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Bullying, a subset of aggression, has been an international focus of scholarship for several decades and has been declared as public health concern globally (Espelage, 2015; Hymel & Espelage, 2018; Kann et al., 2018). An abstract literature search with the terms "adol*" and "bully*" yielded 382 peer-reviewed journal articles from 2001 through 2010, and an astounding 1585 articles from 2011 through 2020.

Defining Bullying: Past and Present

Over the years, there have been significant advances in our understanding of adolescent bullying, although, within the past decade, serious attention has been given to addressing definitional issues in the adolescent bullying literature. The term "bullying" originated in Germany in 1538 as, "a browbeating individual who is especially cruel to others who are weaker" (Volk et al., 2014). However, among bullying researchers, the most familiar and widely cited definition was conceptualized and derived by Dan Olweus. Olweus (1993) first proposed and defined bullying in the 1970s as a subcategory of aggression characterized by three critical components, including: (1) intentionality, (2) repetition, and (3) a power imbalance where perpetrators have some advantage over their victims (e.g., physical size or strength, status, competence, and numbers) and victims have difficulty defending themselves (Olweus, 1993). This definition has been widely adopted by many adolescent aggression scholars around the world (e.g., Felix et al., 2011; Juvonen et al., 2003; Ybarra et al., 2012); however, the ways in which these components are assessed vary widely. However, bullying researchers agree that when the three components of repetition, severity, and a perceived or observed power imbalance are present in an aggressive incident (i.e., bullying), there is an amplification of harm perceived by the target (Van der Ploeg et al., 2015; Van Noorden et al., 2016; Ybarra et al., 2014).

Within the last decade, there has been a concerted effort among scholars to reach a consensus on how bullying should be defined, operationalized, and assessed, how it differs from other forms of aggression (e.g., dating violence), and how it relates to other forms of violence across early and late adolescence (Rodkin et al., 2015; Volk et al., 2017). In 2011, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) convened a group of international scholars and unanimously agreed that "Bullying is any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm" (Gladden et al., 2014, p. 7).

Bullying can include verbal, social (exclusion), physical, and electronic forms of aggression, ranging from name-calling, rumors/exclusion, threats of physical harm, physical attacks, and extortion. Bullying can occur face to face (offline) or online through cell phones or computers and in video/computer games. Finally, some bullying behaviors may overlap with aggression that meets the legal definition of harassment, but not all incidents of harassment constitute bullying. Given that bullying co-occurs with other forms of aggression and school violence (Espelage et al., 2012, 2018a, b; Rodkin et al., 2015), educators and scholars should not limit themselves to the traditional definition, but examine aggression and bullying in a comprehensive manner. Finally, assessment of victimization should not be limited to peer-on-peer experiences but should be assessed for all members of the school environment, including teachers, school staff, and paraprofessionals (Espelage et al., 2013a; Reddy et al., 2018).

Central to studying bullying behavior is how it is used to discriminate and victimize someone based on the intersection of one's identities which include but are not limited to race, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), disability, immigrant status, sexual orientation, transgendered status, and religion. This form of violence is often called bias-based aggression (or bias-based bullying) and is when a term or action relating to a marginalized identity is used pejoratively (Bradshaw & Johnson, 2011). Although any individual can be targeted and feel harm caused by bullying, this form of violence is reliably directed at individuals and identity groups who are perceived to be "different" in undesirable ways from the dominant culture of space or what is expected from a person of their identities. As such, youth who are physically larger, gender expansive, disabled, homeless or have low SES, religious minorities, or a person who is Black, Indigenous or of Color tend to be targeted for bullying (Earnshaw et al., 2018; Garnett et al., 2014). Intentional or unconscious, these actions are used to uphold societally determined social hierarchies and police individuals for not complying (Payne & Smith, 2016; Volk et al., 2014). For example, when an individual is or is perceived to be part of a sexual minority group, they are often subjected to discrimination and homophobic bullying (Camodeca et al., 2019; Espelage et al., 2018c; Hatchel et al., 2019; Poteat et al., 2012; Rivers, 2011; Russell et al., 2012). Also, racial minorities or immigrant youth frequently encounter racial or

xenophobic bullying due to the dominant biases held regarding their physical traits, skin color, cultural differences, or language use (Koo et al., 2012; Peguero, 2012).

