often worry or fear of

becoming the victim him or herself or making things worse (Bott, 2004).

Bystanders will worry because they do not know what to do and are afraid of

doing the wrong thing.   Many bystanders also feel guilty for not intervening and

feel unsafe in the school (Macklem, 2003).   If a student feels unsafe, learning is

very difficult and his or her academics will suffer (Macklem, 2003), therefore,

bullying affects everyone involved.

                    Helping the Victim, the Bully, and the Bystander

   There are three sets of people involved in bullying incidents and there are ways

to intervene and help each of these three parties.

Teachers' Role in Helping the Victim

A good teacher is alert and knows what is going on in his or her classroom all the time, making it possible to identify a victim (Beane, 1999). Teachers should look for signs such as the children who are quiet or isolated, draw little attention to themselves, are always the last student to leave the room, and who seem anxious about checking where adults are (Beane, 1999). Paying attention to the conversations and interactions going on in the classroom is also important. If a teacher suspects that a student is a victim, he or she should start paying more attention to the child's school work, social life, attendance and health, and emotional and behavioral actions (Beane, 1999).

Bullies need an audience of peers to gain power. However, they do not want adults nearby. Therefore, most bullying will take place where it cannot be seen or heard (Beane, 1999). Because of this, teachers must communicate with each other in order to identify common behaviors of certain students in the different classrooms and settings.

Once a victim is identified, teachers need to make themselves available by talking to the child directly in a non-confrontational tone when no one else is around, or referring him or her to the guidance counselor (Wessler, 2003). Another important way to help is to "break the code of silence" (Beane, 1999, p. 83). Often students will not talk to adults about bullying because from experience, they do not do anything about it or give poor advice. Beane

suggested sharing stories about bullying, taking a survey, and using notes-to-the-teacher to help victims break the code. Acting immediately is important for the victim, especially if he or she is in physical danger (Beane, 1999).

Another important way to help is to empower parents (Beane, 1999). Parents can be allies by informing the school about bullying situations. Educating parents about bullying and ways they can help will greatly benefit the classroom climate and the victims.

Finally, to help a victim, build self-esteem by implementing charts, feel-good posters, or lists (Beane, 1999). Help the victim learn a new skill or hobby and help someone else. Share tips with the victim to stay bully free, such as staying busy playing, staying near gown-ups or in groups with other kids, and playing on the swings because then it is harder for the bully to have access to the victim (Geffner, Loring, & Young, 2001).

Teachers' Role in Helping the Bully

To help a bully is to catch him or her in the act (Beane, 1999). Being aware and alert will help to identify the bully and act appropriately. Beane suggested getting assistance because intervening alone can be dangerous. Take the student or students off to the side and away from any audience. Try verbal intervention first and if that is not enough, use some kind of distraction if necessary.

Have compassion for the bully (Beane, 1999). The last thing a bully needs is more verbal abuse or degrading because more than likely he or she already gets

enough of that from home or somewhere else. Bullies need understanding and empathy just as much as another child.

When trying to identify bullies, Beane (1999) suggested looking for warning signs such as enjoying being in control, being physically larger and stronger than his or her peers, being impulsive, and having little empathy and compassion for others. It is also important to get parents' input and have them look for signs in their child, such as having more money than he or she can explain or buying things he or she normally could not afford, behaving aggressively, and challenging parental authority (Bean, 1999).

Another way to help bullies is to enforce the consequences that should be set by the school district. If the school does not have set consequences, Beane (1999) suggested forming a team to produce a set of consequences. Finally, to help a bully, counseling should be provided. Students who have bullied need to learn how to interact with their peers in a positive way (Beane, 1999). Peer counseling or small groups could also be successful in helping the bully.

Teachers' Role in Helping the Bystander

Most bystanders simply do not know what to do because, they have never been taught how to intervene or report a bullying incident (Coloroso, 2003). Coloroso stated that bullying is a learned behavior; therefore, other students need to be taught ways to stop it. Macklem (2003) also supported educating bystanders on how to intervene, including teaching bystanders to walk away and refuse to be the

audience, saying things to let others know this behavior is wrong, distracting the bully, telling the bully to leave the person alone, telling the student who is being bullied to walk away, threatening to report behavior if bullying does not stop, and getting help from an adult. Teaching children what to do when they become a bystander and allowing them a confidential way to report is vital.

