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Addressing Relational Aggression: Assessing the Merits of Coeducational and Gender-Specific Bullying Prevention Programs

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ADDRESSING RELATIONAL AGGRESSION:

ASSESSING THE MERITS OF COEDUCATIONAL AND GENDER-SPECIFIC

BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAMS

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ABSTRACT

Interviews with eight bullying prevention program directors from around the country reveal the extent to which research findings are reflected in bullying prevention programs currently in operation. Framed as a list of best practices for coeducational and gender-specific bullying prevention curricula, the purpose of the present thesis was to document the most positive contributions made by various approaches to bullying prevention programs to the overall field, and to highlight practices of programs that reflect insight into what is known about gender differences in bullying. Best practices included new approaches to empathy-building, service-learning, confidentiality, cyberbullying, positive reinforcement, reporting systems and youth-driven programming.

This thesis will demonstrate that only some bullying prevention programs take advantage of scholarly knowledge by incorporating recent findings into their curricula. The results demonstrate that while many programs incorporate known literature about bullying into their programs—resulting in positive contributions to the field—others may be applying potentially harmful practices. Research findings also revealed that new best practices were present in programs regardless of status as a gender-specific or coeducational audience.

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Introduction

<u>Where Humans Can't Leave and Mustn't Complain</u>
-Les Murray

Where humans can't leave and mustn't complain,

There some will emerge who enjoy giving pain.

A dreary intense groove leads them to each one

they pick to torment, and the rest will then shun.

Some who might have been picked, and natural police,

do routine hurt, the catcalling, the giving-no-peace,

but dull brilliance evolves the betrayals and names

that sear dignity and life like interior flames.

Whole circles get enlisted, and blood loyalties reversed

by self-avengers and failures-getting-in-first

but this is the eye of fashion. Its sniggering stare

breeds silenced accomplices. Courage proves rare.

This powers revolution; this draws flies to sad pools;

this is the true curriculum of schools.

"Kids will be kids." "It's just child's-play." "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." "A rite of passage." "Little girls are made of sugar, spice and everything nice." "Boys will be boys."

Many have heard these phrases summoned in the context of confrontations between adolescent boys and girls. However, new research is beginning to uncover the reality behind such negative interactions. Research increasingly demonstrates important, even dangerous outcomes from the presence of bullying behavior for adolescents. Going far beyond healthy or normal behavior, participation in bullying and other forms of abuse has serious negative consequences later in life. Additionally, programs designed to address the issue have begun to serve as subjects for formal evaluations and analysis that reveal both effective and substandard techniques. It remains to be seen, however, which aspects of these programs can be considered most effective according to modern research results. Framed as a list of best practices for both coeducational and gender-specific bullying prevention curricula, the present thesis will document and discuss these positive contributions and highlight key programs whose practices reflect insight into what is known about gender differences in bullying.

Literature Review

Subject context

As the topic of adolescent bullying receives increased attention from researchers in social science, criminal justice, psychology and other fields, its relevance for teachers, school counselors, child-oriented psychologists, social workers, after school program coordinators, administrators, parents and of course, the youth themselves, becomes more apparent.

The following summary describes major findings with regard to frequency and trends in adolescent bullying and the programs and procedures used to address it. With particular emphasis on the differences between male and female aggression, the following literature review sets the stage for new research documenting the relative contributions of gender-specific and coeducational bullying prevention programs in the United States.

General bullying

According to the World Health Organization, bullying is an international problem, affecting 10 percent of all secondary students and 27 percent of middle school students (Meichenbaum, n.d.). More specifically, one out of every four American children and adolescents is affected by bullying in some form (Kracke, 2001). In a national survey of students in sixth through tenth grades, 13 percent of all students reported bullying others,

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11 percent reported being the target of bullies and another six percent said they both bullied others and were bullied themselves (Nansel et al., 2001). Clearly this is a universal problem that, as it gains attention from researchers, appears more widespread. Most experts agree that bullying is a complex behavior that involves three essential components: intent to harm, power imbalance and repetition. The phenomenon occurs when a desire to hurt is put into action by an individual with more power than his or her target. In addition, bullying typically involves repetition, most often resulting in a feeling of oppression by the recipient (Olweus, 1994; Rigby, 2002).

Dominance is one aspect of power that plays a crucial role in the bullying process. In his work on dominance theory, Pellegrini (2002) argues that as young people develop and encounter new social situations (e.g. attendance at a new school) students are required to renegotiate their status in peer relationships. This uncertainty of status often leads to imbalances in power among peers. Bullying, therefore, may be a deliberate strategy to attain dominance in newly formed or unstable peer groups. It is important to note, too, that power may not always be defined physically. Other forms of power include social status, authoritative position, information, etc.

Another critical contributor to bullying involves repeated negative conduct on the part of the bully. Note that this does not include sporadic misbehavior or a one-time transgression between two opposing peers, nor accidental offense between two youths where an individual is hurt unintentionally. Rather, a deliberate intent to harm on the part of the perpetrator is a vital aspect of this phenomenon. When repeated misconduct with harmful intent is combined with power asymmetry, the power differential between bully and victim is made salient in a way that harms the victim. As the behavior continues, the

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supremacy of the bully is repeatedly reinforced, thus validating the power imbalance. Over time, the constant experience of dominance makes it increasingly difficult for a target to break the cycle of aggression (Meichenbaum, n.d.).

Although bullying always involves these three basic components—intent to harm, power imbalance and repetition—the behavior itself can manifest in a variety of forms. Bullying can be both verbal (such as teasing) and nonverbal (such as exclusion, eye-rolling, etc.), occurring through direct means such as physical confrontation and verbal attacks, or through more indirect, covert behaviors including gossip, exclusion and the manipulation of relationships (Björkqvist, Lagerzpetz & Kaukiainen, 1992; Bowen, 2007). Cyberbullying has also become prevalent among young people as a method of behaving aggressively toward one another through electronic means including the Internet, cell phone text messaging, digital media and other electronic communication (Li, 2007; Meichenbaum, n.d.; Wolfsberg, 2006).

Olweus (2001) and others agree that various factors put individuals at risk for bullying. There does not appear to be one single element that leads to perpetrating bullying behavior or to being its target. Rather, an interdisciplinary framework best describes how various areas of adolescent life put youth at risk, including individual variables, peer context variables, family variables and community variables (Swearer et al., 2006).

With regard to individual variables, one's level of personal power acts as the major factor in predicting bullying (Handbook, 2006). This perspective finds that bullies are stronger than average, generally more aggressive, manipulative and low in empathy. Individual risk factors also include temperamental, personality and psychological

characteristics. For example, depressive and anxious symptoms have been associated with those involved in bullying, but it should be noted that the direction of this relationship is unclear (Craig, 1998 in Swearer et al., 2006). These traits, combined with the desire for domination described by Pellegrini (2002), may lead to bullying (Swearer et al., 2006). Although this theory aligns well with the power asymmetry inherent in bullying, one negative implication of this view is that it sees individuals themselves as problems because they are predisposed to act aggressively, reducing the potential for change.

It is important to note that this critique is echoed in some literature from the field of Human Communications, in which scholars propose that research on individual bullying variables is too narrow. Hepburn (1997) proposes that bullying relates not to interpersonal relations, but rather to rhetoric and social construction. By analyzing the wider issue of the ways we construct what it is to be human and the effects these constructions can have on the way we relate to others, this scholar argues that bullying can be redefined.

Peers also play a role in bullying. Social variables point to the importance of dominance and affiliation with peers as incentives for bullying behavior (Pellegrini, 2002; Bukowski, Sippola & Newcomb, 2000 as cited in Swearer et al., 2006). Because peers are present approximately 85 percent of the time in which bullying occurs, research on this area suggests that the behavior may be considered a group phenomenon (Craig & Peplar, 1997 in Swearer et al., 2006). School climate has also been recognized as a factor in both academic and behavioral student outcomes (Anderson, 1982 in Swearer et al., 2006).

With regard to family variables, Olweus (1993) found that the caregivers of boys who bully lacked involvement and warmth, often using power to assert their point of view. These families also demonstrated a permissive approach to children's aggressive behavior. Research on abuse has linked caregiver maltreatment to bullying and victimization because abuse fosters emotional dysregulation (Shields & Cicchetti, 2001 in Swearer et al., 2006). In turn, this emotional dysfunction gets transferred to interactions with the peer group. Finally, some have argued there is a connection between being bullied by siblings and bullying at school (Wolke and Samara, 2004 in Swearer et al., 2006).

Lastly, the influence of community variables on bullying suggests that high levels of poverty are linked to a variety of undesirable youth outcomes, including aggression and delinquency (Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Klebanov & Sealand, 1993; Plybon & Kliewer, 2001 in Swearer et al.; Stern & Smith, 1995 in Swearer et al., 2006). It is generally believed that children exposed to high levels of community violence tend to become violent themselves (Swearer et al., 2006). This perspective may apply to aggression as manifested through bullying as well.

The interaction between these multiple systems is critical to understanding bullying and victimization in early adolescence. The strength of each of these influences varies throughout development with some areas becoming less important than others at different ages. To further complicate possible predictors of bullying, several moderating factors have been identified, such as family cohesion, parenting, social support and stress (Plybon & Kliewer, 2001 in Swearer et al, 2006). Additionally, a recent study by Ahmed, Harris, Braithwaite and Braithwaite (2001) demonstrated a mediating

relationship between a number of risk factors and the presence of shame, specifically how individuals manage shame over wrongdoing.

Given that the previously mentioned research points to an interaction of multiple variables that have a hand in bullying, it should be becoming clear that any serious analysis of bullying is a complex undertaking. It is therefore necessary to conduct a review of some of the terminology associated with the behavior before continuing a discussion of its various causes, effects and forms. A clear understanding of the terms and concepts associated with bullying will lend itself to a thoughtful study on the topic.

Terminology

A clarification of terminology is important in any discipline, but perhaps because of the growing media hype surrounding the field of bullying, it has become even more critical to explain the use of common terms. Simmons (2002) argues that establishing a common language for bullying and its related forms of aggression is critical to the development of effective interventions. She writes, "We must introduce new, more inclusive anti-bullying language into school policy" (p. 249). She adds that a standardized language to describe this behavior would allow for discipline "…to be applied consistently, without regard to family, social status, race, or gender" (p. 249). In the absence of a recognized authority to assume the role of decisive labeling for the various forms of bullying behavior—clarifying types, styles, categories and other nuances—it is left to each researcher or practitioner to decide for him or herself how to apply bullying terminology.

In this vein, it is necessary to clarify how language will be used for the purposes of this thesis. This author will adhere to a strict definition of the term "bullying," put

forth by Rigby (2002) and others (Olweus, 1994; Olweus et al., 2001). As mentioned

earlier, this definition includes the presence of three elements that distinguish bullying

from other socially unpleasant situations. These include repetition, intent to harm and the

presence of a power imbalance. Harassment, abuse and other related social problems are

not directly at issue during the course of this analysis.

With regard to gender differences in adolescent bullying, one must understand

what is meant by indirect, social and relational aggression and how this relates to girls;

similarly, it is necessary to review this study's definition of direct aggression and its

relationship to adolescent bullying among boys. Basic definitions of these terms are

offered here in anticipation of more detailed elaborations that appear below.

Generally, forms of bullying outside of traditional direct forms, including physical

and verbal attacks, have been deemed "alternative aggressions" (Simmons, 2002).

Alternative aggressions can be used as an umbrella term for what researchers define as

indirect aggression, or a type of behavior in which "the perpetrator attempts to inflict pain

in such a manner that he or she makes it seem as though there has been no intention at all.

Accordingly, he or she is more likely to avoid counter-aggression and, if possible, to

remain unidentified" (Brown, 1998, p.13). For example, indirect bullying may take the

form of gossiping, trying to get others to dislike someone, telling bad or false stories, eye-

rolling, giving the cold shoulder, using sarcasm at another's expense, exclusion and other

rude behaviors where direct confrontation is notably absent.

One particular type of indirect aggression is known as relational aggression. This

refers to the manipulation of relationships and/or the peer group as a way to inflict harm

on others (Bowen, 2007; Crick, 1995; Björkqvist, Lagerspetz & Kaukianen, 1992).

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Examples may include social isolation, purposefully pitting friends against one another, revealing secrets of friends, strengthening relationships with certain individuals as a way to take revenge on others, etc. This paper will attempt to utilize the term "indirect" or "relational aggression" when describing this type of behavior, which is predominantly employed by adolescent girls (McGrath, 2007). The terms relational and indirect aggression may be used interchangeably for the purposes of this paper, since relational aggression has become a popular subject for bullying prevention programs, specifically those aimed at reducing bullying among girls.

However, it is important to point out that relational bullying is not the sole province of girls. Boys engage in it, too. Nor do all girls bully in this manner. However, it has been well documented that indirect or relational aggression is the main way in which adolescent girls bully their peers (McGrath, 2007; Olweus, 1994; 1992). As for adults, some research shows that males in the workplace start to employ indirect aggression to the same extent as females—a finding that reveals these behaviors are not consistently gender-specific (Björkqvist, Österman & Hjelt-Bäck, 1994).

For these reasons, it is important not to mislabel different bullying strategies as "female" and "male"; rather, one must understand that bullying behaviors occur along trend lines that correlate strongly with gender variables. This paper will purposefully use the terms 'indirect' and 'direct'—rather than female and male—when referring to types of bullying. However, one must keep in mind that these two forms of aggression are strongly associated with female and male adolescent behavior, respectively.

Finally, since this study is focused on an analysis of gender-specific and coeducational bullying prevention programs, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by

the term gender-specific. Gender-*specific* programming refers to any sort of curricula or organized program that is used with only one gender. This is slightly different from a gender-*targeted* program, which is a curriculum that has been designed for a particular gender group as its primary audience. A program might be gender-specific without being gender-targeted, as in the case of Baltimore's Female Intervention Team, a unit of 13 probation officers that works only with young female probationers. Here, women are the primary audience, but the program content is not necessarily designed with female-unique characteristics in mind. In contrast, the Hawaii Girls' Court is a program that addresses the special needs of at-risk adolescent girls in the juvenile justice system. This program would be described as gender-targeted. The difference between the two concepts is subtle, yet can be important in evaluating various programs. This thesis will cautiously use both terms with as much specificity as possible. Additionally, the terms gender-specific and gender-targeted apply only to programs, not to types of aggression. As discussed earlier, aggression will be described as indirect, relational or direct, not as gender-specific.   The following section on research related to bullying and gender further enlightens this discussion.