Social-Ecology of Bullying and Associated Youth Violence

Bronfenbrenner's (1977) seminal ecological systems' framework has been proposed as the preferred framework for examining the determinants of bullying and peer victimization, and other forms of youth violence. This framework postulates that bullying is an outcome within the multiple-level systems (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem) in which they occur (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) and supports the need for multifaceted approaches to research on bullying (Espelage, 2015; Hong & Espelage, 2012; Rose et al., 2015). As Bronfenbrenner (1977) had envisioned, an individual youth is positioned at the center of a series of nested systems structures, including classrooms and schools. Structures or locations where children have direct contact are referred to as the *microsystem*, including family, peers, community, and schools. The interaction between components of the microsystem is referred to as the *mesosystem*. An example of a mesosystem is the interrelations between the family and school, such as parental involvement in their child's school. The *exosystem* is the social context with which the child does not have direct contact, but which affects him or her indirectly through the microsystem. Examples would be teacher or staff perceptions of the school environment and opportunities for professional development around bullying, school violence, or school climate. The *macrosystem* level is commonly regarded as a cultural "blueprint," which may determine the social structures and activities at the various levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). This level includes organizational, social, cultural, and political contexts, which influence the interactions within other system levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The final level of the ecological framework, the *chronosystem* level, includes consistency or change (e.g., historical or life events) of the individual and the environment over the life course (e.g., changes in family structure).

A social-ecological explanation of bullying suggests that youth become involved in bullying as perpetrators, victims, perpetrator–

victims, or bystanders as a result of complex interactions between their own individual characteristics and those of their families, schools, peers, and society. Therefore, targeting multiple levels of the social ecology can both help improve the general social environments where youth spend their time and reduce bullying by bolstering protective aspects of the system.

Prevention, Intervention, and Policy Efforts

As noted, bully prevention and intervention efforts have grown exponentially over the years. Within the previous decade, there was a significant increase in legislative efforts to prevent bullying in schools; today, anti-bullying laws are prevalent in all 50 states (Cascardi et al., 2018; Cornell & Limber, 2015). However, given that research on bullying and violence prevention laws in schools has focused on content analyses of these laws (Cornell & Limber, 2015; Stuart-Cassel et al., 2011), it is unclear to what degree these laws and policies are effective and what the factors are that might contribute to their successful implementation (Flannery et al., 2016).

Violence prevention programs, especially those in the school settings, most often target one type of youth aggression (e.g., bullying perpetration) exclusively even though empirical findings suggest that youth aggression co-occurs with other types of youth aggression (Debnam et al., 2016; Espelage et al., 2015a, 2021; Foshee et al., 2015, 2016). Several longitudinal study findings also suggest that adolescents who frequently show signs of aggressive behaviors, such as bullying, are at increased odds of being involved in other types of aggressive behaviors, for example, dating violence and sexual harassment (Espelage et al., 2012, 2015a, 2018a, b). Therefore, targeting multiple forms of youth aggressive behaviors affecting adolescents, particularly middle and high schoolers is highly suggested (Connolly et al., 2015).

There has been a considerable growth in prevention programs for bullying and concomitant types of youth violence (e.g., sexual violence, teen dating violence) in the United States. The existing violence prevention programs in schools within the past decade include a wide array of programs. Such programs include the universally based, whole-school approach, which focuses on the entire school community (Storer et al., 2017); socio-emotional learning, which focuses on

social skills training, coping skills, or de-escalation approach (Espelage et al., 2013b); and bystander intervention (Nickerson et al., 2014; Polanin et al., 2012). However, the efficacy and effectiveness of the existing programs remain unclear, as there are only a small number of randomized controlled trials that test the efficacy or effectiveness of programs that are specifically designed to reduce bullying or target the consequences of bullying.