<div align="center">Prevention</div>

The best way to try to help something is to prevent it in the first place. The more a school can prevent, the better off it is in the end. One way to try to prevent bullying in a school is to have a safe school plan. The earlier a program starts, the more effective bully prevention will be in the upper grades (Ross, 1996). Barton (2003) noted that a plan such as this addresses environmental safety, student education, school-community partnerships, and policies and procedures.

Environmental Safety

Bullying occurs in areas that are not highly populated at a school. It happens when adults are not looking. One way a school can provide for a safer environment is to have a safe place that students can go to after a bullying incident. These safe places will be highly supervised and will provide a short-term safe haven for students. When talking to these students, identify where the bullying areas are located around the school. Where are they most afraid to go in the school for fear of being bullied? Once this information is known, make sure

there is more supervision (Barton, 2003). Also, make sure to keep a close watch

out on the playground (Barton, 2003), because recess is where students are most

often left out, ignored, or made fun of. If supervising at recess, do not allow

anyone to be left out of a game; everyone gets to play.

Student Education

All students should be taught how to manage a conflict (Barton, 2003). A

conflict manager program or peer mediation program is a good way to have

students help each other. However, the information taught to them would benefit

all students in the school since they all need to be educated on how to handle

conflicts.

Along with conflict resolution, another part to student education is character

education, such as Character Counts. This program is built on the seven character

traits: respect, responsibility, fairness, self-discipline, honesty, kindness, and

perseverance (Husson, 2005). By teaching the students these character traits and

how to acquire them, the students will become better friends and classmates to

each other, which will help prevent bullying. If students are taught about good

character, they will learn that bullying is not a good character trait. Barnes (2001)

reported that students' grades and standardized tests scores escalated after having

lessons instilled on character education. When Character Counts is taught, a

sense of safety is instilled in the classroom, which promotes academic success.

This program, if taken seriously by the whole school, can be very effective.

Classroom guidance lessons, taught by the guidance counselor or the classroom teacher, are also an important part of a prevention program. Conflict resolution and character education can be introduced through the guidance lessons. In addition, there are other topics to be taught in order to prevent bullying.

A school-wide curriculum should address person/social, academic, and career development (Vernon, 2001). The personal/social development is most important to prevent bullying. Students should be taught how to handle their anger in a safe way without hurting themselves or someone else. Learning how to appreciate the differences of each classmate is also important to prevent prejudice and bullying. Students need to be taught that they have choices and there are consequences for the choices they make. For example, if a student chooses to bully another student, the consequence might be getting into trouble or losing friends. Personal safety is important to teach all students, because it will help the victim learn what to do when bullied. Another topic that should be introduced is how to handle relationships and friendships so that students learn that bullying is not a good way to build positive relationships with other students.

School-Community Partnerships

A third way to help prevent bullying is to partner with community businesses. Barton (2003) suggested that businesses should provide incentives to students when they intervene in bullying situations. For example, the Safe Streets program

in Detroit created a network where area business supporters were out on the streets to and from school watching for bullying on the way home from school and providing safe places for children seeking refuge from bullying situations (Barton, 2003).

Policies and Procedures

Schools should have clear policies and procedures regarding an anti-bullying plan and must be adhered to in order to be successful (Barton, 2003). A common goal is to "promote a safe and secure learning environment for students, free from threat, harassment, and bullying" (Barton, 2003, p. 49). Not only is policy making an important step in preventing bullying, but everyone in the school must be familiar with the policy. Staff development, as well as student development, is important. Everyone needs to be educated about the anti-bullying plan.

Student Development

Barton (2003) identified examples of student development to include in the bully prevention plan. These examples are described in the following section.

Mediation. Mediation allows students to try to solve conflicts on their own (Barton, 2003). In the elementary school, this is often through a conflict manager program. The program requires students who are willing to help other students. There is a lot of training that goes into a conflict manager program, but it can be very effective in teaching children to help each other resolve differences.

