Running head: BARRIERS TO HELP SEEKING FOR BULLYING

Perceived Barriers that Prevent High School Students Seeking Help from Teachers for Bullying and their Effects on Disclosure Intentions

Michael J Boulton, Louise Boulton, James Down, Jessica Sanders, Helen Craddock

University of Chester

*Corresponding author

Email: m.boulton@chester.ac.uk

Address: Department of Psychology, University of Chester, Parkgate Road, Chester CH1 4BJ, UK

Telephone: +44 (0)1244 513479

Fax: +44 (0)1244 511323

Abstract

Many adolescents choose not to tell teachers when they have been bullied. Three studies

with 12-16 year-old English adolescents addressed possible reasons. In study 1, students (N

= 411, 208 females/203 males) identified reasons with no prompting. Three perceived

negative outcomes were common; peers would disapprove, disclosers would feel

weak/undermined, and disclosers desired autonomy. In study 2, students (N = 297, 153

females/134 males/10 unspecified) indicated how much they believed that the perceived

negative outcomes would happen to them, and a substantial proportion did so. Perceived

negative outcomes significantly predicted intentions to disclose being bullied. Study 3 (N =

231, 100 females/131 males) tested if the perceived negative outcomes would be strong

enough to stop participants from telling a teacher even though the teacher would stop the

bullying. This was the case for many of them. Participants did *not* report disliking peers who

disclosed bullying. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Perceived Barriers that Prevent High School Students Seeking Help from Teachers for

Bullying and their Effects on Disclosure Intentions

Bullying involves repeated assaults of a less powerful individual by a more powerful

individual or group with the intention of causing distress/harm (Olweus, 1993). It is

widespread in schools (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, & Scheidt, 2001;

Rose, Espelage, & Monda-Amaya, 2009) and is associated with many indices of

maladjustment (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Reijntjes, Kamphuis, Prinzie, & Telch, 2010),

including compromised classroom concentration (Boulton, Trueman, & Murray, 2008).

Hence, those on the receiving end (victims henceforward) are encouraged to disclose when

they have been bullied so that support can be initiated. However, many students choose not

to tell anyone, and teachers in particular, and end up 'suffering in silence' (Boulton, 2005;

Cowie, 2000; Hunter, Boyle & Warden, 2004; Smith, Talamelli, Cowie, Naylor & Chauhan,

2004; Smith & Shu, 2000). Clearly, barriers to seeking help from teachers for bullying must

exist and efforts to identify them are important, not least because teachers are potentially

important sources of support for victims (Beckman & Svensson, 2015; Boulton et al., 2013).

Here, we report three linked studies that extend current knowledge about those barriers.

The general purpose of these studies is to identify if adolescents perceive that telling a

teacher they have been bullied will lead to negative outcomes, what those perceived

negative outcomes are, and their role in predicting intentions to disclose bullying to teachers.

Our work is largely based upon Newman's (2008) theory of adaptive and non-adaptive

help-seeking for peer harassment ('Newman's theory' henceforward). This is a complex

theory that is itself built upon, and integrates, two rich theoretical perspectives, coping and

self-regulation. Central to Newman's theory are the notions that (i) victims engage in a

complex decision-making process about how to cope with this form of social stress and

whether or not it is in their *overall* best interest to seek help, and (ii) these psychological

processes influence actual behaviour via intentions to act. Newman (2008) was clear that

his theory needed to be tested more directly, but given its complexity and scope, it would be

difficult to do this for the theory as a whole. While some subsequent studies have attempted to test some specific predictions, it remains the case that some key aspects of the theory are supported only indirectly and others remain plausible speculations. These include the notions that (i) help-seeking for bullying and the social support it may engender may have perceived potential costs that act as barriers to actual help-seeking behaviour, and (ii) that there may exist developmental changes in help-seeking for bullying processes over the adolescent years. We now consider these issues in more detail.

Other theory (Murphy, 1988) and considerable evidence suggests social support for diverse types of distress, and involving various receivers/providers, can have unintended adverse effects (Akey & Rintamaki, 2014; Barbee, Derlega, Sherburne, & Grimshaw, 1998; Garwick, Patterson, Bennett, & Blum, 1998; Masters, Stillman, & Spielmans, 2007; Roth & Assor, 2012; Warner et al., 2011). Some of these authors have suggested that seeking/receiving help can leave people believing that they are weak because they can't cope on their own, and undermine their sense of personal agency and being in control. While several authors have alluded to the possibility that social support specifically for bullying may have such negative effects (Graham & Juvonen, 2001; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997; Perry, Williard, & Perry, 1990), few studies have actually tested this notion. Researchers have considered how *perceptions* of potential negative effects of social support may act as barriers to disclosure (Newman, 2008; Newman & Murray, 2005; Newman, Murray & Lussier, 2001). In the latter study, perceptions of potential costs, lack of potential benefit, and a desire to resolve the conflict independently were identified by participants as factors that would stop them from seeking help from teachers. We refer to these kinds of perceptions as perceived negative outcomes that attenuate help-seeking for bullying, and it is these that we focus on in the three studies reported here.

Newman's (2008) call for research to identify help-seeking*'s subjective costs* can be well-served with the participatory action research paradigm (PAR, MacEvoy & Leff, 2012) because it allows participants to identify their own personal costs with no prompting.

However, PAR runs the risk of *underestimating* the incidence of perceived negative outcomes simply *because* it requires participants to put them into their own words. Hence, our research to extend current knowledge about subjective costs employed two different approaches. First, we *directly asked a group of adolescents* what they regard to be the key barriers to disclosing being bullied to teachers using PAR. Second, we adopted MacEvoy and Leff's (2012) approach of incorporating the categories identified using PAR into a more structured questionnaire that investigated how widespread they are in a way that did not have those 'self-report burdens'.

In terms of developmental changes, there are reasons to believe that *general* help-seeking will reduce in frequency once adolescence is reached. Adolescence brings increasing social-cognitive capacities (Flavell, 1979; Paris & Newman, 1990) and experiences that foster self-generated solutions (Altshuler & Ruble, 1989; Putallaz & Sheppard, 1992). However, the developmental change towards less help-seeking may also be due to other reasons. One such reason may be the *perceived costs of not solving the problem on one's own*. Adolescents become increasingly aware that it is not 'normative' to seek help, especially from teachers, and may experience or anticipate negative peer reactions and self-feelings for doing so (Schneider, 2000). Indeed, teachers increasingly expect adolescents to become independent 'social problem-solvers' (Newman, 2003), and there is evidence that peers become less sympathetic towards victims across the adolescent years (Rigby & Slee, 1991). Moreover, students increasingly believe that teachers are unable or unwilling to help them (Rigby & Bagshaw, 2003). Newman (2008. p.11) speculated that, "Children may decide the costs of help-seeking are too great … perhaps around the transition from lower to upper elementary grades." While Hunter et al. (2004) did not find a reduction in help-seeking in 10- versus 8-year olds, the 'pressures' to solve social problems like bullying alone may not yet have materialised by this age. So far as we can tell, the notion that perceived negative outcomes arising out of help-seeking for bullying may exist among *adolescents* remains untested outside of Newman's program of research, as do

comparisons among adolescents of different ages. The latter is especially important for understanding developmental changes. For instance, researchers have identified a growing concern among adolescents to avoid actions that could result in negative peer labels (Brown, Mory, & Kinney, 1994; Eccles & Barber, 1999). Collectively, this work is suggestive of a possible trend towards less disclosure of bullying to teachers across early adolescence because of the development and increased salience of beliefs about potential negative peer/ self-consequences.