Meta-Analytic Studies: Traditional Bullying

Within the area of bullying among children and adolescents, several meta-analytic studies were conducted in the last decade that have had significant impacts on the ways in which bullying is addressed globally. For example, Ttofi and Farrington (2011) found program elements that were associated with decreases in rates of bully perpetration included parent training/meetings, improved playground supervision, disciplinary methods, classroom management, teacher training, classroom rules, whole-school anti-bullying policy, school conferences, information for parents, and cooperative group work. Decreases in rates of victimization were associated with the following program elements: disciplinary methods, parent training/meetings, use of videos, and cooperative group work. Further, the duration and intensity of the program for children and teachers were significantly associated with a decrease in perpetration and victimization.

In two separate 2019 meta-analyses, Gaffney et al. (2019a, b) included a review of 100 bully prevention program evaluations and randomized clinical trials, with 72% being conducted outside the United States. Additionally, 65 different anti-bullying programs were evaluated, with four programs representing 38% of the total sample. The Olweus Bully Prevention Program was the most commonly evaluated (18%), generally through age cohort designs (Gaffney et al., 2019b), resulting in larger effect sizes in Norway, when compared to evaluations in the United States (Gaffney et al., 2019a). Of the 12 countries that had multiple evaluations, the United States had the fourth largest reduction in bully perpetration (1.38 OR; Range 0.86 OR (Netherlands) to 1.59 OR (Spain)) and seventh-largest reduction in victimization (1.17 OR; Range 0.88 OR (Cypress) to 1.62 OR (Italy; Gaffney et

al., 2019b). Overall, Gaffney and colleagues (2019b) found reductions of perpetration by approximately 19–20% and victimization by approximately 15–16%.

Although promising, these meta-analyses also pointed to several gaps in the area of bullying prevention efforts. First, these meta-analyses revealed smaller effect sizes for randomized clinical trials (RCT) designs in comparison to non-RCT designs (Gaffney et al., 2019b; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). This suggests that studies conducted in less authentic educational environments (e.g., those with a higher degree of researcher involvement), elicited stronger effects than those conducted in more applied settings (Bradshaw, 2015; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). Moreover, another systematic review of bullying prevention programs concluded that research conducted outside of the United States and studies with racially and ethnically homogeneous samples were significantly more likely to report significant findings (Evans et al., 2014).

Meta-Analytic Study: Traditional and Cyberbullying

In a recent meta-analysis of the effects of school-based programs on both traditional and cyberbullying, Polanin et al. (2021a, b) included a total of 50 studies and 320 extracted effect sizes spanning 45,371 participants. Results indicated that programs reduced cyberbullying perpetration ($g = -0.18$, SE = 0.05, 95% CI [-0.28, -0.09]) and victimization ($g = -0.13$, SE = 0.04, 95% CI [-0.21, -0.05]). Results indicated that when programs have an explicit focus on targeting cyberbullying, reductions were also noted for traditional bullying. We strongly encourage developers of bully prevention programs or those that are revising their programs to include specific and elaborate content on cyberbullying, given its rising prevalence and associations with other forms of aggression.

Meta-Analytic Study: Teen Dating Violence

Concerning bullying that is linked to teen dating violence and sexual violence, even fewer studies evaluating the effectiveness of sexual

violence prevention using a randomized design can be found in the research literature (Foshee et al., 2012). Also, a recent meta-analytic study on dating violence and sexual violence programs for middle and high school students reported that although existing programs influence knowledge and improve attitudes, these programs are not affecting these behaviors to a significant extent (De La Rue et al., 2017). These patterns of findings seem to suggest that developing and implementing effective violence prevention and intervention programs are likely to be more challenging in the United States than in other countries (Evans et al., 2014).