Peer counseling. This is most often done in secondary schools; however, at the elementary level, a form of peer counseling is through small groups (Barton, 2003). When children are in small groups, they learn to help each other out.

Bully boxes. A school can have bully boxes throughout the building in the lunch room, main office, or counselor's office. These are actual boxes such as a mail box or where students can confidentially report bulling incidents. Students are able to fill out a form and slip it inside the box. These boxes should be locked and a school administer should check this box daily. After reading the entries, the administrators should decide the course of action that needs to take place. It would be best to not have a box in the classroom because other students may see who reports and that can cause some embarrassment or uncomfortable feelings for the student reporting (Barton, 2003).

Parent Involvement. Parental involvement plays a "pivotal role in assisting in anti-bullying plans" (Barton, 2003, p. 59). Parents can watch their own children to see if they notice any bully/victim/witness behaviors. Parents can also enforce the anti-bullying plan at home. Getting parents on board makes bully prevention much more effective.

Classroom Strategies

To help teachers, Barton (2003) listed classroom strategies to help with bullying, where the first is to be prepared and have a list of strategies for different incidents of bullying. A second strategy is to respond firmly and not ignore an

identified four effective elements: timeliness, consistency, firmness, and respectfulness.

Timeliness. School faculty needs to respond right away or the moment will be lost. It is best to deal with the situation when words are still fresh in everyone's mind, and if the bullying is not dealt with right away, it is easy to forget or push it off and never deal with it later. Finally, if a student witnessed the bullying and nothing was done right away, he or she may think that the incident was ignored (Wessler, 2003).

Consistency. School faculty must consistently intervene when witnessing a bullying incident in order to set the standard for a bully free school. If there is no consistency, students will continually bully, thinking they will get away with it, and they probably will. It is impossible to catch and intervene in every bully situation, but it is important to try and intervene when students are bullied or degraded in some way (Wessler, 2003).

Firmness. When a teacher responds to bullying or degrading words lightly, students will begin to think that there is nothing wrong with that behavior. Consequently, victims will no longer feel safe in that teacher's room. Teachers and school faculty must be firm and not allow any degrading words or bullying in the school (Wessler, 2003).

Respectfulness. When a teacher intervenes, it is important to do it with respect, even towards the bully. Embarrassing or humiliating a bully in front of

others is not a good way to intervene because it will only anger the bully and

make things worse. Another reason to be respectful is because other students are

watching and it is important for them to see the correct way to intervene. The

teacher must model a positive way to handle bullying, so the other students can

imitate (Wessler, 2003).

What Teachers Can Do

It is up to the teachers to establish a social climate in the classroom where

bullying will be less likely to happen. One way to do this is for teachers to model

pro-social and respectful behavior for the students and other adults in the building

(Rigby 2001b). Another way is to have good classroom management and try to

avoid leaving the class unsupervised for too long (Rigby, 2001b). It is also

important to assign activities where students must work in cooperative groups

(Rigby, 2001b). Sagarese & Giannetti (1999) noted that changing the seating

every three weeks and making sure the students feel welcome in the classroom is

critical. When building the classroom climate, make a point to value all students

and avoid labeling and demeaning language (White & Beal, 1999). Sometimes

teachers do not realize what they are saying is demeaning to a student. This is

why it is important to know students and what would be humiliating to them.

Also, if a student needs to talk, make time and be available for him or her (Harris

& Petrie, 2003).

Teachers need to educate students about bullying (Rigby, 2001b): what it is and the behaviors involved. Allow time for students to ask questions (Beane, 1999). Share stories, facts, and just talk about bullying while actively discouraging the behavior (Rigby, 2001b) and making it known that there will be consequences involved if anyone chooses to bully.

Finally, teachers should try to build good relationships with their students (Horne, Bartolomucci, & Newman-Carlson, 2003). If there is a bully in the class, build a relationship with him or her. There is probably a reason for his or her behavior and providing support and time will allow him or her to open up to someone (Rigby, 2001b). This may be difficult, because the initial attitude towards bullying is to punish, which also needs to be done. However, bullies need someone to trust as well.