Prior evidence of gender differences also exists, with girls tending to be more likely than boys to seek help for bullying (Boulton, 2005; Hunter et al., 2004; Naylor, Cowie and del Ray, 2001; Smith & Shu, 2000). Girls cite the potential costs less than boys (Newman et al., 2001) and were found to be more willing than boys to work with teachers to resolve bullying (Rigby & Bagshaw, 2003). Newman's (2008) theoretical framework conceptualises decisions about help-seeking for bullying as coping and self-regulatory strategies that may themselves be moderated by other variables, such as gender. Hence, it is important to test for gender differences in perceived negative outcomes of telling teachers.

The same is true for victim status, not least because extant research has been inconsistent. Hunter et al. (2004) found that frequency and duration of victimisation were poor predictors of help-seeking. Smith et al. (2004) found significantly more "continuing victims" (i.e., identified as being bullied on two occasions separated by two years) told no-one than "escaped victims". In contrast, Boulton (2014a) found that secondary school students reported a greater willingness to seek help (from peer counsellors) for repeated bullying than for isolated incidents. These somewhat disparate findings are difficult to reconcile at present, but they indicate that it is important to assess the impact of level of victimisation on adolescents' perceived negative outcomes of telling teachers. Put simply, level of victimisation may be associated with stronger *or* weaker perceived negative outcomes among adolescents, but we currently have no data to test between these alternatives.

Young people's beliefs about social support provided by teachers for bullying have been shown to predict willingness to seek help in the future (Aceves, Hinshaw, Mendoza-Denton, & Page-Gould, 2010; Boulton et al., 2013). Such findings are consistent with Newman's (2008) theory, and with other social cognitive theories. The theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) and self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977) both suggest that people's actions are influenced by their beliefs, especially perceived outcomes. Collectively, this work suggests that the more (less) a young person has experienced positive (negative) outcomes of telling a teacher, or *expects* them in future, the more (less) likely they would be to tell a teacher in the future. To date, no study has tested directly if the *specific* perceived negative outcomes that high school students anticipate would predict their intentions to disclose bullying to teachers.

As we have already noted, Newman's theory implies that students weigh up the potential costs of help-seeking against the potential benefits (and the potential costs of trying to cope alone). So far as we can tell, this key aspect of the theory remains untested because no extant study has simultaneously taken account of the impact of *both subjective costs and benefits* of help-seeking. With this in mind, we wanted to know how *powerful* perceived negative outcomes can be. Dowling & Carey (2013) found that stopping the bullying was *the* most desired goal of seeking help for bullying. This provides a useful 'benchmark' to assess if participants would regard any given perceived negative outcome as *too costly*. Put simply, if that perceived negative outcome was to materialise, would it be strong enough to stop adolescents from telling a teacher even though the teacher would stop the bullying?

Throughout his description of his theory, Newman (2008) drew attention to expectations of *peer* disapproval and negative responses to help-seeking as being particularly important. He is not alone in doing so (Graham & Juvonen, 2001; Perry et al., 1990). While it seems a reasonable assumption, it is another aspect of Newman's theory that remains largely untested. Put simply, we lack information about the extent to which students *actually do* disapprove of peers who disclose bullying to teachers. On the one hand, several studies

have shown that many students are quite sympathetic to victims (Boulton, Trueman & Flemington, 2002; Fox, Elder, Gater, & Johnson, 2010; Rigby & Slee, 1991). On the other hand, there is evidence that students avoid forming relationships with victims, largely because they fear attracting the attention of bullies (Boulton, 2013). At present, though, we do not know if the latter 'anti-victim' stance extends to thinking badly of them for disclosing to teachers. As well as testing a specific aspect of Newman's theory, information on this issue can inform interventions to encourage more disclosure. For instance, if it can be shown that peer disapproval is *not* actually widespread, students can be helped to see how largely unfounded this perceived negative outcome is.

In summary, the present research presents three inter-related studies designed to address the aforementioned aspects of Newman's theory. Study 1 invited a sample of adolescents to identify, with no prompting from ourselves, what negative outcomes they perceived would arise out of telling a teacher. Study 2 developed short scales to operationalise the three most frequent perceived negative outcomes in order to determine how prevalent they were in another sample of adolescents, and if they could predict intentions to tell teachers they had been bullied. Study 3 tested the power of these perceived negative outcomes. It invited participants to decide if they would or would not tell knowing that the teacher would stop the bullying but that the perceived negative outcome would arise. In the following sections, we describe the research questions, measures, procedure and results of each study in turn, before presenting a General Discussion.

Study 1

Previous research suggested that individuals seeking or receiving help may experience negative effects, such as a perceived weakness due to an inability to cope on their own and the undermining of their own personal autonomy (Akey & Rintamaki, 2014, Roth & Assor, 2012; Warner et al., 2011). However, few studies have tested if social support specifically for bullying produces similar negative effects. Study 1 set out to identify help-seeking's

subjective costs implementing PAR to enable students to generate their own barriers to reporting bullying to teachers without any prompting. The research questions were twofold:

1. With no prompting, what are the most common negative outcomes that adolescents perceive will arise out of telling teachers they have been bullied?

2. Are there age or gender differences in the identified perceived negative outcomes?

Method

Participants.

Prior to starting this research, ethical approval was solicited and granted for all three studies by the local Ethics Committee. Participants were drawn from two high schools in England, selected on a convenience basis. They were typical state-funded schools with around 1,000 students from a range of socio-economic backgrounds enrolled at each one. Teachers selected the classes to provide data merely on the basis of which ones were available at the time of our fieldwork (e.g., some classes were unavailable due to school trips or because they were taking exams). The sample was 81% White British, 8% Asian British, 7% Black British, 4% other. Table 1 summarizes other key characteristics of the sample and response rates. High schools in the UK teach students in age bands, designated by 'year'. For compulsory education, they range from years 7 to 11, aged 11 to 16 years, respectively. These roughly correspond with US grades 6 to 10. Consent from participants and parents/guardians/head teachers was solicited, with head teachers calling for parents/guardians who did not want their son/daughter to take part to opt out.

Procedure.

Data were collected on a whole-class basis in Personal, Social and Health Education or Registration classes. Teachers were present but took no active part in proceedings (most used the time for marking or doing admin tasks). Each participant was furnished with a questionnaire. The purpose of the study, their right to withdraw at any time and freedom to

decline to answer anything they wanted to, was explained to them. Students were informed that there were no right or wrong answers and that offering their own personal views would be most helpful to the researchers. They were encouraged to respect the privacy of their peers by not looking at how they were responding. All items were read out by researchers to overcome any literacy issues. So that students and researchers had a shared understanding of bullying, and to provide a context for our questions, we read out a standard definition, *Bullying is when people deliberately and repeatedly try to hurt, upset or damage someone who is weaker or less powerful than they are. Bullying can take many different forms, such as hitting and kicking, calling nasty names, leaving people out on purpose, trying to make other people not like them or be friends with them, nasty texts or messages on social media, and things like that.*

Measures.