Tiered Prevention and Intervention Approaches

In the prevention literature, the terms "primary," "secondary," and "tertiary" refer to specific prevention and intervention strategies designed to reduce problem behavior in youth. Perhaps the most widely recognized model that embraces this three-tiered model is the Multitiered System of Supports (MTSS; Cowan et al., 2013), under which Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports is a framework for behavioral prevention and intervention efforts in schools (PBIS; Sprague & Golly, 2004; Sprague & Walker, 2005). PBIS is a system-based, behaviorally focused prevention and intervention set of strategies designed to improve educational outcomes and social development for all students. PBIS frameworks indicate that approximately 80% of students will need primary prevention strategies, 15% will need secondary prevention strategies, and 5% will need tertiary prevention strategies.

Applied to the social-ecological problem of bullying where bullying is conceptualized as emerging from different domains of a child's lives (e.g., individual, school, peer, family), the goal of primary prevention is to reduce the number of new cases of bullying. The idea is that through whole-school and classroom-wide strategies, new incidents of bullying can be curtailed. Fifteen percent of students will need secondary prevention strategies designed to reduce engagement in bullying. These might be the students who are involved in bullying as a bystander or students who are involved in bullying less frequently or less severely. Finally, tertiary prevention strategies are designed for the 5% of students who are involved in frequent and intense bullying
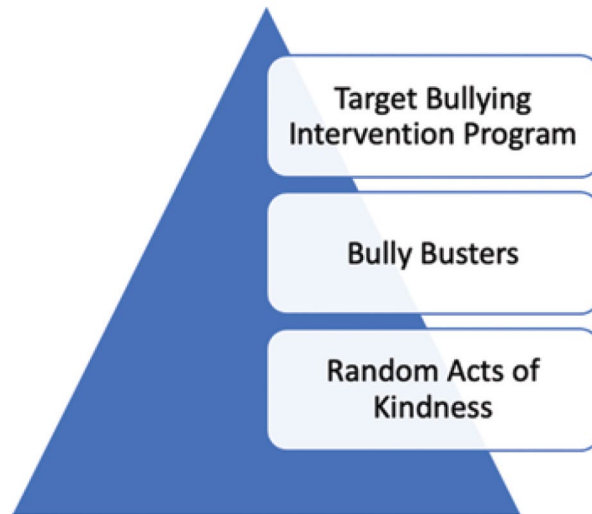
Fig. 1 Bullying prevention and intervention in a Multitiered System of Supports

behaviors. These are the students who might have concomitant psychological problems (i.e., depression and anxiety) as a result of their involvement in bullying behaviors (Davis et al., 2019; Polanin et al., 2021a, b; Walters & Espelage, 2018). The goal of tertiary prevention is to reduce complications, severity, and frequency of bullying behaviors. While not an exhaustive list, Fig. 1 outlines three bullying prevention and intervention initiatives that illustrate the MTSS framework. A description of these three initiatives will be provided in the next section of this chapter.

An Example of Primary Prevention for Bullying Behaviors: Random Acts of Kindness

The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation was established in 1995 (www.randomactsofkindness.org). The mission of the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation is to "make kindness the norm" by promoting resiliency, kindness, and well-being in schools, homes, workplaces, and communities (Schonert-Reichl & Arruda, 2016). All of their programs follow a simple framework: Share, Inspire, Empower, Act, and Reflect. The goal of their school curriculum, Kindness in the Classroom, is to enhance children's social and emotional competence through skill-building activities that promote positive social behaviors and school

adjustment. With its focus on creating a culture of kindness, Kindness in the Classroom is an excellent example of primary prevention for bullying behaviors.

The Kindness in the Classroom is a year-long (36 weeks) curriculum that focuses on six kindness concepts: Respect, Caring, Inclusiveness, Integrity, Responsibility, and Courage. Six weeks is dedicated to each concept, with 4 weeks of lessons and 2 weeks of projects presented. Lessons are designed to be presented once a week, ranging from 30–45 min in length. Each lesson follows the structure of their Kindness framework. First, students share with their peers on what they have learned and experienced with others since the previous lesson. By listening to others' experiences, students' learning is reinforced and are more likely to continue spreading kindness. Second, lessons are designed to inspire both students and teachers through various activities and role-play scenarios.