Gender differences in bullying

It has long been believed that boys engage in bullying activity at higher rates than girls, but in recent years, researchers who have dared to broaden their definitions of bullying beyond common stereotypes of the hefty neighborhood tormentor have uncovered contradictory evidence. Recent research has shown that the two genders merely exhibit different kinds of aggressive strategies, resulting in very distinct forms of bullying. These studies have shown that boys prefer more overt forms of aggression,

such as physical confrontation, while girls show a tendency toward more indirect forms of aggression, including exclusion, gossip and other relationally-oriented behavior (Björkqvist, Lagerspetz & Kaukiainen, 1992; Björkqvist, Osterman & Lagerspetz, 1994; Boulton & Underwood, 1992). It seems then, that just as girls and boys develop in different ways physically and emotionally during adolescence, their pathways to aggression also vary.

One explanation for the disproportionate use of indirect, or relational bullying strategies among girls is the idea that mixed societal messages from the post-feminist era encourage young girls to apply a double standard of expected behavior (Simmons, 2002). On one hand, messages still circulating as a result of the feminist movement in America instill the belief in girls that they have the potential to be extremely powerful. While the "girl power" movement did have an arguably positive influence on women's leadership roles and desire to be high-achievers, on the other hand, long-held social expectations of girls and women simultaneously demand that they remain universally friendly, likeable and giving. Women who are *too* assertive get called derogatory names, such as "bitch," "slut" and "lesbian" (Simmons, 2002). This leads girls to put on a public face of niceness and friendship, while secretly engaging in mean or aggressive behavior to achieve desired ends. Rather than risk the social rejection associated with the expression of negative emotions, such as anger, Simmons (2002) argues that girls have learned to channel their frustration in ways that cannot be easily detected by the outside world.

> …nonverbal gesturing, ganging up, behind-the-back talking, rumor spreading, the Survivor-like exiling of cliques, note passing, the silent treatment, nice-in-private and mean-in-public friends—are fueled by the lack of face-to-face confrontations (p. 262).

Girls' attempt to satisfy both their feminist beliefs in power and leadership, along with society's expectations of likeability, has resulted in their disproportionate propensity to engage in indirect aggression. While this may be a feasible explanation for today's aggressive girls, some contend that the problem of indirect aggression among females goes back farther than the feminist movement of the 1970s. Perhaps rendering this explanation incomplete, some writers have proposed alternate explanations.

Other reasoning about the use of indirect bullying among adolescent girls includes differences in cultural socialization and a disproportionate cognitive capacity to repress their strong, negative emotions (Brown, 1998; Simmons, 2002). Certain types of racial, ethnic or cultural socialization may be associated with different frequencies of indirect aggression in girls. Simmons (2002) notes that girls reared in predominantly urban communities, often those marked by perceived subjugation or some other form of social or economic disenfranchisement, tend to exhibit less difficulty expressing their anger directly with one another, as compared with girls from predominantly white, middle-class backgrounds. She argues that this difference comes not only from a cultural admiration for women's self-esteem and assertiveness, as is often the norm within the African-American community, but from a means of resisting silence and oppression as marginalized citizens. While Simmons and other researchers (Way, 1996; Brown, 1998; American Association of University Women Report, 1990) have found that although girls from these somewhat disenfranchised communities seem to have a different relationship to aggression than their middle-upper class cohorts, they, too tend to withhold important aspects of their anger from close friends in the peer group. These girls present an

alternative image of girls' aggression, one that is not universal across lines of culture or economic status.

Interestingly, socioeconomic class may also prove to be a factor in the propensity for indirect aggression among girls. Some researchers have found that the use of teasing among girls is no less common among females belonging to the lower class, but may instead serve a different purpose. Such research shows that teasing among working class girls might be used as a strategy to socialize each other and teach group norms (Brown, 1998). In this case, expressions of anger are used only against those who do not comply with group norms and may serve as a reminder of the consequences of disloyalty among female friends.

However, Garbarino (2006) suggests that culture and class status do not work in a vacuum to convince girls to hide their true feelings. Simple facts of cognition and maturation may add to the gender difference, such as evidence showing that little girls develop interpersonal skills more rapidly than little boys (Garbarino, 2006). This may serve as one reason girls are able to switch from physical aggression to relational aggression earlier and more smoothly than boys and also may explain girls' ability to use relational bonds more maliciously. Similarly, a flood of data has emerged in recent years demonstrating how boys and girls have different developmental courses and even different brains. Sax (2005) notes that baby boys prefer to stare at mobiles; baby girls at faces. Boys solve maze puzzles using the hippocampus; girls use the cerebral cortex. Boys covet risk; girls shy away. Boys perform better under moderate stress; girls perform worse. In sum, because of their unique brain chemistry and distinctive paths for cognitive

development, girls may be more primed for alternative forms of aggression than boys are (Sax, 2005).

Others purport that girls employ indirect means of aggression simply because it is the most effective form of bullying within their peer group. These researchers point to studies showing that girls and boys in early adolescence have different social goals, leading them to different behavior patterns. Boys, for example, have demonstrated that physical dominance within the peer group is most important to them during adolescence; similarly, they employ physical and verbal aggression most often since it is the most direct way to assert dominance. Girls, however, have expressed that their primary goals at this age center around intimacy and belonging. Therefore, it fits that their aggressive strategies would include alternative aggressions, such as bullying as a way to interfere with each other's relationships (Garbarino, 2006). Ultimately, the thought of being alone is such a powerful threat to adolescent girls' sense of self-worth that a girl faced with the prospect of isolation can be bullied into almost anything. In this vein, relational aggression can be the most painful, and most effective, aggressive tactic of all among adolescent girls. As a form of psychological violence, indirect aggression is the most serious blow that can be dealt.

But why does this type of aggression appear to peak in adolescence? Research has shown that the problem of indirect aggression among girls seems to peak at approximately age 11, during the height of girls' middle school years (Björkqvist et al., 1992). The reason for this may lie in the many pages of literature documenting the importance of the social group for girls' cognitive and social development during these

years. Such research suggests that important benchmarks in girls' social development may occur during this time (Bowen, 2007).

Relational aggression refers to the use or manipulation of relationships to inflict harm on others and exists along a continuum of mild to extreme (Bowen, 2007). As a form of emotional violence, relational aggression has been deemed one of the most popular bullying strategies for adolescent females of middle school age (Dallasega & Nixon, 2003; Simmons, 2002; Björkqvist, 1992; Björkqvist, Österman & Lagerspetz, 1994). Girls' use of relationships as a powerful weapon against one another through behaviors such as exclusion, ignoring, spreading rumors, alliance-building, damaging reputations, intimidation, manipulative affection, public insults, undermining or threatening to end relationships, cyber-bullying and more, vouches for the critical importance of social status and belongingness needs during the middle school years (Simmons, 2002; Bowen, 2007; McGrath, 2007). It also fits girls' need to maintain the appearance of feminine lovability since, compared with other forms of aggression, relational aggression is quieter, more insidious and harder to detect. Dallasega and Nixon (2003) note that "damage occurs because the use of relational aggression prevents girls from aligning with one another during an important time in their psycho-social development and instead turns them into adversaries" (p. 9).

Additionally, as girls in early adolescence acquire new cognitive competencies, they are able to adapt their persona to society's expectations. Since the society most girls find themselves in happens to be a middle school social hierarchy, girls learn to hide unwanted emotions when appropriate according to unwritten rules of social posturing and inflicting harm discreetly through circuitous means. Girls at this point in development

are particularly adept at knowing the difference between reality and pretending, between

being authentic and wearing a mask. As one researcher puts it:

> Early adolescence, in other words, disposes girls to
> see the cultural framework, and girls' and women's
> subordinate place in it, for the first time…Moreover,
> since these strong feelings emerge just as girls move into
> the dominant culture, at the very moment when their anger
> is most disruptive to the social order, proponents of the
> status quo have much invested in covering or pushing these
> feelings out of public view (Brown, 1998, p. 16).

In some ways, girls' cognitive capacity to switch personas according to their environment

may enable them to engage in the complex behavior of indirect and relational aggression.

As anger is recognized as a liability in their social world, girls learn to expose it only in

the most discreet ways. Garbarino says, "Parents and other adults have colluded with

culture to make the option of physical aggression off limits for girls" (2006, pp. 52-53).

Interestingly, research on girls and relational aggression indicates that they tend to

employ aggressive strategies more frequently within their own friendship circles, in

comparison to boys, who tend to aggress outside their friendship circles. One may ask

how this could be, considering that friends should be supporting, rather than inflicting

harm upon, each other. When combined with research supporting the idea that indirect

aggression is common among socially proficient, popular and well-connected

adolescents, this internal group aggression is not surprising. It is precisely because of

girls' proficiency in the workings of their own social system that they learn how to inflict

the most severe harm on one another (Simmons, 2002). It seems that girls understand

that friends who know each other well will be more successful at hurting each other most.

Traditional research on gender differences in social dominance has found that differences in the need for males and females to assert relational authority over one another is biologically determined, resulting from the differences in reproductive strategies between sexes. More recent research demonstrates that these gender differences may be mediated by personal social values (Cariacati, 2007). The implications of this would suggest that despite their predisposition to dominate their peers, adolescent girls' and boys' individual attitudes toward the social hierarchy may determine the likelihood that they would be involved in relational aggression.

Interestingly, as much as girls understand the importance of their place in society, their surrounding social hierarchy and how to manipulate it, they tend to fall short of holding themselves accountable for their negative behavior. Naomi Scheman (in Brown, 1998) notes, "Anger is 'object hungry.' Indirectness will not only contribute to confusion and make it more difficult for others to respond directly to one's feelings; it will, over time, make it difficult for girls to identify their angry feelings" (p. 13). Research has shown that when aggression is so indirect as to separate the perpetrator from the victim by several degrees, as is the case with behaviors such as exclusion, gossip, corruption and negative body language, girls find it extremely difficult to take responsibility and therefore rarely feel remorse (Simmons, 2002; Garandeau & Cillessen, 2006). "The same thing happened to me the first time I asked a group of…girls to volunteer stories of being mean. They'd looked at me as though I'd asked them to swallow live goldfish" (Simmons, 2002, p. 150). Also known as "diffusion of responsibility," Olweus (1991) and others have shown that when aggression occurs in the presence of many peers, individuals feel less accountable for their offenses.

Effects of bullying

Despite widespread belief that it is a normal part of development, bullying is extremely harmful. Bullies are more likely to use drugs and alcohol, drop out of school and engage in delinquent and criminal behavior (Farrington, 1993). Alarming studies report that 60 percent of children who engaged in bullying between grades six and nine had criminal convictions by age 24 (Meichenbaum, n.d.). Research on school shootings has linked bullying with an increase in school violence (Leary, Kowalski, Smith & Phillips, 2003; Newman, 2004; Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum & Modzeleski, 2002). Interestingly, a study conducted by the U.S. Secret Service uncovered a striking commonality between 41 school shootings that took place between 1974 and 2000—71 percent of the shooters had been targets of a bully (Vossekuil et al., 2002). A summary of the report indicated that "Many attackers felt bullied, persecuted or injured by others prior to the attack" (Vossekuil et al., 2002, p. 21).

In addition to the tangible, behavioral effects of bullying listed above, several studies have demonstrated that negative psychological effects of bullying last long after young people leave the school setting and the abuse has stopped (Salmivalli, 2001). Targets are more likely to be anxious, fearful, withdrawn, depressed and insecure (Olweus, 1994). Recipients of bullying are also at increased risk of refusing to go to school, academic failure and becoming socially isolated. It has been estimated that as many as 163,000 students enrolled in U.S. schools stay home each day for fear of being targeted by a bully (Meichenbaum, n.d.). In extreme cases, bullying has been linked to suicidal ideation and death (Olweus, 1993).

Negative psychological consequences of the bullying process are not confined to victims' experiences alone; bullies also suffer various psychosocial problems such as loneliness, trouble making friends, poor academic performance and involvement in problem behaviors such as smoking and drinking (Erikson, 2001). Further, research shows that youth who are both bullies and victims seem to be at a particularly high risk for short- and long-term psychosocial difficulties, since they experience the troubles associated with both groups (Nansel et al., 2001). While these factors are clear correlates of bullying behavior, they cannot be understood as definite causes or effects. It remains to be plainly demonstrated in which direction the relationship between bullying and the psychosocial problems associated with it points.

Finally, the harms linked to bullying do not end with one's 18th birthday or graduation ceremony. Troubles for both bullies and their targets often extend into adulthood as evidenced by an increased likelihood for clinical depression and a decrease in adults' ability to trust others and act confidently (Rigby, 2003). Studies have found that without an alternative to solving interpersonal problems, adults who were once bullies continue to rely on the same strategies learned in childhood to resolve interpersonal disputes (Björkqvist, Österman & Lagerspertz, 1994). A survey of university employees in Sweden investigated whether males, as adults, employed indirect aggression to the same extent as females (Björkqvist et al., 1994). Two varieties of the behavior among adults emerged—rational-appearing aggression and social manipulation; males used the former type of aggression significantly more often than females, while females used the latter more than males. Both types can be categorized as indirect forms of aggression in which the perpetrator tries to disguise his or her destructive intensions in

order to avoid detection. It appears that although indirect aggression is found more commonly among adolescent girls than their male peers, men in the workplace "catch-up" as adults in indirect bullying proficiency due to increased pressure of social norms not to aggress overtly. These negative outcomes of participation in bullying at any age clearly demonstrate the need to devote concerted attention to preventing it.

A recent study of workplace bullying also notes that the cycle of conflict present in bully-victim relationships prevalent in childhood is reproduced in some workplace conflicts (Whitehouse, 2006). Whitehouse argues that promotion of healthy youth and adolescent conflict resolution techniques can help prevent workplace bullying in later years.

With a solid understanding of the definition, forms and troublesome correlates of bullying, it is time to shift focus to what can be done to address it. The next several sections will introduce various preventative approaches that have been tried in the past, including general bullying prevention programs, gender-specific aggression prevention programs, single-sex educational techniques and, finally, gender-targeted bullying prevention programs that aim to address the particular types of aggression common among adolescent girls.

General bullying prevention programs

A number of state legislatures have proposed laws requiring schools to establish anti-bullying policies and programs, and more recently, a federal legislator even proposed national legislation on bullying (National School Safety and Security Services, 2007). In the meantime, some states are considering their own mandatory anti-bullying laws (Thomerson, 2001). Most schools have adopted some type of policy or disciplinary

response to address bullying behavior (National School Safety and Security Services, 2007). However, many problems with these approaches exist. For example, not all policies consider indirect aggression a dangerous form of bullying, and even fewer require the implementation of preventative educational programs for students and staff in addition to reactionary discipline.