Self-generated perceived negative outcomes. A question asked, *Do you think that sometimes some students who get bullied do not tell a teacher?* and all participants agreed. The key question that generated data for analysis was, *What do you think are the main reasons why they might not tell?* with two *general* prompts provided sequentially, *You might want to think about why you did not tell a teacher in the past or would choose not to do so in the future* and *You might want to think about why someone you know did not tell a teacher in the past or would choose not to do so in the future*. Participants were encouraged to write down their individual ideas as they came to them and then to list each separate reason as a discrete bullet point. Participants had about 10-15 minutes to think about this key question, far more than is usually afforded to open questions incorporated into self-report questionnaires.

Four common perceived negative outcomes emerged but we ignored the generic *it would make the bullying situation worse*[1]. One was labelled *peer disapproval* and captured the notion that peers would react negatively if an individual disclosed bullying to a teacher, e.g., "The other students would think they were a snitch" (UK expression for a 'tell-tale'). Another

was labelled *feel weak/undermined* and it reflected the idea that disclosing being bullied would leave the person with negative self-thoughts associated with low power and agency, e.g., "They would feel weak." A third was designated *prefer autonomy* and reflected a desire for personal mastery over the problem, e.g., "It's always best to do it on your own, and not need no teacher."

Using these definitions and exemplars, two researchers independently coded participants' responses for the presence/absence of the three perceived negative outcomes (95% agreement). To test reliability, participants from one class from each year group (n = 132) were asked the same key question one week later and 87% of the three perceived negative outcomes were given consistently.

Plan of analysis.

We tallied the percentage of participants who identified each perceived negative outcome. We used chi-squared tests of association to identify if there were significant differences as a function of age or gender.

Results[2]

Overall, 51.1%, 43.6% and 45.5% of participants identified *peer disapproval*, *feel weak/undermined* and *prefer autonomy*, respectively, as a perceived negative outcome, see Table 2. Proportionally fewer year 7 students than those in all of the other years identified (i) *feel weak/undermined*, χ^2 (4) = 13.89, *p* = .008, and (ii) *prefer autonomy*, χ^2 (4) = 14.17, *p* = .007.

Study 2

A limitation of utilising PAR is that individuals have to produce their own answers with no prompting, and this may lead to underestimates of the number of adolescents who perceive negative outcomes for seeking teachers' help for bullying. To overcome this, Study 2 utilised MacEvoy and Leff's (2012) method of creating a structured questionnaire that alludes to the

top three reported barriers identified in Study 1. This enabled us to investigate how prevalent they are without the 'self-report burdens' of PAR. In addition, previous research has suggested that the more (or less) an individual has experienced positive (or negative) outcomes of telling a teacher, or expects them, the more (or less) likely they would be to tell a teacher in the future. Hence, Study 2 also tested directly if these specific perceived negative outcomes would predict intentions to report bullying to teachers. The research questions were:

1. How widespread are the perceived negative outcomes identified in Study 1 when assessed with a self-report questionnaire?

2. Are there age, gender and victim status differences in self-reported perceived negative outcomes?

3. Do perceived negative outcomes predict intentions to disclose being bullied, and if so, do age, gender or victim status act as moderators?

Method

Participants.

Participants were drawn from a high school in England, not used in Study 1. Sampling procedures were as in Study 1. Ethnicity data were not collected at the request of the school principal. Table 1 summarizes other key characteristics of the sample and response rates. Consent was gained as in Study 1.

Procedure.

Data were collected as in Study 1.

Measures.

Perceived negative outcomes. Based on pilot work, each of the three perceived negative outcomes identified in Study 1 was operationalised with four items, half being

negatively worded, with a 5-point response option anchored by *agree a lot* and *disagree a lot*, scored 1-5 or 5-1 for negatively worded items. Items all began with, *If I was bullied, ……* For *peer disapproval,* items were, *other students would think bad things of me if a teacher helped me, other pupils would think I was weak if they saw a teacher sort it out, I would get more respect from other pupils if a teacher helped me,* and *other pupils would like me more if they saw a teacher sorting it out*. For *feel weak/undermined,* items were, *having a teacher help me stop it would make me feel like a weak person, getting help from a teacher would help me feel pleased with myself, I would feel unhappy with myself every time a teacher helped me deal with it,* and *I would feel good about myself when a teacher helped me sort it out*. For *prefer autonomy*, items were, *I would be happy to let a teacher help me sort it out, I would always want to sort it out myself rather than ask a teacher, it is only right that I fix it on my own rather than ask a teacher,* and *getting help from a teacher would be a good thing*. Alphas were .69, .76 and .78, respectively. A mean score was computed for each perceived negative outcome. Higher scores indicate stronger perceived negative outcomes, and those of 2.0 or more on any measure were taken as indicating that a participant saw this as a *strong barrier* to help-seeking, i.e. they agreed or strongly agreed that it applied to them on average across the four items of the scale.

   Intentions to disclose bullying. Based on prior work (Boulton et al., 2013), this was assessed with two items, *If you were bullied (picked on a lot) in the future, how often would you tell your teacher?* Response options were *never, sometimes, most times* and *always*, scored 1-4, respectively. Responses were highly correlated (r = .76, p <.001), alpha = .86, and so a mean score was computed, with higher scores representing stronger intentions to disclose. Participants scoring 2.0 or less were categorised as having *low disclosure intentions*, i.e., they indicated they would disclose only *sometimes* or less often on both items.

   Victim status. As in previous studies (Boulton et al., 2002), this was assessed with self-reports of five common types of bullying, *Have you been bullied since the start of the school*

year (about eight months earlier) *in any of these ways: teased in a nasty way; left out of things on purpose; hit, kicked, pushed and things like that; other pupils spread nasty stories about me and did things to make other people not like me;* and *somebody did or said something nasty to me by mobile phone call, text or on the internet.* All had a five-point response option that included *never*, *only once or twice, two or three times a month, about once a week,* and *several times a week*, scored 1-5. Cronbach's alpha was .85 and so a mean victim score was computed. Higher scores indicate more victimization. Participants scoring 2.0 or less were categorised as non-victims (n = 211), i.e., bullied less than *only once or twice* on average across the five victim sub-types, and those scoring above 2.0 as victims (n = 69, 17 unclassified due to missing data).

Plan of analysis.

We calculated participants' mean scores on the three perceived negative outcomes measures, and also tallied the percentage of participants who indicated that each was a strong barrier to help-seeking. For each type of perceived negative outcome, a 5 (age: years 7 to 11) X 2 (gender: female, male) X 2 (victim status: victim, non-victim) analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out to test for age, gender and victim status differences, using means scores as dependent variables. A repeated measures ANOVA, with mean scores on the three perceived negative outcome measures employed as dependent variables, tested for their relative levels.