To empower their students, teachers facilitate class-wide and small group discussions to give students the tools needed to find ways to express kindness in their daily lives. Existing opportunities to act with kindness are found throughout the lessons, but students demonstrate their ideas and skills by completing unit projects. Students work to bring real, tangible kindness into the world through projects involving one of the six kindness concepts. Finally, at the end of each lesson and project, teachers guide students to reflect on what they have learned and identify how being kind impacts their own lives, as well as the lives of those around them.

In a randomized controlled trial conducted by the University of British Columbia (Schonert-Reichl & Arruda, 2016), Kindness in the Classroom significantly improved students' emotional and social competence, including empathy/sympathy and intrinsic prosocial motivation, while also significantly decreasing antisocial and aggressive behaviors.

An Example of Secondary Prevention for Bullying Behaviors: Bully Busters

Bully Busters: A Teacher's Manual for Helping Bullies, Victims, and Bystanders (Newman et al., 2000) is a group-based, psychoeducational program developed to target teachers' skills and self-efficacy

in reducing bullying behaviors. The focus of Bully Busters is to alter the school environment by changing teachers' and school administrators' responses and creating a school culture that encourages peer action to reduce or eliminate the problem of bullying.

As such, this program falls under both primary and secondary levels of prevention. This program was created based on three core assumptions: changing the environment is more powerful than changing individuals, prevention is better than intervention, and changing the environment requires support and understanding among teachers (Horne et al., 2011). There are four versions of the program: Bully Busters: A Teacher's Manual for Helping Bullies, Victims, and Bystanders – Grades 6–8 (Newman et al., 2000), Bully Busters: A Teacher's Manual for Helping Bullies, Victims, and Bystanders – Grades K–5 (Horne et al., 2003), Helping Bullies, Victims, and Bystanders: A Parent's Guide to Bully Busters (Horne et al., 2008), and Empowering Teen Peers to Prevent Bullying: The Bully Busters Program for High School (Horne et al., 2012). The high school program has a different structure than the other school-age programs, with the emphasis on adult facilitators and older students as peer leaders, rather than the teacher-led modality.

The Bully Busters Program is implemented through a staff development training workshop, which is then followed by teacher support groups. The workshop provides information on the social-ecological model on which the program is based, and the specific classroom materials and activities included. The workshop is comprised of seven modules, each composed of an overview, rationale, objectives to be accomplished, discussions, and student activities that are related to the topic. Module One is designed to help teachers and students recognize the extent of the problem of bullying, provide a common definition, dispel myths about bullying, and develop classroom exercises to help students understand bullying. The second module focuses on the development of bullying, the variety of forms it can take, gender differences in bullying behaviors, and common myths and misconceptions. Module Three examines how to recognize the types of victims and victimization of bullying and effects of victimization and prepares teachers to conduct skills training to help students learn effective methods to report and manage the bullying problem. Recommendations and interventions for bullying behaviors are the focus of the fourth module,

which provides teachers with specific strategies to create a bully-free classroom, including empathy skills education, social skills training, anger control skills, and classroom management techniques. The fifth module expands students' skills development through the instruction of strategies to implement with victims of bullying, such as victim support, interventions for specific types of victims, and group assimilation. Module Six focuses on aiding teachers in the role of prevention of bullying via characteristics of schools and teachers that lead to bullying reduction and different recommendations to prevent bullying and victimization. This module also includes student activities that focus on building problem-solving and decision-making skills to prevent conflict. Module Seven addresses teacher-coping skills, relaxation training, and emotion management, with the goal of teachers applying the skills, then teaching those skills to their students. After all of the modules are completed, a follow-up assessment of teachers' knowledge and self-efficacy is administered, as well as a student and teacher survey of bullying in their school.

After the workshop, the Bully Buster Teacher Support Teams are composed and organized. In addition to reviewing the modules, the Support Teams fulfill several roles: they serve as a reminder to continue addressing bullying behaviors, provide opportunities to discuss problematic situations in the classroom or with specific students, and offer the chance to evaluate what is working and what is not effective in the prevention of bullying behaviors. A study conducted by Newman-Carlson and Horne (2004) found that the treatment program effectively increased teachers' knowledge of intervention skills, teachers' self-efficacy, and reduced classroom bullying through measurement of disciplinary referrals.