Programs designed to address bullying function within several different contexts of intervention and prevention. The three most common approaches are at the school-wide level, the classroom or small-group level and the individual level (Garrett, 2003). Some programs are designed to be used in only one of these settings, while others are more flexible and can be applied across all three.

Most researchers agree that intervention designed to combat bullying behavior requires defining bullying for students, providing strategies and developing a language or script for intervening (Atlas and Peplar, 1998; Garrett, 2003). Peplar (2006) recently suggested two important organizing concepts for any bullying intervention program—scaffolding and social architecture. Scaffolding focuses on providing supports for the needs of individual children who bully or who are victimized. An example might include a situation in which a parent of a victimized child helps their son or daughter rehearse strategies to use when faced with a bully in the school hallway. By helping the student develop potential solutions to social problems, adults provide behind-the-scenes support, much like the scaffolding inside a building's walls. Social architecture requires an emphasis on the dynamics of adolescents' peer groups and the need to create school cultures that promote positive peer interactions. An example of this might include a teacher who purposefully pairs a socially isolated child with a popular one for a group

project in an effort to facilitate a friendly relationship between them. On the other hand, if a student is being perpetually bullied by a classmate, the teacher might implement an intervention based on social architecture by pulling the two youths apart and assigning them to different groups. Peplar (2006) concludes that interventions for bullying require a combination of scaffolding and social architecture to adequately address the problem.

One of the most well known bullying prevention and intervention programs is The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, developed by the prominent Norwegian bullying researcher, Dan Olweus. The Olweus program purports to reduce existing bully/victim problems, prevent the development of new cases of bullying and improve peer relations at the school (Olweus, 1991; 2004). Another frequently used program is the Expect Respect Project (Sanchez, Robertson, Lewis, Rosenbluth, Bohman & Casey, 2001). Outcomes from this program report that it was able to help students increase their expectations of themselves in addresssing bullying, rather than expecting school staff to do it. Students were also more likely to take personal action on behalf of bullying targets and were less likely to tell an adult about a name-calling incident (Sanchez et al., 2001). Peaceful Schools, Bully-Proofing Your School, Take a Stand, Steps to Respect and Bullybusting are just some of the other popular programs that combine a school-wide interventionist approach and classroom curricula to address bullying. Several of these programs include units that recognize indirect or relational aggression and its prevalence in the social circles of adolescent girls, albeit peripherally. However, the majority of bullying prevention programs currently in use are designed to address bullying across both genders.

While each of these programs employs a different theoretical approach to addressing and preventing bullying, it is important to note that researchers have drawn a clear line between the social-emotional training necessary as part of bullying prevention and the skills needed for adolescent conflict resolution—which bullying experts contend are not appropriate aspects of a respectable bullying prevention program (Bowen, 2007). The reason for this lies in the inherent difference between conflict and bullying. While conflict is disagreement between equal parties, imbalance of power combined with intent to harm are inherent aspects of bullying behavior (Bowen, 2007). No amount of conflict resolution skills can overcome this asymmetry in status. Rather, attempting to resolve a bullying situation using a conflict resolution approach has the potential to further victimize the bullying target. Also, conflicts are a normal part of life whereas bullying is not. Therefore, one must be careful to differentiate between conflict resolution training and bullying prevention programs.

Research on what happens when bullying behavior goes unaddressed is startling. Miller and Linn (2002) found that the indifference of bystanders increases over time, implying that without educational intervention, students who witness bullying learn that peer aggression, power and control are accepted modes of behavior. In the absence of prevention programs that affirm moral standards about behavior, witnesses to peer aggression appear to become less willing to intervene on behalf of victims and more indifferent to his or her distress. In other words, the anger and disapproval of bullying behavior expressed by the fifth graders may become the indifferences reported by the eighth graders. Students may lose their aversion to others' victimization. If adults do not provide information and instruction to combat bullying, students fall back on the

resources available to them, such as the development of avoidance skills (emotional indifference). Some argue this contributes to the very school culture that makes bullying possible (Miller & Linn, 2002).

Single-sex prevention programming

Despite the fact that females have exhibited major differences in their aggressive strategies, in the criminal justice system they continue to be treated in the same ways as males. Some have suggested that the same principles of intervention that "work" for males should apply to women (Dowden & Andrews, 1999 in Cunningham, 2007). However, many emerging approaches to prevention programming for girls have grown out of an understanding of how girls are different from boys. Since it appears that girls may well find their way to violent behavior in significantly different ways than do boys, it follows that treatment and intervention strategies should vary accordingly. In other words, because research demonstrates that girls approach aggression and violence in a unique way from their male counterparts, their intervention programs must also be unique.

A comprehensive review of best practices by the Office for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (Greene, Peters & Associates, 1998) endorsed the need for gender-specific programs to address aggression in females. Other bodies have joined the effort to advocate for gender-specific programming for females in the criminal justice system. The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (1992) requires state governments seeking federal funding to have a plan for providing needed gender-specific services. Half of U.S. states have done so already, and the other half are in the process of doing so (Greene, Peters & Associates, 1998).

Generally speaking, gender-targeted programs that address female aggression refer to program models and services that comprehensively address the special needs of the particular group (Guiding Principles for Promising Female Programming, 1998). Far from serving as feminist platforms from which to spew the idea that girls are more special than boys, these programs are founded on research showing the unique needs of girls and how to empower them toward positive behavior. "Those who feel resistant to the gender-specific model because of its feminist association should be encouraged to simply learn about it as a model explicitly designed to empower girls, setting aside any preconceived notions of feminism" (The Girl Connection, 2000, p. 2). Specific programs recognize both the risk factors most likely to impact the gender group at hand, as well as the protective factors that can build resiliency and prevent delinquency. It aims to help girls already in trouble, while preventing future delinquency among girls who are at risk. The program bridges theory-into-practice by combining knowledge about the psychological development of adolescent females with juvenile justice practices (Guiding Principles for Promising Female Programming, 1998).

A report by Girls Incorporated (1996 in Guiding Principles for Promising Female Programming, 1998) stresses the importance of valuing, celebrating and honoring "the female perspective" in program planning and design for both gender-targeted and coeducational prevention curricula. Leslie Acoca (in Guiding Principles for Promising Female Programming, 1998), director of the Women and Girls Institute at the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, lists these hallmarks of a gender-specific or gender-targeted facility for female aggressors: a humane living environment; small group sizes,

which allow for innovation; respectful interactions between staff and residents and a positive atmosphere to encourage change.

One example of the single-sex approach to prevention is the Female Intervention Team in Baltimore, a unit of 13 probation officers that works only with young female probationers (Greene, Peters & Associates, 1998; Daniel, 1999). Similarly, the Hawaii Girls' Court, launched by The Family Court of the First Judicial Circuit in September 2004, is a gender-targeted program that seeks to reduce aggression in females. This program addresses the special needs of at-risk adolescent girls in the juvenile justice system. The program incorporates promising practices meant to help girls get back on a positive development track and avoid future delinquent behavior (Hawaii Girls' Court, 2006). Finally, the PACE Center for Girls was established in 1985 as an alternative to incarceration or institutionalization for at-risk adolescent girls in Jacksonville, Florida, and applies a gender-specific approach to violence prevention among its constituents (Schaible, 2001).

Gender-targeted programming has been used as a preventative or intervention strategy to address negative behavior such as delinquency, but such programs also have been used to curb other unwanted behavior such as alcohol, drug and tobacco usage. Not On Tobacco, for example, is a gender-targeted program aimed at the cessation of smoking among youth. Like some violence prevention programs, it claims it is gender-specific because "males and females use tobacco for different reasons" (Marion County School, 2007).

Male-specific prevention programming is gaining in popularity as well. Especially with regard to violence and delinquency prevention efforts, some

organizations are taking note that boys are in as much need for unique approaches to address their socio-emotional issues as are girls.   Programs such as the Girls Project/Boys Project and the Boys Council develop and implement training and intervention programs specifically for boys because they recognize that traditional masculine socialization can estrange and isolate men from each other, especially during times when they need the most support (Boys Council, 2007). This phenomenon of isolation is theorized to heighten their risk of engaging in acts of violence (Feder, Levant & Dean, 2007). Therefore, these programs can be described as attempts at preventing future acts of aggression and delinquency in young men.

Most importantly, gender-targeted programs extend beyond simply single-sex audiences. As stated in a report from the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women, "these programs consider the social context of girls' [or boys'] lives and create services in intentional response to the unique challenges—and strengths—of those they seek to serve" (The Girl Connection, 2000, p. 1). The importance of these programs is not found in the composition of the audience they are meant to serve, but rather, in the effort made by the programs' developers to meet unique challenges of various segments of society.

Single-sex education

It may seem obvious that gender-targeted violence prevention results in a single-sex approach to programming. Programs designed to address the distinct aggressive strategies of males and females, must also isolate these groups in order to direct their messages toward the appropriate audience. Literature on single-sex education is therefore a relevant subtopic for a discussion on gender-specific programming.

Two of the most formative scholars on single-sex educational practices are Reginald Dale (1974) and James Coleman (1961). After a series of studies, Dale concluded that the coeducational environment better suited students' long-term educational success since it mimicked larger society, acting as a microcosm where young people could learn to get along with one another. Conversely, Coleman argued that schools constituted an 'adolescent subculture' containing a world of social interactions that were ultimately hazardous to students. He speculated that single-sex schools would provide a more effective environment for education because they could diminish this subculture through an increased emphasis on academics rather than "the cruel jungle of rating and dating" (1961, p. 51).

Coleman's opinions have been supported by more recent research, which argues that single-sex education is more likely than coeducational settings to promote academic achievement. Several added variables have been identified, which affect this finding. Namely, Riordan (1990) found single-sex schools had the most benefits for white females, as well as for male and female minority students. Additionally, Cairnes (1990) found that single-sex schools had most positive impact on students' self-esteem and locus of control. Among categories of cognitive, social, athletic and general self-esteem, single-sex schools had more positive effects than coeducational schools.

Other research by Brutsaert and Bracke (1994) measured the general wellbeing (self-esteem, sense of mastery and sense of belonging) of students in coeducational and single-sex settings. Their research concluded that girls do not seem to be influenced in any way by the organization of the school. Boys, in contrast, are negatively affected not by the gender composition of the student population, but by a preponderance of female

teachers on staff. Such research underscores the importance of considering the sex composition not only of fellow students, but also of staff and faculty, in assessing effects of sex organization on socio-emotional student outcomes.

It seems, then, that most research on single-sex education is based on the assumption that boys pose the primary danger to girls' self-esteem and achievement. However, research on relational and indirect aggression among girls contends that girls threaten each others' success in the social realm as much or even *more* than their male counterparts. In this vein, a new question concerning the risks and benefits of gendered education arises as it applies to social pressures within single-sex groups.

Empirical data also strongly suggest that most teaching materials and curricula tend to be gender-biased, although the description of this bias appears to vary depending on the target variable. For example, some scholars purport that many items used in standard teaching procedures are structured in such that they are at odds with the ways in which females tend to interpret information (Streitmatter, 1999). Traditional schools reflect and are congruent with men's socialization experiences, which are different from those of women. Because women tend to construct knowledge in different ways than men, the male focused school setting may present an environment in which female students are less likely to be comfortable than males, therefore internalizing less of what is being taught. In contrast, other researchers have suggested that today's academic environment is geared more toward the sedentary, verbal learning style of girls. In one study, boys demonstrated a significantly greater gain in information retention in a non-classroom environment than in the traditional classroom setting. If present, such bias would make it difficult for male students to sit still and follow school norms (Carrier,

2009). Although the direction of the bias is yet to be determined, it is conceivable to argue that gender differences in learning styles affects academic performance of adolescent students.

In a similar vein, one should be careful not to allow empirical data touting the benefits of single-sex education to serve as a pretext, thereby continuing to perpetuate existing stereotypes of women (Gardenswartz, 1993). Some have called Sax's (2005) research on brain differences between males and females "essentialism," contending it is nothing more than "sexist rubbish" (Younger in Weil, 2008). Presumed experts in relational aggression who refer to various means of indirect bullying as "girl bullying" ought to recognize that serious damage can be done by applying rigid labels to groups based on the behavior of some.

Finally, with regard to bullying prevention curricula, gender-targeted programs have been recommended for use not because of the alleged academic benefits of single-sex learning groups, but because the content of the material itself is designed with gender differences in mind. In other words, because research demonstrates that girls approach bullying in a unique way, the intervention strategies used to prevent and address this behavior should be focused on the special issues with which girls' struggle.

Single-sex bullying education/Gender-specific bullying prevention programs

Despite the array of knowledge about bullying, its forms, its association with gender differences and literature focused on gender-based aggression programs, less documentation exists on programs that actually address bullying prevention with direct consideration of gender differences. A few programs exist (Salvaging Sisterhood, Bullying in the Girls' World, Power Up, Step Up, The Boys Project, etc.), but the

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majority of them are focused only on females. There is also very little empirical research

documenting their effectiveness.   Documenting the positive contributions made by these

programs to the field of bullying prevention in general and assessing which programs'

practices also reflect insight into what is known about general bullying and gender

differences in bullying, is the intent of the present investigation.

Methods

The data for this study was collected through a series of qualitative interviews

with program directors from eight bullying prevention programs across the United States.

The interviews consisted of approximately 50 questions relating to the programs'

background, goals, executive administration, participants, content, theoretical approach

and outcomes. Interview questions varied slightly depending on their relevant

application to coeducational or gender-specific programs, but all participants were asked

the same basic set of questions (See Appendixes A and B for the list of interview

questions used with coeducational and gender-specific program directors, respectively).

Interview lengths ranged between 90 and 150 minutes and were conducted by the

primary researcher via in-person meetings or telephone conversations.

Participants

The interview respondents were nine program directors from a variety of bullying

prevention programs. Each respondent was selected after conducting thorough research

about their respective programs, which fell into one of three categories: coeducational

bullying prevention, gender-specific bullying prevention or verbally-oriented

coeducational bullying prevention. Two of these bullying prevention programs also fell

under the category of more broadly defined "character education" curricula. Two or

more programs were investigated in each of these categories, in order to survey the range

of programs available. These programs are represented in Table 1.