Results[2]

Descriptive data are given in Table 2. Overall, mean scores for *peer disapproval*, *feel weak/undermined* and *prefer autonomy* were 2.90, 2.55 and 2.60, respectively, all well in excess of our criterion for them being a strong barrier (i.e., 2.0 or more). The percentage of participants who indicated that *peer disapproval*, *feel weak/undermined* and *prefer autonomy* was a strong barrier for them was 96.9%, 83.7% and 85.2%, respectively.

In terms of relative levels, scores for *peer disapproval* were significantly higher than for the other two perceived negative outcome measures, and the latter did not differ significantly, F (2, 271) = 48.06, Wilk's Lambda = 0.74, p <.001, partial eta squared (η^2) = .26.

For *prefer autonomy* and *feel weak/undermined*, significant year group differences emerged, F (4, 278) = 6.92, p < .001, partial η^2 = .09, and F (4, 278) = 7.72, p < .001, partial η^2 = .10, respectively. On both measures, year 7 participants scored significantly lower than all of the other year groups, none of whom differed significantly. Victims (mean = 3.21) scored significantly higher than non-victims (mean = 2.78) on *peer disapproval*, t (272) = 5.14, p < .001, η^2 = .09[3].

Table 3 summarizes the regression model employed, predicting disclosure intentions from perceived negative outcomes and possible moderators. Year group, gender and victim status were entered together as control variable at step 1, and to allow their product terms to be included at step 3. The three perceived negative outcomes were entered together at step 2. Collectively, they accounted for a significant amount of variance in disclosure intentions (26%) beyond the 7% accounted for by the control variables, and *peer disapproval* and *prefer autonomy* did so uniquely, especially the latter, β = -.14, p <.05 and β = -.45, p < .001, respectively. At step 3, the product terms of each of the control variables and the three perceived negative outcome variables (e.g., gender X *peer disapproval*) tested if the predictive effects of the three perceived negative outcomes were moderated by year group, gender or victim status (Aiken & West, 1991). They were entered one at a time. None were significant.

Overall, the mean score for disclosure intentions was 1.95, well within our criterion (of 2.0 or less) for *low* disclosure intentions. Indeed, 68.8% of participants had *low* disclosure intentions by this criterion. Year 7 participants had significantly higher intentions to disclose scores than those in all other year groups, none of whom differed significantly, F (4,264) =

7.72, p <.001, partial η^2 = .11. Victims (mean = 1.77) had significantly lower intentions to disclose scores than non-victims (mean = 2.02), t (269) = 2.22, p = .027, η^2 = .02.

Study 3

One aspect of Newman's theory that is yet to be tested is the proposition that students weigh up the potential costs of reporting bullying to teachers against the potential benefits of the bullying being stopped (and the potential costs of trying to cope alone). Study 3 aimed to determine how powerful perceived negative outcomes can be by testing the simultaneous impact of both subjective costs and benefits of help-seeking. It also tested if participants actually do disapprove of peers who ask teachers for help dealing with bullying. The research questions were:

1. Would each identified perceived negative outcome be strong enough to stop participants from telling a teacher even though the teacher would stop the bullying?

2. Are there age, gender and victim status differences in the above?

3. To what extent do adolescents actually disapprove of peers who disclose bullying to teachers?

Method

Participants.

Participants were drawn from a high school in England, not used in Study 1 or 2. Sampling procedures were as in Study 1. The sample was 78% White British, 10% Asian British, 5% Black British, 7% other. Table 1 summarizes other key characteristics of the sample and response rates. Consent was gained as in Study 1.

Procedure.

Data were collected as in Study 1.

Measures.

   Power of perceived negative outcomes. Based on pilot work, this was assessed with three items that differed only in the perceived negative effect that would take place, *Imagine that you have been bullied and that telling a teacher would stop the bullying*. *If* [insert perceived negative effect] *was also to happen, would you still choose to tell a teacher?* The perceived negative outcomes were (i) peer disapproval, *the other students would think bad things about you*, (ii) feel weak/undermined, *you would feel like a weak person*, and (iii) prefer autonomy, *you really wanted to sort out the bullying on your own*. Response options were *yes* or *no*.

   Level of personal disapproval of disclosure (PDD). Based on pilot work, two measures were employed. One assessed *hypothetical* PDD with the item, *Imagine that another student is being bullied and goes to a teacher for help. How much would you…..?* A second measure assessed *actual* PDD, *Is there somebody at school who you know has been bullied within the past month or so and gone to the teacher for help? If so, how much did you…..?* Both of these items were followed by a slight modification of the four items used in Study 2 to measure peer disapproval, *think bad things about them for telling* (R), *think they were weak for telling* (R), *give them more respect for telling*, and *like them more for telling*. Response options were *a lot, quite a lot, only a bit and not at all*, scored 1 – 4, respectively (reverse scored for R items). As in Study 2, responses to the four hypothetical and the four actual PDD items were internally reliably (alphas = .83 and .79, respectively) and so for both, a mean score was computed. High scores represent high PDD. We used both hypothetical *and* actual PDD because we anticipated that some participants would not know someone who had recently told a teacher they had been bullied and so could not provide data for actual PDD.

   Victim status. This was assessed as in Study 2. This led to 89 victims, and 123 non-victims being identified, and the rest unclassified due to missing data.

   Plan of analysis.

For each of the three perceived negative outcomes, we tallied the percentage of participants who would not tell a teacher they had been bullied if doing so would stop the bullying but also lead to the negative outcome arising. We used chi-squared tests of association to identify if there were significant differences as a function of age, gender or victim status. We calculated mean scores for hypothetical and actual PDD. For each type of PDD, a 5 (age: years 7 to 11) X 2 (gender: female, male) X 2 (victim status: victim, non-victim) ANOVA was carried to test for age, gender and victim status differences.

Results[2]

Even if telling a teacher would stop the bullying, many participants reported that they still would *not* do so if it led to peer disapproval (75.5%), feeling weak/undermined (64.2%) or compromised their desire for autonomy (58.8%), see Table 2. Proportionally more students in years 8 to 11 than in year 7 indicated that they would not tell a teacher if peer disapproval was to happen, χ^2 (4) = 15.82, *p* = .003, and also if it would leave them feeling weak/undermined, χ^2 (4) = 17.05, *p* = .002. Proportionally more males than females indicated that they would not tell a teacher if peer disapproval was to happen, χ^2 (1) = 5.33, *p* = .021. Proportionally more victims than non-victims indicated that they would not tell a teacher if peer disapproval was to follow, χ^2 (1) = 10.11, *p* = .001, if it was to leave them feeling weak/undermined, χ^2 (1) = 4.02, *p* = .045, and also if it compromised their sense of autonomy, χ^2 (1) = 6.07, *p* = .014.