An Example of Tertiary Prevention for Bullying Behaviors: Target Bullying Intervention Program

The Bullying Intervention Program (T-BIP; Swearer & Givens, 2006) is an individual cognitive-behavioral intervention for use with students who bully others. The guiding premise behind T-BIP is twofold. First, we are guided by the reality that the social-cognitive perceptions of students involved in bullying interactions are as critical as are the aggressive behaviors, because the perceptions and cognitions of the

participants serve to underlie, perpetuate, and escalate bullying interactions (Doll & Swearer, 2005; Swearer & Cary, 2003). Second, there is compelling research that suggests that homogeneous group interventions are not helpful for aggressive youth and in fact, may be damaging (Dishion et al., 1999). Based on these two underlying premises, the T-BIP was developed as a mechanism for school counselors and school psychologists to work directly with students who bully others.

The T-BIP is in part based upon two decades of research on school bullying under the research project, "Target Bullying: Ecologically-Based Prevention and Intervention for Schools." Target Bullying is a participatory research project whereby university researchers and school personnel and families work together to understand the bullying phenomenon. The T-BIP was developed by the request of a middle school principal who experienced the fact that in-school suspension, suspension, and expulsion were ineffective strategies for reducing bullying behaviors. Research has also found that zero-tolerance policies are not effective in curbing aggressive behaviors (Casella, 2003) and that expulsion is equally ineffective in reducing aggressive behavior (Gordon, 2001). Thus, the interventions typically employed in school settings (group treatment, zero tolerance, and expulsion) are ineffective in dealing with bullying behaviors.

The T-BIP is an alternative to in-school suspension for bullying behaviors that is being implemented in a Midwestern public school district. When a student is referred for bullying behaviors, the typical protocol is that the student is sent to in-school suspension. In the T-BIP, parents are given a choice: in-school suspension or the T-BIP. In all cases (n = 272) since the program's inception in 2005, parents have chosen T-BIP. In order to participate in the T-BIP, active parental consent and student assent are obtained. Then, the T-BIP is scheduled according to the same policies and procedures that the school uses to schedule in-school suspension.

The T-BIP is a three-hour one-on-one cognitive–behavioral intervention session with a masters-level student therapist under the supervision of a licensed psychologist. There are three components to the T-BIP: (1) assessment, (2) psychoeducation, and (3) feedback. The assessment component consists of widely used measures to assess experiences with bullying, depression, anxiety, cognitive distortions, school climate, and self-concept. The assessment component

lasts approximately 1 h. The psychoeducation component lasts about 2 h and consists of the student therapist presenting an engaging and youth-friendly PowerPoint presentation about bullying behaviors. The presentation is followed by a short quiz to assess understanding. This is followed by several worksheet activities about bullying behavior that are used from Bully Busters (Newman et al., 2000) or virtual reality learning experiences for students ages 13 and older. Finally, the student therapist and the referred student watch videos about bullying. The session ends with a debriefing component where the referred student talks about his or her experiences with bullying and impressions of T-BIP. Based on the assessment data and the interactions with the referred student, a bullying intervention treatment report is written. Recommendations are based on the data collected. The treatment report is reviewed with the parents, student, and school personnel during a face-to-face solution-oriented meeting.