Table 1: Bullying Prevention Program Categories

	Coeducational Bullying Prevention Program	Single-Sex Bullying Prevention Program	Verbal Bullying Prevention Program (Coeducational)	General Character Education Program (Coeducational)
Bullying in the Girl's World		X		
Bully-Proofing Your School	X			
Don't Laugh At Me			X	X
Power Up		X		
Salvaging Sisterhood		X		
Step Up		X		
Words Can Heal			X	X
Youth Matters	X			X

Materials

The only material employed during the data collection process was a hand-held voice recorder, which was used to document the content of each interview. Later, the interviews were transcribed by the researcher, and the tapes were destroyed.

Respondents were offered anonymity; however all chose to have their affiliations and programs identified in this thesis.

Procedure

Before beginning, each respondent officially gave her consent to proceed with the interview. Consent was obtained through written signatures from face-to-face participants and through agreement to a verbal consent script during interviews conducted via telephone (See Appendixes C and D, respectively).

Measures

Interview responses were interpreted by the researcher in accordance with contemporary research on bullying prevention. The criteria described in "Best Practices in Bullying Prevention—Helping Youth Change Aggressive Behavior" (Davis, 2005) and "How to Implement Oregon's Guidelines for Effective Gender-Responsive Programming for Girls" (Patton & Morgan, 2002) provided the bases of comparison for each program. Based on these published guidelines, a list of positive program criteria was devised and compared with the eight programs being analyzed as part of this study. The following constitutes the list of combined comparative criteria for the purposes of this study (Davis, 2005; Patton & Morgan, 2002): presence of participant feedback loop, extensiveness of hiring practices and training, mentorship opportunities, youth perception of safety (physical and emotional), value placed on gender differences, level of focus on conflict, use of single gender approach versus coeducational approach, new skill development and defense strategy building, sensitivity to victimization and trauma, respect of young people's autonomy, emphasis on empathy and focus on group accountability.

Table 2: Positive Program Criteria

	Increased presence has positive implications	Decreased presence has positive implications
Extensiveness of hiring practices and training	X	
Mentorship opportunities	X	
Youth perception of safety (physical & emotional)	X	
Value placed on gender differences	X	
Level of focus on conflict		X
Use of single-gender approach versus coeducational approach	X	
Respect of young people's autonomy	X	
New skill development & Defense strategy building	X	
Sensitivity to victimization and trauma	X	
Value placed on gender differences	X	
Emphasis on empathy	X	
Focus on group accountability	X	
Presence of participant feedback loop	X	

(Davis, 2005; Patton & Morgan, 2002)

Data analysis

      Information gathered from the interviews revealed several relevant themes, which were later clustered by the researcher into a series of categories. These include: "gender-specific benefits," "new best practices" and "potential harms." Subsequent chapters of this thesis are dedicated to each of these categories, allowing the results therein to be discussed in further detail in the results portion of this writing.

Results

As previously mentioned, the present thesis aims to document the positive

contributions to bullying prevention made by currently operating programs and to

highlight program components that reflect either the presence or absence of insight into

recent research. A secondary focus is to document an awareness of gender differences in

programming aimed at preventing bullying.

The data from the interviews reveal that all of the programs included in the

sample group were operating under the assumption that bullying prevention in some form

is an important component of a child's education in contemporary America. Recognizing

that bullying behavior is neither normal nor a healthy part of the developmental process,

each of these program directors has taken steps toward educating their constituencies

about its dangers. However, each program approached bullying prevention from a

distinct perspective. In some sense, these varying approaches highlight a clear lack of

standardization in the field; conversely, several important patterns emerged connecting

groups of programs to each other through one or more of the following: theoretical

foundation, school administrative support, lesson content and outcome measurements.

However, before one can adequately understand these trends it is necessary to

first examine the basic structures and goals of each program in the sample. An

appreciation of the range of programs that participated in interviews with the researcher

serves as a critical part of the interview analysis itself.

Program Profiles

While for some of the programs described below there is no data available to show the number of students served, socio-economic status, ethnic background or locations, demographic information is provided when possible.

Bullying in the Girl's World. Bullying in the Girl's World is a text-based resource for educators, providing lessons and activities for preventing relational aggression and bullying by girls in grades three through eight. This school-wide approach is designed to be used in both coeducational and single-sex settings. Published in 2007 and available for purchase nationwide, the book contains suggested talking points for educators confronted with describing the rationale behind implementing the program at their school, as well as content for leading a teacher in-service on relational bullying as a way to garner school-wide support. Classroom activities include stories, games and reproducible student worksheets for all participants. The resource provides ideas for conducting small group counseling sessions with girls only, and this sub-curriculum includes surveys, stories, strategies, student assessments and group activities. Finally, guiding principles and activities for use in individual counseling environments are provided. These suggestions include situation cards, activities, student worksheets and a model for problem-solving. All levels of activity are designed to be run by the on-site school counselor. The program's goals are to help young girls and their classmates become more self-assured, independent and confident in interacting with others in healthy, helpful ways.

Bully-Proofing Your School (BPYS). Bully-Proofing Your School is a

comprehensive, school-wide program for handling bully-victim problems through class

instruction and follow-up classroom meetings. It focuses on converting the silent

majority of both male and female students into a "caring majority" by teaching strategies

that aim to help avoid victimization and promote a bully-free school.

BPYS is available for early childhood, elementary, middle and high school

educational levels and has been published in several updated editions since the year 2000.

It emphasizes the need for schools to establish a cadre of staff members who will learn

anti-bullying concepts, vocabulary and strategies as well as oversee the implementation

of the BPYS curriculum at their school. The program professes six main components:

staff training, student instruction, support of victims, interventions with bullies, systems

interventions and development of a positive climate in the school. The classroom lessons

are designed to be facilitated by individual teachers according to a facilitator's guide.

The program is broadly used nationwide.

Don't Laugh at Me. The Don't Laugh at Me program is intended to serve as an

introduction to, and enrichment of, ongoing efforts that nurture young people's

emotional, social and ethical development, such as character education, conflict

resolution and teaching tolerance programs. As a supplementary program for classroom

teachers with a coeducational student audience, the program provides tools and activities

designed to sensitize youth to the hurtful effects of ridicule, scorn, name-calling,

bullying, intolerance and other forms of disrespect they may encounter. It also

incorporates a multi-media component, utilizing classroom activities in combination with

a DVD and musical CD. The program hopes to guide teachers and students toward creating a "Ridicule-Free Zone" in their schools. Specifically, DLAM attempts to aid in the establishment of classroom environments characterized by four main values: a healthy expression of feelings; caring, compassion and cooperation; the creative resolution of conflicts and an appreciation of differences. According to its national website, over 40,000 educators have participated in DLAM workshops throughout the United States to date.

Power Up. Power Up is a bullying prevention initiative of Girl Scouts-Mountain Prairie Council serving girls ages five through 17. Its vision is to create an environment where girls and adults are in partnership to collectively eliminate bullying behavior. The program centers strongly on encouraging the 85 percent of the student population who are bystanders during incidents of bullying to intervene when they witness wrongdoing. An all-girl program, Power Up is focused on preventing the unique verbal and relational aggression prevalent among females through experiential activities. Its slogan, "Doing Nothing is Not an Option" highlights the program's two primary goals: to enable girls to identify bullying behaviors and to prepare them to intervene when confronted with bullying activities both inside and outside of Girl Scouting. The program can be facilitated by Girl Scout troop leaders, staff members, camp counselors or volunteers. It is also sometimes offered in local schools, primarily in northern Colorado.

Salvaging Sisterhood. Salvaging Sisterhood is a gender-targeted group curriculum designed to teach female friends how to communicate efficiently and effectively with one another. It purports to: raise awareness and understanding, develop empathy, teach healthy conflict, explore feelings and promote a positive change in female relationships. Published in 2005, Salvaging Sisterhood is designed to be run by school counseling professionals who are experiencing teacher complaints, student self-referral, administrative complaints and/or parents' calls of concern about bullying in their community. The program has been purchased and used by school counselors nationwide.

Step Up. Developed in 2005 and updated in 2006, Step Up is a single-sex bullying prevention program that aims to empower middle schools girls to reduce relational aggression in their communities. Used primarily in schools throughout Kansas City, KS, the eight-session program addresses issues such as rumors, body image, cliques, gender expectations, cyberbullying, beauty, friendship and handling conflict with other girls. Kits include a facilitator's guide and individual student journals for each participant, which contain all session activities and homework assignments. Facilitator guides contain background information on relational aggression and step-by-step instructions for leading each lesson. The program can be run by any school-based female staff member. The program's website indicates that over 50 Step Up kits have been sold since May 2006.

Words Can Heal. Words Can Heal is a character education curriculum for youth ages six to16 focusing on the prevention of verbal aggression. Modeled after the national Words Can Heal campaign launched in 2001, the current curriculum was developed by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver in 2002. The 12-week program includes activities about using positive language free from name-calling, teasing, gossiping and stereotyping. It also offers skill-building lessons designed to give youth tools to use when they are the target of verbal violence or see someone else being targeted. Individual sessions are facilitated by Boys and Girls Club trained staff members with the help of youth mentors. Additionally, the program includes a performing arts component for older youth who present an assembly for younger participants using concepts from the Words Can Heal curriculum. The program is used in Boys & Girls Club locations across the state of Colorado.

Youth Matters. Youth Matters is a skills-training curriculum that targets different forms of negative behavior among school-aged youth, including bullying and aggression. The program is used nationwide and is based on the social development model. It incorporates knowledge of risk and protective factors associated with the onset of aggression and other antisocial behaviors. Curriculum content teaches students the cognitive, behavioral and social skills necessary to recognize, avoid and respond to bullying situations in school. It can be facilitated by classroom teachers or by external, Youth Matters trainers.

Summary. One may notice the wide range and variety of the programs sampled in this research. While some are undoubtedly meant for either a coeducational or gender-specific audience, other programs are designed to be used with both. Additionally, several programs from the sample group are decisively oriented toward direct forms of bullying—such as physical and verbal attacks—while others purport to address indirect forms, such as relational manipulation. However, those programs specifically aimed at combating verbal aggression are somewhere in between, since verbal bullying can be considered both direct and indirect depending on the context (i.e. gossip and rumors). Finally, some programs orient their lessons around avoiding victimization, while others are aimed at reducing the aggressive behavior of the perpetrator. Still others center their attention on passive bystanders and their roles in a bullying situation.

Thus, a review of the interview data solidified the researcher's inclination that the wide variety of bullying prevention programs currently in use are so varied as to prevent their resolute categorization into distinct groups. Rather, program types are best interpreted along a continuum defined by two main typologies: type of audience (coeducational vs. gender-specific) and type of aggression (direct vs. indirect). The range of programmatic content used in this sample is depicted in Figure 1, titled Continuum for Bullying Prevention Program Typology.

Figure 1: Continuum for Bullying Prevention Program Typology

Coeducational

BPYS   DLAM   **Words Can Heal**   **Youth Matters**

Direct ————————————————————————————————— **Indirect**

Bullying in the Girl's World   **Step Up**   **Salvaging Sisterhood**

Gender-Specific   **Power Up**
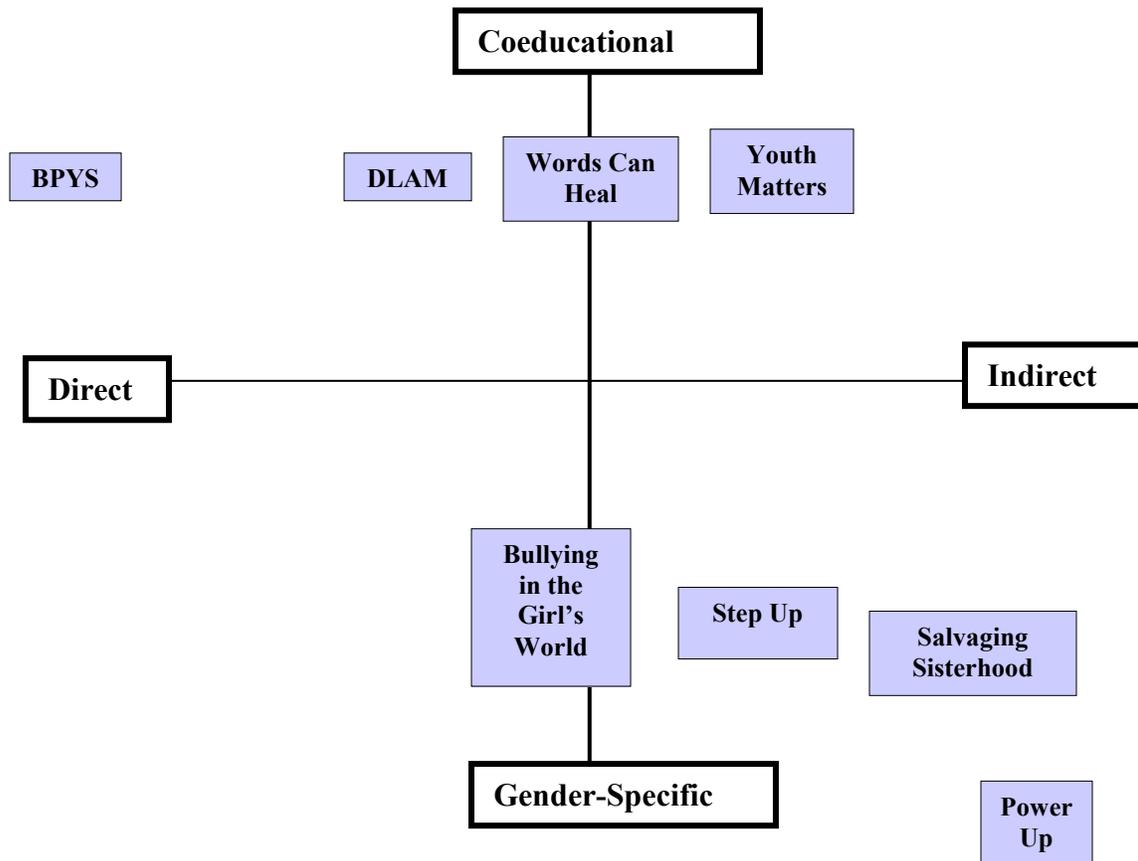
Data categorization

Overall, results from the interviews reveal that several programs from the sample offer unique and effective approaches to bullying prevention with positive outcomes for students. Additionally, several programs' approaches provide support for the claim that gender-specific programming is necessary and effective in the bullying prevention discipline; program directors argued for this especially when it comes to girls, whose strong propensity for indirect and relational modes of aggression is well established by research. Because of their attention to current literature on gender's relationship to

bullying, certain programs emerged particularly strong. The positive contributions of

these programs are highlighted in a later section of this paper entitled "Gender-Specific

Benefits." Bullying prevention programs that approach the subject from a general

standpoint, regardless of student demographics, age or locale are also highlighted. When

compared with the criteria in Table 2, these programs are generally positive and

impressive in their outcomes and are described in the subsequent category entitled "New

Best Practices." Finally, a small but surprising group of programs engaging in potentially

harmful practices during their attempts at bullying prevention were exposed in the

interview data. Cautionary aspects of these programs are described in the section entitled

"Potential Harms."