Mean scores for hypothetical and actual PDD are shown in Table 2. Overall, the values were 1.63 and 1.67, respectively, indicative of *low* levels on both measures of PDD (i.e., less than 2.0 that represents *only a bit* on average across the four items in the scale). In both cases, significant year group differences emerged, *F* (4, 202) = 5.19, *p* < .001, partial η^2 = .09, and *F* (4, 134) = 6.47, *p* < .001, partial η^2 = .16, for hypothetical and actual PDD respectively. On both measures, year 7 participants scored significantly lower than all of the other year groups, none of whom differed significantly. Victims (mean = 1.44) scored significantly lower than non-victims (1.77) on hypothetical PDD, *t* (210) = 7.26, *p* < .001, η^2

= .20, and victims (1.50) scored significantly lower than non-victims (1.78) on actual PDD, *t* (142) = 4.40, *p* < .001, η^2 = .12.

General Discussion

We conducted three studies to investigate why adolescents are often reluctant to seek help from teachers when they are bullied. Three specific perceived negative outcomes of telling teachers were spontaneously identified by a substantial proportion of participants in Study 1, namely peer disapproval, feeling weak/undermined, and preferring autonomy. Our findings resonate with those of Newman et al. (2001) because they too found that students identified potential costs and thwarted desire for a personal solution as key perceived negative effects. Such similar findings suggest they may apply beyond our samples (but with caveats, see below). Our study also builds on previous work (Graham & Juvonen, 2001; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997; Perry et al., 1990) in that it revealed two *specific costs* that had been suggested as being salient to students but which had not actually been identified before by students themselves, namely peer disapproval and feeling weak/undermined.

In line with previous studies (Boulton, 2005; Cowie, 2000; Hunter, et al., 2004; Smith, et al., 2004; Smith & Shu, 2000), we found a widespread reluctance to disclose bullying to teachers among our participants in Study 2, with 68.8% having low disclosure intentions. Extending previous work, we found this was especially pronounced after Year 7 and among victims themselves (see below). Even more substantially, Study 2 revealed that the three most common perceived negative outcomes identified in Study 1 by means of an open, unprompted question, were very widely endorsed in a different sample and with a different method of generating data. Our findings highlight a fear of peer disapproval as being especially widely held. For the first time, we have demonstrated that those three perceived negative outcomes collectively, and peer disapproval and prefer autonomy uniquely, predicted intentions to disclose bullying. Taken together, these findings suggest these

19

perceived negative outcomes represent some of the key reasons why adolescents don't disclose that they have been bullied to teachers.

Our findings that anticipated negative self-feelings – feeling weak/undermined and compromised desire for autonomy – were widespread can be related to Dowling and Carey's (2013) observation that *feeling better about oneself* was rated second only to stopping the bullying as a desired outcome of disclosing bullying. On the basis that most students *don't* appear to associate disclosing bullying with feeling better about themselves, but that such positive self-feelings are valued highly, we suggest that more needs to be done to help students feel good about telling. For instance, and as we discuss below, teachers could emphasise the personal qualities of maturity and willingness to take difficult decisions that are required for disclosure, as suggested by Newman (2003). Consistent with this recommendation, a recent study found that when adolescents taught younger peers about the virtues of seeking teachers' help for bullying, they were more likely to say that they would act in this way themselves, *and* exhibited raised self-esteem (Boulton & Boulton, in press).

Newman et al. (2001) reported no significant age differences in reasons for not telling teachers among 8-10 year olds. Across Studies 1 and 2, we found 11/12 year olds in their first year of high school were significantly *less* likely to identify feel weak/undermined and prefer autonomy as disclosure barriers than older students (with a trend in that direction for peer disapproval). The youngest students also reported being significantly *more* likely to disclose bullying to teachers. This suggests an age-cleavage after the first year in high school in terms of perceived negative outcomes. It is plausible that experiences during the first year of high school may engender these two specific perceived negative outcomes so that they become firmly established in subsequent years. Future studies could investigate what those experiences might be. For instance, they could be linked to explicit or implicit communications from teachers because teachers tend to expect students to take increasing personal control of social problems as they progress through high school (Newman, 2003). Older students themselves might also 'socialize' the new intake of high school first years into

believing that personal rather than teacher-led solutions are expected. This could be part of a more general belief that 'snitching' or 'telling tales' is not looked on favourably by students at high school (Graham & Juvonen, 2001), even if it was (relatively) tolerated in junior schools (but see below). Another plausible contribution to our observed age cleavage beyond 12 years is the emergence of a growing desire for autonomy (Havighurst, 1948; Noom, Dekovic, & Meeus, 2001).

Another consistent finding across Studies 1 and 2 was the *lack* of a significant age difference for the most frequently proffered reason for a lack of disclosure - peer disapproval. This supports the suggestion that this particular perceived negative effect emerges *prior* to the transition to high school at around 11/12 years (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997; Perry et al., 1990).

Study 3 has added important new findings concerning the *power* of the three perceived negative outcomes identified as common in Studies 1 and 2. Even when they believed that telling would stop the bullying – what most students want to happen (Dowling & Carey, 2013) – considerably more than half of our participants still regarded each one of them as a barrier that was too costly because they reported that they still would *not* tell. This was especially the case for peer disapproval, with more than three quarters showing a strong reluctance to tell if there was a risk of it happening. The latter finding joins those from Studies 1 and 2 to attest to the primacy of this over the other two perceived negative outcomes that we identified.

In terms of gender, Newman et al. (2001) found that pre-adolescent girls were less concerned about potential costs than pre-adolescent boys but we found no gender difference on any of the three perceived negative outcomes that our participants identified across Studies 1 and 2. Age may be a factor here, such that by adolescence, those costs become salient to both males and females. Indeed, it is well-known that developing good peer relationships and self-esteem (Schneider, 2000) and autonomy (Havighurst, 1948) become universal developmental priorities during this period. In the one case where a

significant gender difference did emerge, proportionally more males than females in Study 3 indicated that they would not tell a teacher if peer disapproval was to happen, it was consistent with Newman et al's (2001) finding. This might reflect a growing concern among adolescent males to present a strong and powerful image within the peer group that has been suggested elsewhere (Cowie, 2000; Peterson & Rigby, 1999).

Our three studies as a whole have some important theoretical and practical implications that advance understanding of bullying-related issues during adolescence. Collectively, they attest to the complexity of adolescents' decision-making processes about whether or not to seek help for bullying that were highlighted in Newman's (2008) theory. Our data advance that theory by showing for the first time that adolescents' perceived costs can outweigh even the most desired positive outcome of telling teachers – getting the bullying to stop. That so many of our participants reported being aware of those perceived costs within other people and themselves, and via methods that did and did not prompt them to recall them, is striking. Our findings can be situated in the broader theoretical context of a pervasive negativity bias, captured succinctly in Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer and Vohs' (2001) statement, "We have found bad to be stronger than good in a disappointingly relentless pattern . . . this difference may be one of the most basic and far-reaching psychological principles" (p. 362). This suggests that helping young people change their widely held perceived negative outcomes may not be easy, a topic we now address.