What Administrators Can Do

Interventions do not stop with the teachers. Administrators play a very important role as well. One of the main reasons teachers do not intervene is because they do not know what to do, so administrators should arrange for in-service workshops focused on bullying. The topic of bully prevention and intervention should be discussed throughout the year in order to continue safety for students within the school.

Bullying prevention programs can be successful in helping the bully (Sagarese& Giannetti, 1999). Bullies need to be challenged for their behavior

because if not, their aggression will continue into adulthood. Hiring speakers to come in to the school is a way to educate and warn students of the danger of bullying and witnessing the act (Sagarese & Giannetti, 1999). Also, having speakers to inform parents about the dangers and issues of cliques, bullies, and peer harassment would help get parents more involved in helping with the bullying problem.

Administrators should make sure to model consistent interventions and remind school staff and teachers at meetings the necessity of intervening in bullying or harassment situations (Wessler, 2003). It is a good idea for administrators to track data on bullying and harassment (Wessler, 2003). This can be done through surveys or documentation from teachers. By tracking the data, schools can use this to prioritize areas of greatest need and also get information such as, where bullying happens most in the school and at what times.

Interventions for the Whole School

Studies have indicated that bullying takes place more often in schools than going to or from school (Ross, 1996) as cited in Macklem (2003). A news article (Reinitz, 2004, p. A10) reported a family suing a school district after their son reported he was attacked on the playground and during gym class. The article stated, "The parents said the school district is responsible because officials didn't do anything to protect their child." It is true that the school is responsible for the climate in the building and the safety of its students, which is why it is extremely

important for the students to not only feel safe, but be safe, in order to succeed emotionally, socially, and academically.   If schools want to stay away from lawsuits, they had better take the protection of their students seriously. Because bullying happens mostly out of view of adults, to decrease bullying incidents, administrators, teachers, counselors, and school staff must be visible throughout the school (Wood & Huffman, 1999).

Sharp and Smith (1994) and Rigby (2001a) cited several reasons why it is important to collect data about bullying by using questionnaires, interviews, or individual activities. First, this will raise awareness in the school community and measure the extent of the problem. Second, collecting data will help locate the "hot spots" where bullying takes place most regularly (Suckling & Temple, 2001, p. 87). Third, having the students complete surveys will give the message that the school is aware of the issue and is taking it seriously. Finally, collecting data will allow the staff to work together as a team.

Buddy programs, where students are partnered with a peer or an older student to help develop good relationships (Rigby, 2001), can be implemented. If schools decide to use older students as buddies, they must be voluntary and selected with care. These programs are very effective because students are more likely to relate to someone other than an adult, and a healthy relationship will form.

Another program is the Big Brother program (Ross, 1996), which assigns kindergarteners to older students who they can trust and get help from when

needed. Coming from being the oldest in preschool to a whole new bigger school can be scary for some children. Not only does this program benefit the kindergartener, but it gives the older student a sense of responsibility.

Rigby (2001a) pointed out that students must be taught as early as possible how to use language to be appropriately assertive. If a student expresses his or her feelings respectfully, he or she will be less likely to become a bully or a victim. Language is an important part of creating a safe school climate. For example, students should be taught how to say "no" firmly to peers, when they do not want to do something. This is done by looking the person in the eye, not mumbling, giggling, or fidgeting, and staying calm (Rigby, 2001a). Using I-messages is important to do because it keeps a person from blaming or putting someone else down (Suckling & Temple, 2001).

Another form of language that is effective when dealing with a bully is called fogging (Sharp & Smith 1994). Fogging is responding to the bullying with a neutral statement. For example, if the bully says, "your hair looks like a dog tail," the victim would respond, "maybe" or "you might think so" (Suckling & Temple, 2001, p. 124). This is frustrating to the bully because he or she is not getting the reaction he or she is looking for. Finally, since inner thoughts or speech guide behavior (Suckling & Temple, 2001), positive self-talk, which can generate behavior changes, should be taught.