Gender-specific benefits

The intent of the present research is two-fold: to document the most positive

contributions made by various approaches to bullying prevention programs to the overall

field, and to highlight practices of programs that reflect insight into what is known about

gender differences in bullying. The interview data clearly support the premise that some

programs go to great lengths to consider and incorporate the issue of gender into their

programs. Within this sample, certain programs' philosophies and practices stood out to

reinforce the argument made in the literature that gender-targeted programs are effective

in preventing bullying among adolescent girls.

Safety in separation. Of all of the reasons recognized by bullying experts to

conduct prevention efforts in a single-sex environment, perhaps safety is the most critical

and compelling. Lisa Scott of Power Up takes the issue of safety further than most

literary advocates in her program design. "This is very unsafe territory," she says, "and

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people don't honor that in the way that they should" (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008).

In effect, Scott proposes that discussing bullying in coeducational groups may actually compromise participants' perception of safety and therefore dilute the richness of the discussion. The sensitivity of this topic is underestimated, she says, because unlike other subjects around which prevention programs have been developed—such as sex education or substance abuse—bullying is never merely theoretical in the minds of young children. Bullying prevention programs must recognize that they are inevitably addressing a topic that is extremely tangible and has been suffered by the majority of school-aged children and adolescents.

> Bullying prevention…is teaching an incredibly sensitive
> topic in a room full of people who've experienced that topic
> in horribly negative ways that they have probably never been
> able to effectively process or deal with…And if we're going to
> address abusive behavior in a classroom setting or in any kind
> of group therapy or group setting that is not therapeutic, we have
> to address it in as safe a way as possible (personal communication,
> March 6, 2008).

Scott uses the example of verbal aggression to demonstrate how coeducational programs cannot adequately promise a safe space for youth to discuss their experiences. Scott explains that sexually-charged words—such as "slut" and "lesbian" for girls and "fag" for boys—are frequently exchanged in bullying situations and cannot be discussed candidly in a coeducational environment. Scott says, "It would have been too humiliating for them to talk about those words in front of each other…They cannot feel safe in the same way having those kinds of discussions" (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008). In Scott's view, the sexism implicit in these words, and

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others like them, makes discussions related to verbal bullying unsafe in the presence of the opposite sex.

Additionally, groups that attempt to conduct these discussions with both boys and girls may appear to be getting by unscathed, but one can never be sure the content of the conversation is completely honest. Given the onset of puberty and increasing feelings of sexual and romantic interest in their peers, Scott notes that it is only to be expected that girls and boys will act differently around one another than they do in a single-sex setting. Therefore, there is a risk that the comments and concerns shared in a room where boys and girls are together will be less candid than the opinions they might share when surrounded by members of their own gender. Although there are times when Power Up brings both boys and girls together for certain aspects of their program that *are* deemed safe, generally speaking, Scott operates under the assumption that asking youth to jointly discuss their intimate experiences with bullying and victimization puts young people at emotional risk. This risk is simply not one Power Up is willing to take. Therefore, it is intentionally designed as a gender-specific, all-girl program that can address bullying meaningfully for that constituency alone.

Reflecting documented gender differences. As critical as they are, safety concerns do not account for the only reasons the Power Up program advocates for a gender-targeted approach to bullying prevention. While it may seem obvious that the curriculum would be aimed at girls only—given that it is rooted in the Girl Scouts organization—Scott's decision to develop a gender-specific program did not happen by default.

Scott points to literature demonstrating that key behavioral differences in the ways boys and girls bully, such as work by psychologists Wendy Craig (2000, 2003) and

Dan Olweus (1991, 1994, 2001, 2004). This work is well supported by other researchers who have conducted studies to show that boys prefer more overt forms of aggression, such as physical confrontation, while girls show a tendency toward indirect forms of bullying and relational aggression (Björkqvist, Lagerspetz & Kaukiainen, 1992; Björkqvist, Österman & Lagerspetz, 1994; Boulton & Underwood, 1992).

Scott says these distinct aggressive methods, combined with research showing that boys and girls' interpret the world through different social lenses, present coeducational programs with an often unrealized attention problem: bullying prevention curricula that cater to coeducational clientele waste valuable time losing the attention of half of their audience with information to which they cannot relate. "You spend so much time just trying to explain to guys what relational bullying is…And with girls…you just say 'drama,' and they know. You can shorthand so much and just get straight to the solutions" (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008). Converse examples of this phenomenon might include girls tuning out during discussions about direct, physical bullying, which research has associated most closely with males. Given the time constraints imposed by most educational institutions that allow bullying prevention programs to implement their curricula during a given period, practitioners cannot afford to waste time articulating concepts that are not-applicable to half their students. What Scott's point about boredom and wasted time communicates is the need for bullying prevention practitioners to incorporate research on the different ways that girls and boys exhibit aggression into practical, programmatic terms.

Like Power Up, each of the gender-specific programs included in the present research sample recognized and acknowledged the existence of gender differences in

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bullying, although each one conceptualized these differences in vastly dissimilar terms. Dianne Senn, author of *Bullying in the Girl's World* described the need for gender-targeted programming based on the fact that males and females have different social goals—for girls goals include connecting over group and social activities and for boys goals include bonding over outward expressions of physical activity (D. Senn, personal communication, March 19, 2008). This view correlates directly to literature previously mentioned demonstrating that adolescent boys have more pronounced needs for physical dominance within their peer group, while girls' primary objectives at this age revolve around intimacy and belonging (Simmons, 2002; Bowen, 2007; McGrath, 2007; Garbarino, 2006).

Conversely, Julia Taylor of Salvaging Sisterhood described the need for gender-specific programming based primarily on physiological factors related to brain chemistry. "It comes down to general brain science," she says (J. Taylor, personal communication, February 29, 2008). Citing research showing that the brain's amygdala is larger and more active in girls, she says it is easier for them to be more proficient in nonverbal forms of communication, such as facial expressions and body language. She says the anterior singular cortex is also larger in females, affecting girls' ability to make decisions and increasing the likelihood they will experience anxiety. According to Taylor, the hippocampus—which is in charge of emotional memory—is bigger and more active in females, making it more likely that girls will remember events in more detail and with more emotion, whereas males tend to remember generalities. Taylor says females' brain structure also makes it less likely for them to be involved in physical altercations and risk-taking activities that are more commonly associated with boys. Her perspective on

gender differences reflects literature on brain differences between males and females. Some research has shown that indeed, amygdala volume in females is significantly larger than males (Tebartz van Elst, Woermann, Lemieux & Trimble, 2000). However, other studies have found no differences between the amygdalas of males and females (Gur, Gunning-Dixon, Bilker & Gur, 2002), suggesting that physical evidence of brain differences between genders remains unclear.

Reflecting research suggesting that gender differences in bullying stem from socialization, Trish Madsen of Step Up agrees that a majority of adolescent girls are responding to societal expectations about the need for females to repress negative emotions and remain outwardly pleasant at all times (Brown, 1998). She says:

> Girls often think that if you have conflict a
> relationship is over. It's so cut and dry in that
> 'Oh if I get mad, our friendship is done.' And
> I want to salvage those friendships and say 'No,
> it doesn't have to be over. It just means you're
> expressing yourself within the context of that
> friendship'…I really want the next generation to
> be able to call other girls out on it. It's very
> empowering (T. Madsen, personal communication,
> March 18, 2008).

This view is shared by scholars who purport that the propensity for indirect aggression is fueled by girls' attempt to satisfy both the modern expectation to be assertive and powerful, and the traditional expectation for females to embody likeability (Simmons, 2002). Madsen says what is needed to curb girls' bullying behavior is programs like hers that recognize this double standard and aim to reeducate girls to believe that direct confrontation with others is okay when done appropriately. The interview data

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demonstrate that Step Up and other gender-specific programs which endorse this particular perspective are characterized by an emphasis on female empowerment.

No facilitation without representation. While Power Up definitely adds much to the discussion of gender differences to the field of bullying prevention, several other programs also recognize the unique needs of girls when it comes to aggression. The program directors from Step Up and Don't Laugh at Me both emphasized the importance of having female facilitators run their curricula in order for girls to feel represented and identified during the program.

Step Up program director Trish Madsen explained her rationale in saying that were a male facilitator to run her all-girl curriculum, the program would lose overall credibility. "The girls would just assume that the guy just doesn't get it" (T. Madsen, personal communication, March 18, 2008). She says the gender of Step Up's facilitators has been a point of contention in the past, especially when an experienced male school counselor has expressed the desire to lead the program without a female co-facilitator, something Madsen demands. In her argument for prohibiting solo male facilitators in Step Up she says, "No experience would allow for a man to fully understand what happens with girls and women" (T. Madsen, personal communication, March 18, 2008). Joyce Bignell who facilitates the Don't Laugh at Me program in schools across Colorado notes that it is important to have a diverse group of program leaders. While Don't Laugh at Me uses both male and female facilitators to run its coeducational curriculum in schools, Bignell says for her, the gender of her facilitators matters because **"Depending on who the presenter is, it affects how they interact with the students…So the gender issue becomes very big in our presentation"** (J. Bignell, personal communication,

February 22, 2008). As a result, Bignell says she makes sure students in the Don't Laugh at Me program see that both male and female facilitators have experience with bullying and know how to respond.

What we can glean from these different interpretations is not that there is a need to decide which of these beliefs about gender differences in bullying is correct, but rather, that there are a multitude of reasons to develop and support gender-targeted bullying prevention programs. From brain science to sociological factors to developmental psychology, this research reveals copious insight to support the idea that girls and boys bully differently, and therefore, that they benefit from separate and targeted prevention programs.

Taking ownership. Research showing that aggressive or perpetrating girls are ill-prepared to accept responsibility for their bullying behavior was well represented in the interview data. Several program directors testified that reports of bullying actually increased after conducting the program on-site. Rather than interpreting this increase in reporting as a rise in actual behavior, most program directors theorized that the outcome can be explained by girls' increased ability to recognize that their indirect, relational aggression actually constituted a form of bullying. While this finding occurred across programs that were both coeducational and gender-specific in nature, it supports research previously noted indicating that when aggression is indirect, girls find it difficult to take responsibility for their actions and fail to classify their behavior as bullying (Simmons, 2002; Garandeau & Cillessen, 2006).

Step Up program director Trish Madsen explains the increase in reports of bullying among girls who have completed her program by saying, "I think when you

increase kids' awareness to it, they go 'Whoa, wait a second—This shouldn't be happening'…where six months prior to that they wouldn't have even thought of it that way" (T. Madsen, personal communication, March 18, 2008). Program director Kathleen Keelan of Bully-Proofing Your School agrees, saying kids who didn't think that spreading rumors and gossiping was bullying prior to completing the program now understand the severity of their actions. Therefore, the increase in female reports of bullying behavior after the implementation of a bullying prevention program indicates an increase in recognition, rather than an increase in frequency of the behavior.

Alternately, reports of bullying among boys actually *decreased* after the implementation of programs, according to several program directors. Youth Matters' Jeni Rinner theorizes that unlike girls' reasons for reporting, this finding can be interpreted as a reflection of actual decreased frequency. She asserts this is because boys already knew that their aggression constituted bullying—the program merely emphasized the damage caused by this behavior and increased the likelihood that boys would feel heightened compassion for victims and stop perpetrating. Thus, bullying incidences were less frequent among boys following the execution of the program.

While there has been no research undertaken to document this finding through external sources, such as outside observers or teacher reports, studies on the effectiveness of other, similar bullying prevention programs have found mixed results (Olweus, 1991, 1994, 2004). Additionally, Stevens, Bourdeaudhuij & Oost (2000) discovered that school-based anti-bullying intervention strategies can be effective in reducing problems with bullying, especially within primary schools, but their findings point to an unclear pattern of behavioral changes.

Summary. The practices and philosophies described in these results reflect a general understanding of how gender influences adolescent bullying. Important perspectives on how and why gender-specific programming is being applied surfaced as a result of this investigation—including both physical and psychological safety concerns for all-inclusive bullying prevention, consideration of neurological and psycho-social differences between adolescent boys and girls, the need for facilitators of both genders and the presence of accountability issues among adolescent girls.   Consequently, this research demonstrates that program directors with a solid understanding of the relationship between gender and bullying are well adept at incorporating gender-appropriate modules into their training.

New best practices

It has been demonstrated that bullying prevention programs which take into consideration the importance of gender variables have much to offer students. The programs described in the previous section are those which reflect literature on the differences between male and female aggression in adolescence. However, results from the interviews reveal that several programs from the sample offer unique and effective approaches to bullying prevention, despite the fact that they may not address gender differences. Several programs' approach to bullying across the gender divide also demonstrate important practices in bullying prevention worthy of emulation. When compared with the previously mentioned criteria (See Table 2), the techniques and outcomes of these programs can be considered "best practices" for any bullying prevention effort.

Empathy for everyone. During a conference entitled "Mean Girls," aimed at educating school administrators, counselors, safety officers and program directors about relational bullying among adolescents, psychologist Alison Bowen named empathy as a key emotional skill with important ties to the occurrence of bullying (Bowen, 2007). Speaking broadly about bullying and other forms of negative behavior exhibited by youth, Bowen indicated that the experience of empathy is often absent during bullying scenarios. She argued that adults need to provide children with copious opportunities to experience empathy as a way to build up its capacity in young people. Indeed, most bullying prevention programs in the present sample described the need for empathy-building in this way—as something critical primarily for the bully or perpetrator to experience in order to curb their negative behavior. Tonja Mitchell of Words Can Heal says, "If a kid can show empathy… then that makes them less likely to bully others or show that type of aggressive behavior (T. Mitchell, personal communication, February 27, 2008)." The implication of this assertion is that the ability for youth to experience empathetic reactions to everyday scenarios will subsequently decrease the propensity of perpetrators to aggress against their peers.