Practically, our findings call for teachers (and others) to look more closely at the 'routine' practice of simply encouraging students to tell them (or other people) when they have been bullied. As we have seen, studies confirm that many do not heed this advice, and our findings offer plausible reasons why. It seems reasonable to suggest that if teachers can be made aware of the kinds of perceptions of negative outcomes that prevent students from disclosing bullying, they might act in ways that mitigate those beliefs. Research can again inform alternatives that are worth exploring as potentially more effective. It has been shown with adults that priming positive affect can reduce the attention bias towards negative

information (Smith et al., 2006). We suggest that teachers would do well to emphasize the

maturity and strength required to seek help for bullying, perhaps using real-life examples of

'strong' people seeking help more generally for issues that they could not deal with alone.

This suggestion sits well alongside the finding that teachers who were made aware of how to

address bullying-related issues, and developed greater self-efficacy, were more likely to take

positive action against it (Boulton, 2014b).

Study 3 also revealed another aspect of perceived peer disapproval that has potentially

important implications for practitioners. Despite its seemingly widespread acceptance by

many students (indeed, most of them in Studies 1 and 2), our data suggest that the belief

that peers would disapprove of help-seeking for bullying may actually be *misplaced or over-*

stated. Put simply, most participants were *not* disapproving of peers who tell teachers they

have been bullied. In some ways, this finding is consistent with reports that many (though by

no means all) students hold quite sympathetic attitudes to peers who are victimised (Fox et

al., 2010; Rigby & Slee, 1991). Teachers and other practitioners could share our finding with

students as a way of helping them reflect on the possibility that their fears of negative peer

reactions to telling may be unfounded. Again, this may help shift adolescents' attention on to

the positive aspects of telling teachers and away from what is perhaps a 'default' of focusing

on the negative aspects (Rozin & Royzman, 2001).

Understanding help-seeking processes in victims themselves is especially important

given the distress they often experience (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Reijntjes, Kamphuis,

Prinzie, & Telch, 2010). Study 2 showed that victims were more reluctant to disclose being

bullied to teachers than non-victims. That victims also anticipated significantly more peer

disapproval than non-victims is salient here as a possible explanation of their unwillingness

to disclose. So too is our finding that they also reported that the other two perceived

negative outcomes were strongly held. Thus, the forgoing suggestions for practitioners may

be especially salient as they work to support victims themselves. However, evidence from

adult samples (Mogg et al., 2000; Mogg & Bradley, 2002) suggests that the dysphoria,

23

depression and anxiety that many victims experience will exacerbate their negativity bias and make it even harder to challenge.

A limitation of our studies is that our data are correlational. Future longitudinal studies would provide the most direct test of temporal precedence, i.e., of the notion that perceived negative outcomes actually do *lead to* reduced disclosure of bullying by adolescents to teachers. Such a study that follows students over the transition to high school at around 11/12 years and beyond could test the age trends we observed in our cross-sectional data, notably that the youngest students (aged 11/12 years and in their first year of high school) reported the fewest perceived negative outcomes, least power of those perceived negative outcomes, and the highest intentions to disclose, relative to older students.

Other limitations of our research need to be kept in mind. While the sample was not small, participants came from only four schools in England and so the extent to which they apply elsewhere needs to be established. Cultural differences may be important (Boulton, Bucci, & Hawker, 1999; Dutton, 2012). Also, we relied heavily on students' self-reports. This might be especially problematic for our regression analyses because it leaves room for shared method variance to account for the predictive associations we identified. However, given the importance of students' *subjective beliefs*, there is a case for self-report being an appropriate method for our research questions (Newman et al., 2001; Newman, 2008). It is worth noting that we investigated disclosure intentions to teachers specifically. Future research may wish to distinguish between teachers, non-teaching pastoral staff, and other adults to explore the extent to which disclosure intentions differ depending on the source of support available.

In conclusion, apprehensions about peer disapproval, feelings of being weak/undermined and a preference for autonomy emerged as three common and powerful reasons why adolescents choose not to disclose bullying to their teachers, especially after the first year of high school and among victims themselves. Efforts to change these beliefs may encourage – perhaps even enable – more students to seek teacher support for bullying, to feel good

about themselves for doing so, and avoid the harmful effects that so often accompany bullying.

Footnotes

[1]While some of our participants meant that it would make the bullies perpetrate more frequent or severe attacks, it was apparent that many other participants – an unknown proportion – meant that other aspects that they did not specify under this heading would be made worse. It was the *specific reasons* that we were interested in in our studies.

[2]For the sake of brevity, only significant findings are reported.

[3]Victim status could not be incorporated into year group x gender ANOVAs due to small cell sizes in some cases.

References

Aceves, M. J., Hinshaw, S. P., Mendoza-Denton, R., & Page-Gould, E. (2010). Seek help
from teachers or fight back? Student perceptions of teachers' actions during conflicts and
responses to peer victimization. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 39*(6), 658-669.

Aiken, L. S., & West, S. G. (1991). *Multiple regression: Testing and interpreting interactions*.
Newbury Park: Sage.

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human
Decision Processes, 50*, 179-211.

Akey, J. E., & Rintamaki L. S. (2014). Optimal social support practices for health care
professionals who treat patients managing eating disorders. *Journal of Nervous and
Mental Disease, 202*(2), 126-32. doi: 10.1097/NMD.0000000000000081.

Altshuler, J. L., & Ruble, D. N. (1989). Developmental changes in children's awareness of
strategies for coping with uncontrollable stress. *Child Development, 60*(6), 1337–1349.

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Towards a unifying theory of behavioral change.
Psychological Review, 84(2), 191-215.

Barbee, A. P., Derlega, V. J., Sherburne, S. P., & Grimshaw, A. (1998). Helpful and
unhelpful forms of social support for HIV-positive individuals. In V. J. Derlega & A. P.
Barbee (Eds.), *HIV and social interaction* (pp. 83-105). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Baumeister, R. F., Bratslavsky, E., Finkenauer, C., & Vohs, K. D. (2001). Bad is stronger
than good. *Review of General Psychology, 5,* 323–370.

Beckman, L., & Svensson, M. (2015). The cost-effectiveness of the Olweus Bullying
Prevention Program: Results from a modelling study. *Journal of Adolescence, 45*, 127-
137.

Boulton, M. J. (2005). School peer counselling for bullying services as a source of social

support: An interview study with secondary school students. *British Journal of Guidance

and Counselling, 33*(4), 485-494.

Boulton, M. J. (2013). The effects of victim of bullying reputation on adolescents' choice of

friends: Mediation by fear of becoming a victim, moderation by victim status, and

implications for befriending interventions. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology,

114*(1), 146-60.

Boulton, M. J. (2014a). High school pupils' understanding of peer counselling and

willingness to use it for different types of bullying. *Pastoral Care in Education, 32*(2), 95-

103.

Boulton, M. J. (2014b). Teachers' self-efficacy, perceived effectiveness beliefs, and reported

use of cognitive-behavioral approaches to bullying among pupils: effects of in-service

training with the I DECIDE Program. *Behavior Therapy, 45*, 328–343.

Boulton, M. J., & Boulton, L. (In press). Modifying self-blame, self-esteem, and disclosure

through a cooperative cross-age teaching intervention for bullying among adolescents.

Violence and Victims.