In order to prevent bullying, the whole school community must be involved

(Macklem, 2003) in prevention and intervention plans. Three main steps in

developing a program or policy are: development, implementation, and evaluation

(Macklem, 2003). These steps will be discussed further below.

Steps to Develop a Program

Wessler (2003) described an anti-harassment policy. In order for a policy like

this to be successful, there are certain elements that must go into it. First of all,

the administrators and school faculty must express their commitment to

preventing and intervening in bullying throughout the school. Second, the policy

should cover all aspects of bullying and harassment, from teasing to physical

abuse, as well as harassment against another race in the school. Third, the policy

should clearly define every category of bullying and the consequences. Finally,

the policy should define reporting procedures. Administrators, teachers, school

staff, and students need to know how to report an incident correctly. Reporting

must also be confidential as to not discourage a student from reporting for fear of

retaliation.

Sharp and Smith (1994) discussed how to set up a whole school policy to raise

awareness about bullying. The first step is to get consultation and ask community

groups for ideas and suggestions. It is important to not only involve staff and

students, but families as well. The next step is to prepare a draft and turn it over to

the consulted groups and then turn it into a final draft. The next step is

implementation, which may cause changes in the way the school has normally been run. Finally, maintaining and reviewing the policy must continue each year. Changes may need to take place from year to year.

Another suggestion for schools is to monitor through video recording (Ross, 1996). In Lyndon Comprehensive School in Solihull, England, cameras were installed to prevent theft, but school administrators soon realized bullying can be caught on these tapes as well (Ross, 1996). The cameras can be placed in the lunchroom, hallways, and at recess.

Students can be very effective in helping with the bullying problem in schools. Ross (1996) suggested student watch programs, where trained student volunteers patrol the school and anonymously report incidents of bullying. Another approach is to form an anti-bullying committee (Rigby, 2001a) comprised of students that meet to try to help reduce bullying in their school. These are excellent ways to get students involved in helping their own peers at school.

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement has been mentioned in this paper, but it needs to be expanded upon because children first learn how to function socially at home (Macklem, 2003). Parents and siblings affect how a child acts because the family is where a child experiences his or her first relationships and how to behave (Espelage & Swearer, 2004). This is why home and parents are so important in preventing bullying. "Many characteristics that predispose children, who later

become victims or bullies, are developed before even entering school" (Espelage & Swearer, 2004, p. 227).

One way the school district can educate parents is to hold parent workshops on topics such as "personal safety, discipline, time management, communication skills, homework, self-esteem, drug and alcohol abuse, and nutrition" (Bey & Turner, 1996, p. 87). Parent workshops will help parents realize the role they have in keeping their child safe and healthy.

Parents also have the responsibility of monitoring their children. They should pay closer attention to what videos their child rents or who he or she hangs out with at school, and what he or she does on the weekends (Dill, 1998).

Parent-teacher conferences are so important for a child and both parent and teacher have a responsibility when going in to a conference in order for it to be successful. Teachers must be able to communicate the information in a non-threatening manner because a conference that is more hostile will be ineffective and more of a power struggle and waste of time (Bey & Turner, 1996). The kind of conference that is the most effective is an informative conference where there is a set agenda, the teacher is organized and prepared, the parents are willing, and no one is defensive. At times, parents may be uneasy about talking to teachers about their child; therefore, teachers and administrators must make the effort to inform parents and show their genuine concern for every student in the school.

The Counselor's Role

Responsibilities for a counselor are endless; however, there are four main roles

a counselor should assume: counselor, consultant, coordinator, and leader. Within

these four roles, bully prevention and intervention is included.

Counselor

The counselor's first role is to counsel students individually, through small

groups, and through classroom guidance. The victim, bystander, and bully may

need help with various aspects of bullying. For example, the victim may need

individual counseling, as well as group counseling for support from other students

going through the same thing. A bully will benefit from individual counseling,

where he or she can learn how to appropriately treat other students. A bully must

be told what he or she is doing is wrong and can become a very serious problem if

not stopped. A bully will most likely need counseling for other issues that could

possibly be the cause of his or her behavior. The biggest thing a bystander needs

to learn is what to do in bullying situations and how to help the victim without

becoming one him or herself, which can be taught through classroom guidance or

small groups.   In addition, the bully, victim, and bystander will all benefit from

classroom guidance, where social skills are taught. A counselor must show

sensitivity to diversity and educate students on the importance of differences.