However, several of the program directors interviewed as part of this research expressed fresh views on the topic of empathy and its role in bullying prevention work. Adding to the idea that increased empathy will curb aggression, Lisa Scott of Power Up emphasized that such skill-building is important for bystanders and victims of bullying as well. If adults expect bystanders to intervene in bullying situations, they must appreciate the potential reality that the victim is someone who is not well-liked, not only by the bully, but by the student body in general. This type of empathy, she argues, is harder to

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impart because it goes against the accepted reality of the social culture. She says, "Encouraging the defenders to have empathy for a provocative target or a target that's not particularly sympathetic, is really key…If I can't understand how it feels to be in that position, I'm far less likely to defend you in that position" (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008). Also called "ignorers" in Power Up, bystanders can get beyond their apathy when wrongdoing occurs, according to Scott, only if they have the ability to appreciate another person's humanity despite their positive or negative feelings about that individual.

Scott goes on to argue that empathy-building is also important for victims of bullying for several reasons. The first relates to the difference alluded to in an earlier section of this paper about the importance of terminology. As mentioned, the key difference between targets and victims of bullying can be found in the recipient's attitude about the situation. Scott links this to empathy by arguing that those targets whose past bullying experience affects them the least, or as she puts it, those who are most "self-actualized" as targets, are those who have a strong sense of empathy for the bully. "These are targets who say, 'I understand where they're coming from. I bet they really have it bad at home if they're gong to act like that to me.' And those kids get out of the process far more intact than the kids, the targets, who cannot have empathy for other people" (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008). Simply speaking, empathy allows targets to avoid becoming true victims because they can sympathize with the psychological state of their perpetrator and, thus, avoid internalizing the cause of the bullying. As of the writing of this thesis, no research on bullying has been found on the

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topic of a victim's empathy for his or her perpetrator. Therefore, Scott's perspective appears to be entirely fresh.

The second reason Scott argues empathy should be emphasized for victims as well as bullies, is that it decreases the probability of retribution. Pointing out the lack of empathy for classmates demonstrated by perpetrators of school shootings, such as Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris of infamous Columbine High School, Scott points out that "those are targets who didn't have empathy for other people" (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008). The moral of Scott's observations and her philosophy in Power Up is that bullying prevention programs that choose to see value in teaching empathy only for the perpetrators, fail to recognize the depth of the entire community's role in bullying situations. Alternatively, if empathy is taught across the board—to the targets, to the bystanders and to the bullies—bullying prevention programs will likely increase their efficacy.

Power Up, however, is not the only program from the sample that demonstrated a fresh perspective with regard to the relationship between bullying prevention and empathy-building. During her interview, Youth Matters' program director Jeni Rinner offered some thought-provoking insights. Echoing other respondents who agreed that augmenting empathy skills is important to bullying prevention, but questioned whether or not this type of skill could really be taught, Rinner offered a slightly different perspective.

Rather than attempt to instill empathy in individuals who seem to lack it, the Youth Matters program claims to build on people's existing, natural empathetic instincts. Most kids, she argues, simply repress their natural reactions to help others due to pressure from peers who they think would frown upon such interventions. Simply speaking, it is

not that adolescents are incapable of empathy, but rather, that they suppress these emotional reactions in order to remain part of a larger group that is either indifferent to the bullying or may even be perpetrating it. As Rinner puts it, the Youth Matters program attempts to "reawaken" empathy in youth who have deliberately tried to inhibit these feelings for fear of being cut off from their social group. This may be considered an optimistic assertion, since it argues for students' innate capacity to care for others.

Unfortunately some research shows that over time, repeated exposure to negative interactions with peers results in increased apathy. When the empathy levels of a group of elementary school children were compared the same measurements taken several years later in middle school, research showed that their tolerance for peer-to-peer aggression had increased and their propensity to feel empathy for the victim had decreased (Jeffery, Miller & Linn, 2001). This finding is true especially among boys, as myths about victims are perpetuated. This finding may suggest that if bullying prevention programs are going to maintain youth's preexisting ability to experience empathy, such support must be offered early on before this capacity is quashed by repeated exposure to harm.

Overall, each program director interviewed agreed that empathy is an important aspect of any bullying prevention effort. Many of the respondents said their programs attempt to incorporate empathy-building skills through role-playing activities where youth are given the opportunity to experience social situations from varying perspectives. Additionally, the use of fictional literature was described by several program directors, including Rinner of Youth Matters, Diane Senn of Bullying in the Girl's World and Tonja Mitchell of Words Can Heal, as another way in which to encourage youth to empathize with others. The thinking here seems to be that if not comfortable outwardly

expressing empathy for a known classmate, youth might at least start by admitting concern for characters in the abstract.

Given that all eight program directors in the present sample cited empathy as one of the most important skills their program attempts to develop, it is fair to say that this is a core competency across many types of bullying prevention programs. These interviews have highlighted the special role empathy plays in bullying behavior among youth, noting that its application is useful not only for perpetrators to prevent future incidents, but for bystanders and victims as well. While some program directors focus on developing empathy, others say they build on suppressed empathetic impulses. In both cases, it is clear that empathy has been identified in both research and practice as a critical element in bullying prevention work.

Cyberbullying unplugged. Recently, the national media spent many hours covering the story of 13-year-old Megan Meier. Meier committed suicide after being bullied online by the mother of a female classmate who was pretending to be Megan's romantic interest on the social networking website MySpace (*Parents: Cyber Bullying Led to Teen's Suicide*, 2007). While it is not the first case of its kind, the story of Meier's death reintroduced the topic of online bullying to the world. It is important to remember, however, that cyberbullying's effects are not always as overt as committing suicide. Often, this type of bullying goes on unbeknownst to adults—hidden in a world of cell phone text messages, computer instant messages, email forwarding, hate web pages, blogs, negative website postings, photographic forgeries and fake identities. To say the least, cyberbullying has become a "hot topic" for educators, school administrators, parents and adolescents themselves.

During her interview, Julia Taylor of Salvaging Sisterhood pointed out there is a special danger in cyberbullying because of its incredible speed. Almost instantly, information about a person can be transmitted to hundreds of thousands of viewers. Taylor says her students rarely recognize these consequences of posting something negative online. To highlight the accessibility and speed of information online, she incorporated an activity on the topic into her bullying prevention curriculum, Salvaging Sisterhood. "I've challenged the girls, every time they want to send a forward, to write it out. You can't Xerox it, you can't print it out 10 times—you have to write it out each time and send it" (J. Taylor, personal communication, February 29, 2008). Taylor says girls in her program soon begin to realize just how many people can get access to an email or web posting with the click of the mouse. The activity also helps drive home the point that once information is sent, there is no retrieving it. "I've yet to encounter a girl who has not said something over IM or email that they completely regret" (J. Taylor, personal communication, February 29, 2008). Taylor's approach aims to help girls think beyond their moments of anger or aggression to help curb abusive and humiliating messages sent online.

In asking program directors from the sample group about their observations and experiences with cyberbullying, one especially important and original notion surfaced. Lisa Scott of Power Up raises an important question by essentially asking, *Is cyberbullying a new, dangerous form of aggression youngsters are using to bully one another, or is it merely a new means of communicating the same nastiness that already exists between peers?* Scott's own perspective leans toward the latter, saying programs

aimed at curbing exchanges of cruelty online would do best not to focus on the means of

communication, but on the moral intent behind the action. She says:

> It's all about respect and dignity for other people. The
> medium is irrelevant. It doesn't matter whether you are
> putting up a billboard, or passing a note or putting it on
> the internet—saying horrible things to people and about
> people is the issue. Being mean and cruel is the issue. So
> let's focus on ways to prevent people from being mean
> and cruel…If we keep drumming into our kids, treat everyone
> with dignity and respect—whether you know them or not,
> whether you can see them or not, whether they can see you
> or not—none of that matters. Treat people with dignity and
> respect. It's the exact same message, it does not matter the
> medium (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008).

In other words, practitioners of bullying prevention would do well to focus their lessons

and activities primarily on how youth treat each other, not designing lessons around the

practice of cyberbullying which does little more than identify appropriate and

inappropriate venues for meanness.

That said, Scott agrees with other program directors that cyberbullying continues

to have a place in bullying prevention curricula. Certainly there are unique

characteristics of online aggression that make it extremely dangerous and distinct. First,

the speed of the internet's ability to communicate, noted by Taylor above, is a defining

characteristic of online aggression. The anonymity youth can enjoy online is another

important factor that increases the potential for harm, both for the bully and the target.

Victims of cyberbullying attacks can be at a double disadvantage—not only is it difficult

to know who is attacking you online, especially in the case of anonymous hate-based

websites—but a target can never be sure if the person they are communicating with is

really who they purport to be. Many cases of false identity and the use of pseudonyms

have been reported in cyberbullying incidents, often with tragic consequences such as the suicide of Megan Meier and others before her (Halligan, 2005; *Parents: Cyber Bullying Led to Teen's Suicide*, 2007).

Perhaps surprisingly, the anonymity of the internet holds danger for the perpetrators of cyberbullying as well. When the internet is used a fear-based alternative to in-person confrontation, Scott believes it can escalate the intensity of the exchange. This becomes problematic not only for the target but also for the aggressor, who may be unprepared for the repercussions—both emotionally and literally—of such fervent interactions.

> The issue with cyberbullying is that kids offend that way
> when they would never ever say those things to their face.
> And I think those kids are the ones who are most likely to
> have empathy and regret and feel really bad about themselves
> later on for what they did and the role they played in it. And
> that worries me, because I think we have a new group of kids
> who have now perpetrated and don't really know what to do
> with that fact (L. Scott, personal communication, March 8, 2008).

Certainly the propensity for expressing oneself online rather than in face-to-face interactions is not only an adolescent problem. In fact, many of the program directors admitted to struggling with this in their own lives during the interviews. With the continuous development of new communication technologies, the danger of anonymous, out-of-control aggression seems to increase accordingly. Perhaps this is all the more reason to follow Power Up's example and teach respect for others at all costs, regardless of the means available to communicate.

Finally, in deciding what kind of role cyberbullying should play in a curriculum for bullying prevention, Jeni Rinner of Youth Matters asserts that assessing the

uniqueness of the behavior is not the only consideration. Schools incorporating the Youth Matters curriculum are often located in low socio-economic neighborhoods, where computer access is limited. Rinner explains that in certain schools she has worked in, few families actually own a computer in the home. This fact obviously decreases the likelihood that internet bullying plays a large role in the daily lives of students in these communities. As an economic indicator, therefore, cyberbullying activities may not be relevant in areas where technology is less available. Additionally, Rinner asserts that access to computers may also indicate cultural sensitivities. She says with regard to using the internet as a form of communication, for some Hispanic students "It's less important culturally than other things" (J. Rinner, personal communication, March 24, 2008). Rinner's point emphasizes that there are several factors, including socio-economic indicators, cultural diversity and locale, which need to be addressed meaningfully before cyberbullying lessons are deemed appropriate for inclusion in a bullying prevention curriculum.

Of course, as cyberbullying becomes the subject of more research, additional variables may emerge to suggest how to best incorporate this issue into an existing behavior modification or character education program. At the time of this writing, the aforementioned interview respondents highlight several important and new perspectives on how bullying prevention practitioners can evaluate the role of cyberbullying in their programs. Although the need to continually upgrade prevention curricula according to changing mediums and evolving behavioral trends is well established—the amount of emphasis placed on each new medium through which bullying is delivered is relatively subjective. However, to write off evolving communication trends among youth entirely

runs the risk of ignoring unique characteristics inherent in these means that may be dangerous in the short- or long-term. In the case of cyberbullying, these characteristics include online anonymity and the speed of message transmission. New potential dangers for both victims and perpetrators must be studied further in order for the technological aspect of bullying to be effectively addressed.

Popping traditional notions of confidentiality. Many bullying prevention coordinators face the dilemma of how to handle confidentiality when conducting a program with a group of students. Given the sensitive nature of the topic of bullying, especially among groups of friends within a given class or school group, the ability to ensure that privacy will be respected for all participants is considered to be an important tenet of any group-based prevention setting. Based on the idea that it is essential to create a safe space in which young people to discuss their experiences with bullying, establishing a confidentiality rule is considered one of several basic guidelines for this type of program (Patton & Morgan, 2002).

Bullying prevention program directors in the present interview sample all observed the need to protect confidentiality. Nearly all of them reported establishing a confidentiality rule of some sort during the initial session of their respective programs. Among other ground rules, the need to ensure confidentiality for all participating youth was a common pattern across each program in the sample. When asked what a typical confidentiality ground rule sounds or looks like, many of the program directors answered: "What is said in this room stays in this room." As this line was repeated throughout the interviews, it became clear that this was the standard confidentiality statement used by most bullying prevention programs in the present sample.

One director, however, had a unique approach to the need for establishing a code of confidentiality among participants in her program. Lisa Scott of Power Up described a problem with the typical confidentiality agreement of "What is said in this room stays in this room." For one thing, Scott recognized that she herself could never live up to the mantra. As a program director, she is responsible for writing grant reports about the program where she will have to characterize the content of her curriculum, including conversations with participants. Additionally, in working with fellow staff members at her organization, Scott described the desire to be able to explain a potentially difficult situation with a participant and get advice on how to handle it from a trusted colleague. In a refreshingly self-reflective tone she says, "So I'm going to be constantly breaking the rule…And I can't do that if we have codified that level of confidentiality" (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008).

Scott's insight into her own responsibility to live up to the rules she demands of her students is not only stirring because it has not been expressed in literature on safety issues around bullying prevention, but it also highlights a vital point about the importance of adult modeling. Directors, teachers and funding organizations of bullying prevention programs cannot expect to earn the trust and respect of their students if they themselves do not live up to the same standards they have established in the group. Without this level of solidarity with one's participants, practitioners cannot expect youth to take the message of bullying prevention seriously.

Humbly, however, Scott admits that the need to abide by ground rules established in the group is not the only reason for her belief in needing to modify the standard confidentiality agreement so common among other bullying prevention programs.

Recognizing the need for students to be able to generalize outside the room in which the prevention program takes place, she points out that the statement "What is said in this room stays in this room" may actually send the wrong message. Because it limits the contexts in which students are permitted to bring up program-related ideas, the declaration may actually be working against programs' goals to encourage youth to apply lessons learned in various venues where bullying occurs. Contrary to the idea that anything learned or shared in the group is not appropriate to repeat in other settings, Scott says bluntly "We need them to be able to take it out of the room and not keep it in the room" (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008). But one must ask, how is it possible to simultaneously ensure students' confidentiality and privacy while encouraging them to apply lessons learned in the program in other environments?