Boulton, M. J., Bucci, E., and Hawker, D. (1999). Swedish and English secondary school

pupils' attitudes towards, and conceptions of, bullying: Concurrent links with bully/victim

involvement. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology, 40*(4), 277-284.

Boulton, M. J., Murphy, D., Lloyd, J., Besling, S., Coote, J., Lewis, J., ... Walsh, L. (2013).

Helping counts: Predicting children's intentions to disclose being bullied to teachers from

prior social support experiences. *British Educational Research Journal, 39*(2), 209-21.

Boulton, M. J., Trueman, M., & Flemington, I. (2002). Associations between secondary

school pupils' definitions of bullying, attitudes towards bullying, and tendencies to engage

in bullying: Age and sex differences. *Educational Studies, 28*(4), 353-370.

Boulton, M. J., Trueman, M., & Murray, L. (2008). Associations between peer victimization, fear of future victimization and disrupted concentration on class work among junior school pupils. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 78*(3), 473–489.

Brown, B. B., Mory, M. S., & Kinney, D. (1994). Casting adolescent crowd in a relational perspective: Caricature, channel, and context. In R. Montemayor, G. R. Adams, & T. P. Gullota (Eds.), *Advances in adolescent development: Vol. 5. Personal relationships during adolescence* (pp. 123–167). Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Cowie, H. (2000). Bystanding or standing by: Gender issues in coping with bullying in English schools. *Aggressive Behaviour, 26*(1), 85-97.

Dowling, M. J., & Carey, T. A. (2013). Victims of bullying: Whom they seek help from and why: An Australian sample. *Psychology in Schools, 50*(8), 798-809.

Dutton, Y. E. (2012). Butting in vs. being a friend: cultural differences and similarities in the evaluation of imposed social support. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 152*(4), 493-509.

Eccles, J. S., & Barber, B. L. (1999). Student council, volunteering, basketball, or marching band: What kind of extracurricular involvement matters? *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *14*(1), 10–43.

Flavell, J. H. (1979).Metacognition and cognitive monitoring: A new area of cognitive–developmental inquiry. *American Psychologist, 34*(10), 906–911.

Fox, C. L., Elder, T., Gater, J., & Johnson, E. (2010).The association between adolescents' beliefs in a just world and their attitudes to victims of bullying. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 80*(2), 183–198.

Garwick, A. W., Patterson, J. M., Bennett, F. C., & Blum R. W. (1998). Parents' perceptions of helpful vs unhelpful types of support in managing the care of preadolescents with chronic conditions. *Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medecine, 152(7)*, 665-71.

Graham, S., & Juvonen, J. (2001). An attributional approach to peer victimization. In J. Juvonen & S. Graham (Eds.), *Peer harassment in school: The plight of the vulnerable and victimized* (pp. 49–72). New York: Guilford.

Havighurst, R. J. (1948). *Developmental tasks and education*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Hawker, D. S. J., & Boulton, M. J. (2000). Twenty years' research on peer victimization and psychosocial maladjustment: A meta-analytic review of cross-sectional studies. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 41*(4), 441-455.

Hunter, S. C., Boyle, J. M., & Warden, D. (2004). Help-seeking amongst child and adolescent victims of peer aggression and bullying. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 74*(3), 375-390.

Kochenderfer, B. J., & Ladd, G. W. (1997). Victimized children's responses to peers' aggression: Behaviors associated with reduced versus continued victimization. *Development and Psychopathology, 9*(1), 59–73.

MacEvoy, J. P. & Leff, S. S. (2012). Children's sympathy for peers who are the targets of peer aggression. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 40*(7), 1137–1148. doi: 10.1007/s10802-012-9636-5.

Masters, K. S., Stillman, A. M., & Spielmans, G. I. (2007). Specificity of social support for back pain patients: Do patients care who provides what? Journal *of Behavioral Medicine, 30*(1), 11-20.

Mogg, K., & Bradley, B. (2002). Selective orienting of attention to masked threat faces in social anxiety. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 40*, 1403–1414.

Mogg, K., McNamara, J., Powys, M., Rawlinson, H., Seiffer, A, & Bradley, B. (2000). Selective attention to threat: A test of two cognitive models of anxiety. *Cognition and Emotion, 3,* 375-399.

Murphy, S. A. (1988). Mediating effects of intrapersonal and social support on mental health 1 and 3 years after a natural disaster. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 1*, 155-172.

Nansel, T. R., Overpeck, M., Pilla, R. S., Ruan, W., Simons-Morton, B., & Scheidt, P. (2001). Bullying behaviors among US youth: Prevalence and association with psychosocial adjustment. *JAMA: Journal of the American Medical Association*, *285*(16)*,* 2094-2100.

Naylor, P., Cowie, H. & del Rey, R. (2001) Reported coping strategies of some UK secondary school girls and boys to being bullied. *Child Psychology and Psychiatry Review, 6*(3), 114-120.

Newman, R. S. (2003). When elementary school students are harassed by peers: A self-regulative perspective on help-seeking. *The Elementary School Journal, 103*(4), 339-355.

Newman, R. S. (2008). Adaptive and nonadaptive help seeking with peer harassment: An integrative perspective of coping and self-regulation. *Educational Psychologist, 43*(1), 1-15.

Newman, R. S., & Murray, B. J. (2005). How students and teachers view the seriousness of peer harassment: When is it appropriate to seek help? *Journal of Educational Psychology, 97*(3), 347-365.

Newman, R. S., Murray, B.J., & Lussier, C. (2001). Confrontation with aggressive peers at school: Students' reluctance to seek help from the teacher. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 93*(2), 398-410.

Noom, M. J., Dekovic, M., & Meeus, W. (2001). Conceptual Analysis and Measurement of Adolescent Autonomy. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 30*(5), 577-595.

Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Paris, S. G., & Newman, R. S. (1990). Developmental aspects of self-regulated learning. *Educational Psychologist, 25*(1), 87–102.

Peterson, L., & Rigby, K. (1999). Countering bullying at an Australian secondary school with students as helpers. *Journal of Adolescence, 22*, 481-492.

Perry, D. G., Williard, J. C., & Perry, L. C. (1990). Peers' perceptions of the consequences that victimized children provide aggressors. *Child Development, 61*(5), 1310–1325.

Putallaz, M., & Sheppard, B. H. (1992). Conflict management and social competence. In C. U. Shantz & W.W. Hartup (Eds.), *Conflict in child and adolescent development* (pp. 330–355). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Reijntjes, A., Kamphuis, J. H., Prinzie, P., & Telch, M. J. (2010). Peer victimization and internalizing problems in children: A meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 34*(4), 244-252.

Rigby, K., & Bagshaw, D. (2003). Prospects of adolescent students collaborating with teachers in addressing issues of bullying and conflict in schools. *Educational Psychology, 23*(5), 535–546.

Rigby, K., & Slee, P. T. (1991) Bullying among Australian school children: reported behavior and attitudes toward victims. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 131*(5), 615–627.

Rose, C. A., Espelage, D. L., & Monda-Amaya, L. E. (2009). Bullying and victimisation rates among students in general and special education: A comparative analysis. *Educational Psychology, 29*(7), 761–776.