Since mid-fall 2005, there have been 272 participants in grades one through eleven. The mean age was 11.45 years (range: 7–17 years old). For race/ethnicity, 50.4% of participants identified as White, 16.9% Biracial, 8.8% Black/African American, 9.6% Latino/Hispanic, 4% Native American, 1.1% Middle Eastern, 0.4% Asian American, 0.4% Eastern European, and 4% identifying as other. Twelve participants (4.4%) did not complete the race or ethnicity items. In terms of self-reporting engagement in bullying, 41.2% of participants reported that they bullied others, were bullied, and observed bullying (bully-victim-bystanders), 9.6% of participants reported they both bullied others and were bullied (bully-victims); 5.9% reported they bullied others (bully); 5.6% reported they observed bullying (bystander); 3.6% reported they were victimized only (victim); and 3.6% reported that they were not involved at all in bullying. In terms of psychosocial functioning, eight participants endorsed clinical levels of depression and five participants endorsed clinical levels of anxiety. Participants endorsed a range of cognitive distortions and behavioral problems. The variety of presenting problems acknowledged by the participants suggests that homogeneous group interventions for students who bully others are likely to be ineffective. At the tertiary level, it appears that individually focused interventions for bullying are likely to be more efficacious than group forms of treatment (Dishion et al., 1999).

How to Implement Prevention Strategies?

The most effective prevention and intervention programming will exist when a coordinated effort exists between primary, secondary, and tertiary strategies. As previously mentioned, MTSS (Cowan et al., 2013) is an example of coordinating these strategies. Clearly, co-ordinating school, family, and community prevention and intervention efforts is essential in reducing aggressive and bullying behaviors in students (Sprague & Walker, 2005). However, despite the fact that there are more than 300 violence prevention programs (Howard et al., 1999), there is little guidance for school personnel and parents on how to implement these programs.

Successful implementation of any prevention or intervention strategy depends in large part on the people involved. Any program will fail if the adults in the system are not supportive. If the adults in the school are enthusiastic, positive, and emotionally healthy and have a unified focus on doing what is in the best interests of students, then the school climate will be a healthy and positive environment. This environment in itself will help create a prevention-oriented atmosphere and will help prevent problems before they start. At the primary prevention level, strategies that help promote a positive school climate, positive relationships in the school, and positive home–school relationships are vital.

Teachers in the school must be supported in their classroom management strategies and classroom-based interventions. Secondary prevention strategies are more likely to be successful when teachers are supported in their work and they are able to identify the students who are struggling. When schools adhere to a unified referral system for at-risk students, they decrease the likelihood that a student might fall through the cracks or does not get additional help (i.e., social skills training). Positive relationships between teachers, administrators, and school support staff (i.e., school social workers, school psychologists) are critical.

Schools must support their counseling departments, as these personnel are trained in working with difficult students. At the tertiary level, there are many interventions that can be utilized in working with students who are involved in bullying behaviors. These interventions typically occur at the individual level, such as individual therapy.

However, small group work, such as support groups, and family therapy may also be effective. It is incumbent upon counseling departments to have a solid referral system for teachers and parents and to develop strong links to providers in the community. Primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention and intervention efforts that are coordinated, positive, supportive, and data-based are vital for the reduction of bullying behaviors in our schools.

Leveraging Technology to Inform Bullying and Youth Violence Prevention

Increasingly, the prevention of bullying and other forms of youth violence are leveraging technology and multimedia. Given the limited efficacy of physical bullying prevention programs, a need exists for a novel, theoretically informed, prevention programming. Several studies have employed video technology to deliver prevention curricula, and their use can be an effective way to deliver content and demonstrate skills on a large scale while keeping costs of implementation low. One example of a study using video to deliver social-emotional learning prevention curriculum is the Second Step program (Espelage et al., 2013b). The Second Step lessons were accompanied and supported by a media-rich DVD which included interviews with students and demonstrations of skills. The videos were used to reinforce skills acquisition during the program delivery which supported other prevention strategies (Espelage et al., 2013b).