One suggestion is offered by program director Trish Madsen of Step Up. In her curriculum, youth are invited to share activities and ideas gleaned from program sessions, but not to repeat specific identifying comments, stories or names of individuals. She says, "Although it's an honor to be in this type of program, they are not some sort of elitist group. They can't relay what somebody says in this group, but they can share with others activities that they did. I don't want them saying 'I can't tell you what we're doing in here,' like some sort of secret society. I think that's important" (T. Madsen, personal communication, March 18, 2008). Nuanced rules such as this one, where the differences between conceptual lessons and personal information are distinguished, are positive steps toward implementing realistic confidentiality agreements. However, Scott's program takes the issue even further.

She calls it "bubbleicious," and says the concept was developed organically from participants within Power Up groups. At the start of each Power up program, the program facilitator will say to the participants:

> When we close this door, we create a bubble. And when we are in the bubble we are 'bubbleicious.' So, what we want is for nothing to be said outside the bubble that will pop the bubble. So we are going to take this out, and we are going to share it with our friends and our families, and I'm going to share it with my funders. But we're not going to do anything that will compromise our ability. And if anybody does do something that pops the bubble, or starts to let the air out, or just blows it in a weird way, we are going to deal with it in this room. Can we agree to that (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008)?

The premise of "bubbleicious" is that there is a sacred boundary between what occurs during the Power Up program and every day life, hence establishing a sense of safety and security inside the program. However, that boundary is not absolute; it is porous and delicate—like a bubble. Participants are therefore encouraged to take and apply the strategies they have learned during program sessions in other settings, but not in a way that will endanger the viability or safety of the group. "Bubbleicious" is therefore a user-friendly metaphor youth use to understand the special nature of group sharing, as well as the need to apply Power Up concepts in other contexts.

As an additional benefit, Scott describes that since implementing the 'bubbleicious' approach as an alternative to traditional rules about confidentiality, she has observed youth using the term in their daily vernaculars as a way to remind each other about living according to the ethics of Power Up. "So now they are saying, 'We're not being bubbleicious,' and putting in those little code words as an example of things we

encourage for replacement activities" (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008). It seems 'bubbleicious' has been adopted by participants in the Power Up program as a realistic way to communicate with one another on a child-to-child level, rather than using terminology that belongs to adults. Scott continues, "The whole bubbleicious thing was reported to us when we did our post-group survey. They were like, 'Oh yeah when we're trash talking one of us will look at the other and go, 'we're not being bubbleicious.'"

The true beauty in this approach is that it provides youth with a language relevant to their own culture with which to discuss bullying and its negative consequences. In turn, this allows young people to hold each other accountable for their actions without a perpetual dependence on the presence of on-looking adults. A positive alternative to traditional confidentiality ground rules in bullying prevention groups, the advent of "bubblecicious" offers a groundbreaking new best practice deserving of emulation.

Discussions with program directors on the topic of confidentiality revealed that while most adhere to the standard motto of "What is said in this room stays in this room," there are a few who have broken out of this mold and created new and effective systems to protect students. One reason is the aforementioned inability for adult program leaders to themselves live by this traditional mantra. Additionally, an effective confidentiality statement must allow for the students to generalize their learning to the outside world. Because it takes into account these two points, and also due to the fact that it recognizes the importance of using youth-friendly language in prevention programming, Power Up has demonstrated the capacity to effectively reinvent confidentiality within the context of bullying prevention.

From service-learning to service-leading. The National Service Learning

Clearinghouse defines the practice of service-learning as "a teaching and learning

strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to

enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities"

(National Service Learning Clearinghouse, 2008). Long believed to be an effective

method for instilling positive character traits in young people, service-learning has

become a common practice among character education programs. However, interview

data from this research have revealed that a new twist on this educational strategy may

hold the key to driving home important concepts in bullying prevention.

At least three programs in the present sample demonstrated the efficacy of

instructing participating youth to share what they learned about bullying prevention with

either younger peers or adult authorities in their community. Dubbed by one director

"Service-*Leading*," this practice serves several constructive purposes. First, Youth

Matters program director Jeni Rinner says the opportunity to act as a leader among peers

serves as a reward for students who have successfully completed the curriculum. In

Youth Matters, which works in schools, students are asked to develop a project idea at

the end of each module and then distribute that project creatively to the rest of the school.

"A lot of them would go make posters that talk about part of bullying and put them up

around the school, or want to go teach or read a bullying story to the littler kids" (J.

Rinner, personal communication, March 24, 2008). By sharing the new information they

have received, Youth Matters students proudly reinforce their newly gained knowledge

while touching others in the process.

Step Up's Trish Madsen invites her all-female students to share their lessons in a slightly different way. During the last session of Step Up, participants invite their female role models to the class to hear about the program and describe their accomplishments. Through interactive, participatory activities girls allow their mothers, sisters and other female mentors to experience some of the Step Up activities that have affected them most. "That's fun to see the adult women walking around with labels on their forehead or talking about how they felt when they were in school. Or sometimes the girls ask the adults in the room about current things, like, 'have you ever fought with a co-worker?'…So it makes it more current" (T. Madsen, personal communication, March 18, 2008). By sharing their learning with older, influential women, participants in Step Up not only practice their new skills, but also receive confirmation from individuals to whom they look for guidance.

The Girls Scout's Power Up program also has a strong service-leading component. Here, participants put together a list of people in positions of influence at their school or site that they believe could benefit from learning more about bullying. These individuals then get invited to attend the last day of class where students do a presentation that includes lessons students have learned during the program, but also covers information authorities need to know to improve the community as a whole. For example, one of the defining characteristics of this presentation is that it includes an explanation of the "safe spaces map." This map is a tool used in the Power Up program and others to help students identify locations in their school or community where they are likely to experience bullying, as well as places youth feel safe from bullying. "So its really excellent feedback for the principle to know that she may have an issue in that

room that she's not really aware of" (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008).

Sharing this knowledge is not only valuable and empowering for students, but provides

direct benefit to adult authorities who have real power to implement policies and

practices that can improve safety.

Scott lists several motivations for incorporating the service-leading aspect into her

program. First, the practice allows students the opportunity to reinforce their learning by

explaining it to others. Scott says, "It's really an awesome exercise of speaking truth to

power. We know that you don't really know that you know something until you've

taught other people. So this closes that loop for them in a meaningful way" (L. Scott,

personal communication, March 6, 2008).

Additionally, during the course of the presentations, participants incorporate their

recommendations for what the administration needs to do to make the school a better

place. This, explains Scott, reframes students in the faculty and staff's minds as partners

in bullying prevention, instead of the problems that need to be solved. "I've seen some

really amazing things happen in that, where a really problem kid will stand up and say

'this is what you need to do to fix this' and it's really powerful to see them take that

ownership when there was a perception that they weren't at all invested in their school"

(L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008).

While service-learning remains a staple of many character education programs,

service-leading may be the new frontier for bullying prevention educators. As a field,

bullying prevention relies heavily on the need to empower the silent majority of youth to

intervene in uncomfortable, or even harmful, social situations. Therefore, an exercise

combining leadership and community service constitutes appropriate training. In

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alternative circles, the use of this educational strategy is also called "servant leadership" (Greenleaf, 1970).

An 'inbox' for bullying. It is clear that many of the program directors interviewed in the sample struggled somewhat with the idea of how to solicit reports of bullying behavior from their participants. Some admitted they avoid asking students about their experiences with bullying at all, preferring to just focus on lesson content and solutions. Refusing to shy away from what can be a difficult issue, Lisa Scott of Power Up offers participants an innovative way to disclose this type of information.

After coming across research showing that a large number of children actually disclose their abuse in Santa Claus letters (Dalenberg, Hyland & Cuevas in Eisen, Quas & Goodman, 2002) Scott instituted a new system called "Tager Mail" at the Girl Scouts' summer camp where Power Up is offered. Scott explained that Tager is the name of the Girl Scout's camp mascot; he is a mythical creature and a serves as a sort of phenomenon at Girl Scout's camps worldwide. Thinking that if children were likely to disclose their abuse to Santa Claus, Scott supposed they might also be willing to disclose their social problems to Tager. Of course, this would only work for youth below a certain age who were willing to indulge the idea that Tager was a real figure, and a trusted one at that. "You have to tap into that moment of suspension of belief and belief in magic, which is good" (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008), she says. Campers write to Tager with problems they are experiencing at camp, and in turn, the camp director reads every letter and writes back—courtesy of Tager—with some tips and tools for how to make friends or handle conflict.

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Scott reports that since instituting the Tager Mail concept, youth frequently use the system to report problems such as not having any friends, or that they are disliked and bullied by other campers. Most importantly, however, the camp director can connect with each troubled camper, making them feel heard, valued and less isolated. Additionally, the camp director can exercise the opportunity to alert that particular camper's counselor that there may be a problem in her unit that needs to be addressed in a meaningful way. The challenge has been to make sure this message is communicated to counselors without alerting campers that staff has been intercepting their messages to Tager, or that Tager is in fact a fabrication. The program's success and creativity lends itself to the fact that Tager Mail represents an innovative, practical response to established research on childhood reporting practices, bullying assessment and ongoing bullying intervention techniques.

Do as I say. While almost all of the sample's program directors recognized the need to suggest replacement behaviors for students learning to avoid bullying as a way to convey anger, express resentment or assert dominance, one articulated a particularly helpful reason for doing so. Dianne Senn, author of Bullying in the Girl's World shared that offering substitutions for behavior—such as counting to 10 when feeling intensely upset, thinking of the long-term consequences of sending a destructive email or defending a friend who is being teased rather than remaining silent—are not just helpful tips. These suggestions may actually help young people solidify their understanding of what it means to avoid bullying behavior.

Senn says it is important to substitute negative behavior with new ways of thinking. Citing brain research, she asserts that replacement behaviors come to mind

more easily than instructions based on avoidance. "If you say 'don't run down the hall,' that's what's going to be stuck in the brain, and they will run. We need to actually use the words 'I need you to walk.' And then that's going to stick in the brain" (D. Senn, personal communication, March 19, 2008).

Originally alluded to by well-known psychologists as "positive reinforcement" (Ferster & Skinner, 1957), this concept has been expanded upon in more recent research in the area of brain science. Researchers using fMRI machines to evaluate brain responses (van Duijvenvoorde, Zanolie, Rombouts, Raijmakers & Crone, 2008) purport that compared with adults, eight- to nine-year-old children performed more inaccurately after receiving negative feedback relative to positive feedback. Such data suggests that cognitive control areas are differentially engaged during negative and positive feedback across various stages of development.

When applied to the practice of bullying prevention, this concept gains even more traction. Senn and others agree it is not enough to merely instruct youth not to participate in certain activities, such as name-calling or exclusion. Rather, it is necessary and important to provide young people with strategies to use in place of these behaviors, such as "I-statements." As Senn pointed out, these ideas help youth access alternatives quickly and easily when needed.

Of course, there are reasons aside from cognitive accessibility to promote replacement behaviors within the context of bullying prevention. Jeni Rinner of Youth Matters points out that her program attempts to avoid encouraging the type of peer-to-peer judgment that can result from turning down a friend's invitation to participate in negative behaviors, such as bullying. She says there are real and dangerous outcomes for

youth who try to confront their peers on higher moral terms. Instead, Youth Matters encourages students to respond to such solicitations by giving alternative explanations. For example, "'No, I don't want to go. I'm not interested [in that negative behavior], but if you want to go—fill in the blank with something you and your friends do—that would be great'" (J. Rinner, personal communication, March 24, 2008). Rinner believes these types of responses keep relationships intact while helping kids to dissent.

Viewed as a replacement behavior available for youth to implement in difficult bullying situations, the suggestions help students incorporate bullying prevention realistically and in their daily lives. Most members of the present sample recognize that avoiding negative behavior at all costs is simply not a strategy that is likely to work.

Youth-driven programming. Perhaps most important in any bullying prevention program is the idea that methods and lessons are truly addressing issues most relevant to youth. The best way to do this is to make sure that lesson content is based largely on input from the target population, rather than adult perceptions about the social lives of youth. Two programs demonstrated that they have a strong emphasis on youth feedback and youth-driven program content.

The most obvious and profound example comes from Power Up, which was created in direct response to one Girl Scout's personal experience with bullying. Scott tells the story of meeting a Girl Scout named Ashleigh nearly three years ago, who had come to her with a troubled past. First she explained that her father and younger brother had died within one year of each other several years prior, ripping apart her nuclear family. Scott responded by offering support in the form of programming that Girl Scouts had developed to address grief-related experiences. However, this was not the troubled

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past for which Ashleigh was seeking help. Next she reported horrific experiences with

physical and sexual abuse at the hand of a male babysitter her mother had hired to watch

the two remaining children while she worked 16 hour days to support the family. Scott

normalized her upset and referred her to programs and resources offered by Girl Scouts to

address abuse and other traumatic experiences. Again, Ashleigh retorted that this was not

the source of her hardship. She continued by saying she was about to have knee

replacement surgery and was terrified of the after effects. Scott offered support in the

form of Girl Scouts programming and resources for this. But this was also not the reason

for the girl's suffering. Finally, Ashleigh began to describe the true source of her upset,

which was a problem with bullying from her peers at school. Scott says:

> Her real problem was that after school the kids would line
> up by the dumpsters and throw garbage at her and her sister
> as they walked home from school. She had a bathroom stall
> that was her stall, and it was the only stall that she could use
> because no one wanted to use a stall that was contaminated by
> Ashleigh. She had a nickname every year, they'd come up
> with something new and disgusting. The nickname when I met
> her, when she was 13 years old, was 'raw meat.' That was
> Ashleigh's problem, and we had nothing to deal with that problem
> (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008).

While of course Ashleigh's pain is likely a cumulative combination of grief, trauma and

uncertainty, her story is proof that adults with the best of intentions cannot always predict

or identify the source a child's upset. Each chapter of Ashleigh's life seemed to be of the

utmost relevance to a professional such as Scott, but it was Ashleigh who enlightened the

Girl Scout authorities that for her, bullying was the most significant and germane

problem she faced. Scott asserts, "Maybe I'm naïve, but I think getting raped when

you're seven years old should be your problem…But my perception of the big, adult

problem was not what was killing her literally. It was how the other kids treated her. I needed to deal with that" (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008). Because Ashleigh spoke up to the people around her with the power to make a difference and told them what were the most relevant and pressing issues to her, Power Up came into being.