Roth, G., & Assor, A. (2012). The costs of parental pressure to express emotions: conditional regard and autonomy support as predictors of emotion regulation and intimacy. *Journal of Adolescence, 35*(4), 799-808.

Rozin, P., & Royzman, E. B. (2001). Negativity bias, negativity dominance, and contagion. *Personality and Social Psychology Review,* 5, 296–320.

Schneider, B. H. (2000). *Friends and enemies: Peer relations in childhood*. London: Arnold.

Smith, N. K., Larsen, J. T., Chartrand, T. L., Cacioppo, J. T., Katafiasz, H. A., & Moran, K. E. (2006). Being bad isn't always good: Affective context moderates the attention bias toward negative information. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 90*, 210-220.

Smith, P. K., Talamelli, L., Cowie, H., Naylor, P., & Chauhan, P. (2004). Profiles of non-victims, escaped victims, continuing victims and new victims of school bullying. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 74*(4)*, 565-581.*

Smith, P. K., & Shu, S. (2000). What good schools can do about bullying. *Childhood, 7*(2), 193-212.

Warner, L. M., Ziegelmann, J. P., Schüz, B., Wurm, S., Tesch-Römer, C., & Schwarzer, R. (2011). Maintaining autonomy despite multimorbidity: self-efficacy and the two faces of social support. *European Journal of Ageing, 8*(1), 3-12.

Table 1

Participant Characteristics

_____
_____

		Year Group										
	7 (12.5 years)		8 (13.5 years)		9 (14.5 years)		10 (15.5 years)		11 (16.5 years)		All	
	Gender											
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Study 1 (N = 411, Response rate = 93%)	37	26	44	60	42	36	56	46	24	40	203	208
	(58.7)	(41.3)	(42.3)	(57.7)	(53.8)	(46.2)	(54.9)	(45.1)	(37.5)	(62.5)	(49.4)	(50.6)
Study 2[a] (N = 297[b] Response rate = 91% 153	21	18	30	43	34	28	36	34	13	30	134	
	(53.8)	(46.2)	(41.1)	(58.9)	(54.8)	(45.2)	(51.4)	(48.6)	(30.2)	(69.8)	(46.7)	(53.3)
Study 3 (N = 231, Response rate = 94%) 100	19	22	23	22	21	14	34	21	34	21	131	
	(46.3)	(53.7)	(51.1)	(48.9)	(60.0)	(40.0)	(61.8)	(38.2)	(61.8)	(38.2)	(56.7)	(43.3)

_____
_____

Note.

[a]Study 2 involved 10 students who did not specify their gender.

Percentages by gender are in parenthesis.

Table 2

Descriptive data for variables used in the studies

_____

Variable	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	All years
			Study 1			
	(N = 63) (N = 411)	(N = 104)	(N = 78)	(N = 102)	(N = 64)	
Peer disapproval[a]	22 (34.9%)	54 (51.9%)	46 (59.0%)	53 (52.0%)	35 (54.7%)	210 (51.1%)
Feel weak/undermined[a]	14 (22.2%)^x	48 (46.2%)^y	37 (47.4%)^y	49 (48.0%)^y	31 (48.4%)^y	179 (43.6%)
Prefer autonomy[a]	15 (23.8%)^x	51 (49.0%)^y	39 (50.0%)^y	51 (50.0%)^y	31 (48.4%)^y	187 (45.5%)
			Study 2			
	(N = 39) (N = 297)	(N = 77)	(N = 63)	(N = 75)	(N = 43)	
Peer disapproval[b]	2.76 (.54)	2.83 (.59)	3.00 (.62)	3.05 (.67)	2.78 (.55)	2.90 (.61)
Feel weak/undermined[b]	2.08 (.68)^x	2.52 (.61)^y	2.62 (.70)^y	2.75 (.70)^y	2.57 (.56)^y	2.55 (.68)
Prefer autonomy[b]	2.09 (.62)^x	2.52 (.76)^y	2.68 (.73)^y	2.82 (.69)^y	2.70 (.60)^y	2.60 (.73)

34

	(N = 41)	(N = 45)	(N = 35)	(N = 55)	(N = 55)	(N = 231)
Intentions to disclose[b]	$2.46\ (.77)^x$	$2.10\ (.78)^y$	$1.77\ (.67)^y$	$1.71\ (.71)^y$	$1.88\ (.94)^y$	$1.95\ (.80)$

_____

Study 3

	(N = 41)	(N = 45)	(N = 35)	(N = 55)	(N = 55)	(N = 231)
Power of peer disapproval[c]	$22\ (53.7\%)^x$	$35\ (77.8\%)^y$	$30\ (85.7\%)^y$	$47\ (85.5\%)^y$	$27\ (72.2\%)^y$	$160\ (75.5\%)$
Power of feel weak/undermined[c]	$17\ (41.5\%)^x$	$27\ (60.0\%)^y$	$28\ (80.0\%)^y$	$42\ (76.4\%)^y$	$22\ (61.1\%)^y$	$136\ (64.2\%)$
Power of prefer autonomy[c]	$24\ (58.5\%)$	$26\ (57.8\%)$	$23\ (65.7\%)$	$32\ (59.3\%)$	$19\ (52.8\%)$	$124\ (58.8\%)$
Hypothetical personal disapproval for disclosure[d]	$1.42\ (.36)^x$	$1.72\ (.32)^y$	$1.65\ (.29)^y$	$1.70\ (.41)^y$	$1.65\ (.32)^y$	$1.63\ (.36)$
Actual personal disapproval for disclosure[d]	$1.35\ (.27)^x$	$1.73\ (.36)^y$	$1.75\ (.29)^y$	$1.72\ (.49)^y$	$1.81\ (.36)^y$	$1.67\ (.40)$

_____

NOTE.

[a]Table values for Study 1 indicate the number (and percentage) of participants who identified each perceived negative outcome.

[b]Table values for Study 2 indicate the mean (and standard deviation) score on a 1-4 scale.

[c]Table values for Study 3 indicate the number (and percentage) of participants who indicated that they would not tell a teacher if doing so would stop the bullying but the perceived negative outcome was to arise.

[d]Table values for Study 3 indicate the mean (and standard deviation) score on a 1-4 scale.

Within rows, year groups with different superscripts are significantly different.

Table 3

Results of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting Intentions to Disclose Bullying from Perceived Negative Outcomes, Year Group, Gender and Victim Status (Study 2)

Predictor	ΔR^2	β
Step 1		
Control variables[a]	.07***	
Step 2 (Perceived negative outcome variables)		.26***
Peer disapproval		-.14*
Feel weak/undermined		-.02
Prefer autonomy		-.45***
Step 3		
Product terms[b]	.03	
Total R^2		.35***
N	245	

Note.

[a]Control variables were year group, gender and victim status.

[b]Product terms involved all of the two-way step 1 x step 2 interactions (e.g., year group x peer disapproval beliefs), entered one at a time. None of these were significant and so the individual regression coefficients are not shown.

p <.05. ***p* <.001.