However, given the need to reinforce social-emotional learning competencies outside of the classroom/school, Ybarra et al. (2016) developed a 7-week middle school text-messaging program called *BullyDown* that included SEL content and encouraged bystander intervention. Results of a small pilot study indicated that there were reductions in bullying in the intervention condition (Ybarra et al., 2016). Bully prevention through text messaging is particularly innovative and has the potential to advance bully prevention, where they may be failing. First, BullyDown will be delivered outside of school. By engaging with the content in a non-academic setting, youth may be more likely to apply their new behaviors across contexts, including bullying scenarios that take place on the way to and from school and other places

where youth congregate. This also has the advantage of giving youth the opportunity to learn SEL components and interact with someone else in the program (i.e., a Text Buddy) without a potential perpetrator sitting at a desk nearby. It also bypasses situations when school-based programming is not viewed as "cool" by some students, resulting in their under-engagement in program activities, which can implicitly reinforce negative social norms. Second, in school-based intervention programs, school personnel are often called upon to implement the content. To do so, they need to be extensively trained to maximize efficacy. Increasingly, financial resources for training are simply not available in US public schools. BullyDown is administered through text messaging, bypassing training, and competition with professional development time. Third, compared to in-person interventions that may be vulnerable to variable implementation fidelity, all youth in the program receive the same content in the same order, thereby ensuring fidelity. Compared to "apps" that require a smartphone and data, all cell phones are text messaging-capable and therefore, all students who have a cell phone would be able to participate. Fourth, the meta-analytic results described above reflect the best-case scenario. Although all states require schools to implement bullying prevention programming, there is significant variation in what is mandated, resulting in a wide spectrum of programming offered in schools across the US. In the FGs, we conducted in the BullyDown development process, very few youths talked about a comprehensive bullying prevention curriculum in their school. BullyDown can be delivered as a "booster" outside of school time that enhances whatever programming is being offered by schools. In doing so, one of the benefits of BullyDown is that it helps to ensure all youth are exposed to the basic tenets of a bullying prevention curriculum. Finally, given the focus on victimization that most of the current prevention programs have, BullyDown's focus on perpetration is innovative.

Virtual reality (VR) has also been utilized as a tool for bully prevention. To explore VR as a violence prevention tool, Ingram et al. (2019) used a pseudo-randomized controlled design to pilot test the effects of a VR-enhanced bullying prevention program compared to the currently used bullying prevention programming in two Midwestern US middle schools. The enhanced program included professionally designed VR scenarios that place students into situations as if they were

witnessing them in real life (e.g., at the party or in the hallway watching an altercation). This in-vivo experience decreases all four dimensions of psychological distance (spatial, social, temporal, hypothetical) that the traditional bullying curriculum does not. These activities include reflecting on character identification, perspective-taking discussion questions, and creating short films aimed to evoke empathy. Results indicated that students in the VR condition reported increases in self-reported empathy and greater willingness to intervene to help a victim of bullying. VR and other programs that use multimedia should be considered as a complement to other school-based prevention efforts.

Conclusions

Bullying involvement among school-aged children continues to be a public health concern and co-occurs with other forms of youth violence, including bias-based aggression, sexual violence, and teen dating violence. Involvement with these forms of youth violence is associated with mental health issues, psychiatric symptoms, academic challenges, and peer relation issues. Research on school-based bullying has burgeoned over the last few decades, and much has been learned about the etiological theories regarding why youth become involved and how bullying is a precursor and antecedent to other forms of aggression. It is clear that bullying involvement is a multifaceted phenomenon that originates as a result of a complex interaction between individual youth and their environments. Multitiered prevention and intervention approaches have shown promise in reducing bullying. We discussed examples of primary, secondary, and tertiary approaches to bully prevention and encourage preventionists to consider how to leverage technology to improve transfer of skills to contexts outside of the classroom or school.

   As prevention scientists who have collectively been engaged in bully prevention efforts for over 50 years, we have learned many lessons including:
   • Bullying co-occurs with other forms of violence and cannot be examined in isolation.

- Minoritized youth (e.g., gender/sexual minority youth, students with disabilities) are particularly at-risk for bullying involvement, but often do not focus on prevention efforts.
- Bully prevention needs to involve all stakeholders – parents, teachers, administrators, coaches, and faith-based leaders, not just students.
- Bully prevention in the United States is not as successful as in other countries, and even within the United States, success varies depending on school districts.
- Efficacy of bully prevention efforts is directly tied to implementation fidelity. Programs need to be implemented as intended if they are to sustain positive outcomes.
- Bully prevention should be integrated into all aspects of school culture and community.

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