Building relationships with the students is an imperative part of the counselor

role. Many times students do not have a safe haven, even at home. It is important

for a counselor to provide that and be ready to help students learn coping skills

(Wong, 2005). Schools are not "substitutes" for families, but should be prepared

to fulfill "unmet needs" (Wong, 2005, p. 1).

Consultant

A counselor's second role is to be a consultant with staff, administration,

parents, and agencies, within confidentiality boundaries, regarding bullying issues

such as what it is, what to do about it, and how to prevent it. Bully prevention has

to be a school wide effort. Orenstein and Studer (2004) stated that, "It takes a

village to raise a child" and "It takes an entire school system to educate a child"

(p. 1). This is very true in bully prevention and intervention, because although a

counselor has a big part in this, he or she cannot do it alone.

Coordinator

The third role of a counselor is to coordinate programs and policies through the

school comprehensive guidance program. One of the most popular programs

incorporated into schools today is the Character Education Program or Character

Counts, which focus on seven character traits: respect, responsibility, fairness,

self-discipline, honesty, kindness, and perseverance (Husson, 2005). Most

counselors understand that education is more than "reading, writing and

arithmetic," it involves being "productive and contributing members of society,"

which comes from building character (Wong, 2005, p. 2). A counselor can help

coordinate school wide activities, community-service projects, classroom lessons,

and evaluation of the program (Husson, 2005). An important role for the

counselor in bringing the character education program into the school is to help

teachers implement character-building activities into their "existing curricula,"

without adding much more to their "plate" (Orndorff, 2005, p. 26). This can be

done through assigning character related topics for writing papers such as

teamwork or diversity, inviting counselors into the classroom to speak on certain

issues related to character, grading group work or projects on teamwork and effort

from the members, evaluating each other peer-to-peer, and coordinating school

wide assemblies (Orndorff, 2005). Character can also be taught through coaches

and athletic teams as well as by different club leaders throughout the school.

School counselors can also coordinate community service projects as part as the

character education program (Orndorff, 2005).

Another program is the Resolving Conflicts Creatively Program (RCCP),

which focuses on clear communication, expressing feelings, careful listening,

resolving conflicts, managing anger, appreciating differences, and nurturing

cooperation (Bortner, 2005). Conflict management can be taught in classrooms or

to selected students who work as conflict managers throughout the school.

A final program for counselors to coordinate is the Fast Track Project, which is

set up to help students who are at risk for conduct problems (Bortner, 2005). This

program focuses on certain developmental periods such as transitions and helps to

improve friendship skills and behavior (Bortner, 2005). This program includes

parent training and home visits, tutoring, and "social-cognitive skill development" (Bortner, 2005, p. 15).

Leader

The final role of a counselor is being a leader, especially in promoting and working to develop and perfect a comprehensive guidance program within the school, which includes a bully prevention program. Counselors need to also "work together and advocate for all students" (Bowers, 2004, p. 1). A counselor may have to stand up and promote a whole-school policy in bully prevention and intervention because sometimes teachers and administrators do not realize the importance of the policy.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

Although we know that bullying historically goes back a long ways, it is still occurring with great frequency. In order to stop it, schools need everyone: administrators, teachers, school staff, students, and parents on board to intervene and stop the bullying. The best way to do this is to educate everyone about the subject. Although the act should be forbidden in a school, the word should not. It should be talked about and taught that it is wrong and there are serious consequences to that kind of behavior. Children deserve to feel safe at school so that they can grow academically, socially, and emotionally. Safety is the second need on Maslow's hierarchy of needs pyramid and it is an essential psychological

need. For this reason alone, bullying must be prevented. Suggestions for doing

so were explored in this paper, along with information about intervention.

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