Scott asserts that many of the prevention-based programs currently offered to youth are focused on problems that are adult-driven. For example, anti-drug, anti-smoking, anti-dropout, anti-pregnancy and anti-obesity programs for youth are extremely popular. Addressing these issues is thought by adults to be one of their key responsibilities in shaping healthy lives of youth. Although these issues are serious and important, they are largely problems that adults believe youth have, not issues youth have expressed concern over. "These are not the problems that kids were coming to me with. When I ask kids what their issues are, it really is like, 'yesterday we were best friends and today she won't talk to me, and I don't know what to do'" (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008). Consequently, Power Up has taken the issues most pertinent and frequently experienced among youth and created a curriculum that holds relevance for them.

It is worth noting that in addition to the way in which it serves as a response to important issues in youth culture, Power Up also proves it is youth-driven in other arenas. The program's emphasis on "realistic defenses" illustrates its commitment to remaining continually relevant in youth culture. For example, Scott described a common controversy within the field about what type of defense a bystander should perform when intervening on behalf of a bullying victim. She says there are times in Power Up when she might advocate for a very low-risk defense, which some would argue is not good

enough. These detractors hold that every bystander intervention should be profound, never implied or weak. However, Scott rightly contends that program directors and other adults who work with youth have to come to kids where they are. "Any defense is a good defense," she says. She goes on to argue that in order to maintain credibility with its participants, Power Up advocates for interventions that won't make kids feel silly, out of context or fearful of repercussions.

> People say kids should come up and make these incredibly high-risk defenses….And you think, if they did that in a hallway at school, they would get their butt kicked. It would take it from a small infraction to massive physical bullying for no apparent reason, other than encouraging an incredibly ineffective defense… And let's face it, if I don't like you that much, I may not take the highest-risk defense for you. And maybe that's ok. And maybe a high-risk defense isn't always incredibly necessary…So I think putting the defenses in a really relevant way and having it resonate with the kids is really key (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008).

Scott clearly understands the importance of allowing youth to put the concepts emphasized in Power Up into their own language and make individual decisions about what kind of intervention is most appropriate. This not only makes the program more understandable and relevant, but also increases the likelihood that the skills taught in Power Up will actually be used when needed.

Additionally, one could argue that low- and high-risk defenses are entirely relative depending on the child. While some would feel that intervening at all is extremely risky, others have a higher threshold for taking chances. Scott notes:

> I can give a stronger defense than a lot of people can in part because of my training, but also because of my personality. Someone who is a strong introvert may not be able to…for them a high-risk defense is saying anything out loud. If they were the primary target of that bully last year, anything they say could be a

high-risk defense. So we need to honor people where they are (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008).

It should be clear that Power Up is incredibly focused on addressing the issues most important to the youth it serves and to remaining relevant within the cultural context of its participants. Using research to its advantage, the program has demonstrated a commitment to putting research into practice for the ultimate benefit of students.

Summary. The aforementioned approaches to bullying prevention represent the most innovative and positive contributions to the field of bullying prevention revealed in this research sample. Innovative approaches to the topics of empathy, cyberbullying, confidentiality, service, positive reinforcement and reporting practices provide practitioners and academics alike with an up-close view of how programs are applying known literature in tangible ways. As fresh and effective approaches to what are best described as average best practices in the field, these key concepts serve as positive examples to other programs. In addition, it may be useful to highlight the fact that the Power Up program, developed and directed by Lisa Scott, appears repeatedly in each of these top categories. This is no mistake, as the Power Up program consistently proved to be a successful example of effective and inspired bullying prevention.

Additional results

The aforementioned findings represent the key practices among currently operating bullying prevention practitioners with regard to their grounding in recent literature and creative implementation. Other contributions to the field bullying prevention were also revealed in the interviews. When analyzed in comparison with the criteria outlined in Table 2, the following findings emerged:

➢ Mentorship—when defined as the use of older, influential individuals to help instill important values—was used effectively by several programs in the present sample, including Words Can Heal, Salvaging Sisterhood, Don't Laugh at Me and Power Up.

➢ The importance of follow-up after the completion of a bullying prevention program was emphasized by Trish Madesen of Step Up, who said, "I try to make an effort to visit every single school where I do a Step Up program a couple months later to see how the girls are. And I also feel like I'm kind-of a visual reminder to them to make sure that they are Stepping Up at their school and not getting back into those same old behavior ruts" (T. Madsen, personal communication, March 18, 2008). Few other programs emphasized the need to stay in touch with former participants.

➢ The utility of incorporating bullying prevention values into other academic subjects was noted by Youth Matters program director, Jeni Rinner and Diane Senn of Bullying in the Girl's World. For example, Senn said she encourages teachers in her school to incorporate topics from the curriculum into a variety of subjects. "The teachers have a set of activities that they go back and do in their classrooms that are more related to academics, like writing prompts, reading children's books to prompt discussions…and so they're not actually teaching the main lessons to them, but they are supporting it. Because when they [children] hear it from all angles, it makes more of an impression" (D. Senn, personal communication, March 19, 2008).

- Replacing negative bullying behaviors with other, more positive examples of interaction through the use of memorable phrases or acronyms was provided by several programs in the sample, including Don't Laugh at Me, Power Up, Step Up and Youth Matters.

- With regard to the unique bullying behavior of girls, one program director noted that there is a relationship between bullying and body image. Trish Madsen of Step Up asserted that emphasis on appearance and relational aggression are inextricably linked.

- Bullying prevention practitioners often note the difficulty they face in encouraging youth to speak to an adult about a bullying incident, when students have been raised in a culture that discourages them from "telling" on others. Programs that emphasize the difference between tattling and telling confront this problem head-on, teaching that "Tattling gets someone *into* trouble, while telling gets someone *out* of trouble." They include: Salvaging Sisterhood, Power Up and Youth Matters.

- While the importance of terminology has been addressed in a previous portion of this thesis, several program directors cited the carefulness with which they approach semantics as part of their program. Words Can Heal, for example, prefers not to use the term "bully," fearing that it labels youth—rather, the word perpetrator is used in their curriculum guide. Alternately, Step Up avoids using the word "victim," since it may imply a sense of learned helplessness—its program director prefers the terms "target" which can move. Finally, Bullying in the Girls' World adds the word "behavior" to the term "bullying," saying it

removes the person from the action as to communicate that it is bad behavior, rather than bad personhood.

➢ Finally, only one program director from the sample articulated the difference between bullying and conflict. In her refusal to classify bullying as a type of conflict, Dianne Senn of Bullying in the Girls' World echoes scholars who point out that the power asymmetry inherent in bullying automatically prevents traditional conflict resolution techniques from being applied in these situations.

Summary. Practices reflective of research on mentorship, follow-up, integration into academics, behavioral replacements, body image, tattling, terminology and conflict all indicate that program directors do take into account basic literary resources when developing their curricula. However, unlike the "Gender-Specific Benefits" and "New Best Practices," these findings have been classified as relatively 'additional results'— meaning they are relevant to the overall research question, but ultimately offer less evidence of innovation or major contributions to current field practices.

Potential harms

In documenting various trends and contributions to the bullying prevention field, not all of the approaches described by program directors in the sample proved to be entirely positive. Two main themes emerged in this vein: lack of practitioner awareness of the dangers of inflicting psychological damage as a result of exposure to in-depth discussions about bullying for previous victims, a phenomenon known as "revictimization;" and victim-focused programs that aim to curb bullying by training youth how not to be targeted. According to literature and scholarly advice on both of

these topics, several programs in the present sample demonstrate less than desirable results.

Intervention-induced revictimimzation. Few programs seemed aware of the risks of intervention-induced revictimization. This phenomenon occurs when a former target of bullying finds him or herself in an environment in which their experience of trauma resurfaces, causing them to become uncomfortable, upset or in some severe cases, re-traumatized. Research on the potential for re-victimization clearly shows that interventions bringing together offenders and victims, such as restorative justice programs, have the capacity to increase victim fears of recurrent abuse and replicate their trauma (Braithwaite, 2002). This is due to the fact that in severe cases, victims of bullying can acquire Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a result of their experience, putting them at greater risk for inner-directed anger that results in psychological revictimization (Felblinger, 2008). Similarly, Braithwaite and Parker (1997 in Strang, 2002) suggested that interventions may fail victims especially when facilitators have not taken seriously the harm caused by perpetrator abuse. These risks have been documented even in highly structured, pre-screened and restorative environments. The bullying prevention programs in this sample, by contrast, are substantially less structured, often allowing bullying perpetrators and victims to co-mingle in a so-called "prevention" setting. Given that the programs' facilitators rarely know which students in their group have been victimized and by whom, it is surprising that many of the respondents in the present sample seemed to let the concern for psychological revictimization remain unexplored.

In some cases, this lack of concern stemmed from a genuine sense of ignorance about the issue. "I'm kind-of confused because I feel like revictimization has always been there because it means it's happened to the victim more than once. Right? Is that what you're saying? Because that's what I think makes it bullying is that it's repetitious" (T. Mitchell, personal communication, February 27, 2008). Here, the program director of Words Can Heal demonstrates her misunderstanding of the term "revictimization," interpreting it as repetitive harassment. This confusion highlights a potentially dangerous possibility—that students in her program could be experiencing repeated exposure to trauma as a result of the program itself. While it is true that the presence of ongoing abuse is a hallmark of bullying behavior, this program director's comments reveal that her understanding of trauma literature dangerously limited. Rooted so strongly in "prevention theory" and the "character education" paradigm, the Words Can Heal program inadvertently ignores the possibility that its students have already experienced serious bullying.

To her credit, upon learning the intended psychological meaning of "revictimization" during the course of the interview, the director demonstrated true concern for the problem and expressed the desire to incorporate it into Words Can Heal. She said, "It's good to think about all this stuff because I wonder if there are kids who sit in Words Can Heal and are quiet because they're like, 'Oh crap, it happens to me a bunch.'" One gets the impression that Mitchell and her staff would be concerned about this issue if they were aware of it. The fact that the Words Can Heal program is based primarily on diversity theory, rather than psychological or bullying data, may explain why this concept has been largely absent from their training and curriculum content.

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Alarmingly, lack of awareness about revictimization in bullying prevention programs has the potential to put participants involved in the curriculum at risk of experiencing psychological trauma as a result.

It may be understandable that Mitchell lacks awareness about the danger of revictimization among youth in the Words Can Heal program, given that her background is primarily is in general character and urban education. This makes it all the more disturbing that those programs that purport a strong psychological base, such as Salvaging Sisterhood, have not incorporated safeguards against revictimization. When asked how she would proceed were she to learn about a participant with a history of victimization from bullying, Taylor emphasized that it is not an issue she would address with particular intensity. "Well, we'll talk about it, but the group is pretty solution focused. Like, 'Lets move forward, we'll discuss this, but let's move forward'" (J. Taylor, personal communication, February 29, 2008). The desire to continually "move forward" is commendable in some ways, but dangerous in others. While it is important for youth to learn not to wallow in past experiences of pain or subjugation, their victimization cannot and should not be bypassed, even for the benefit of others in the group who have not undergone similar experiences. To do so risks not only lack of psychological closure and resolve, but reinforces the individual student's perception that he or she is unimportant and unworthy—the same message communicated by the original bully (Braithwaite, 2002; Braithwaite & Parker, 1997 in Strang, 2002).

Most programs in the sample talked about dealing with experiences with bullying on an individual basis, typically by taking students aside and talking to them privately about their history, including the programs Youth Matters, Bullying in the Girl's World

and Don't Laugh at Me. Some program directors whose sessions are taught by classroom

teachers said they refer youth who admit to being victimized by a bully to the school

counselor for help. While these are first-steps toward appropriate and helpful responses,

few respondents described how the content or approach of their program sessions would

change to accommodate victims and prevent them from being revictimized during group

discussions or activities.

It is helpful to provide an example of one program from the sample that *has* made

a concerted effort to consider the risks posed by revictimization and how to avoid

accidentally constructing dangerous situations. Referring back to her belief that bullying

prevention must be approached as if every child in the group has experienced it, Lisa

Scott of Power Up says avoiding additional trauma is always on her mind. In groups

where she has confirmed that there is a history of bullying among participants she says

her facilitators' approach changes drastically to accommodate those individuals.

> There are games we might choose not to play because
> they are just too high-risk. I would do a lot more check-in,
> because check-ins also help build empathy. So there are
> significant things that I would do in building culture and
> things like that. But there's no way, like if a problem were
> identified half-way through, no way we would just keep going
> on like we were and just act like it's the elephant in the room
> (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008).

Scott's attention to the potential for revictimization highlights several key

strategies program directors may use to avoid negative outcomes. First is the decision to

omit participation in games or role-playing in which bullying takes place. Even if

students are placed in reversed roles (target is played by a perpetrator and/or bully is

played by a target) the potential to 're-live' a traumatic experience may be too

overwhelming for some individuals. Second, Scott makes clear her intention to 'check-in'

with her program participants regularly. This practice may help facilitators stay abreast of

the emotional status' of participants as well as promotes empathy among group members.

Finally, program directors hoping to avoid revictimization during either a prevention or

intervention program would do well to emulate Scott's willingness to alter lesson plans or

agendas should an issue arise during a given session.

Despite the disturbing trend that most program directors are weakly educated

about protecting their participants from re-traumatization during exposure to their

programs, several interview respondents at least acknowledged that role-playing posed

particular danger for youth if placed in the "wrong" role. For example, Kathleen Keelan

of Bully-Proofing Your School described her program's philosophy that facilitators

should avoid putting known bullies in the role of the bully and should never pair up

known bullies and victims in role plays with one another. "I think that's probably the

place in our program where it would be monitored, so they are not re-traumatized," she

said (K. Keelan, personal communication, February 28, 2008). Others articulated a

similar commitment to role-playing exercises where bullies and victims could potentially

find themselves face-to-face. However, one must ask if role-play scenarios are the only

danger zone for victims of bullying.

While several program directors expressed a desire to discuss youth's past

experiences with bullying during the group, such as Joyce Bignell of Don't Laugh at Me

and Lisa Scott of Power Up, few others seemed willing to directly ask youth about their

pasts and subsequently adjust program sessions according to this risk. Step Up program

director Trish Madsen was somewhat entertained by the idea that facilitators would take

time to address individuals' histories with bullying. She said, "No. I don't mean to laugh, but I could like literally do that with every single girl in the room. All of them want to tell me their stories. I'm not trying to trivialize them, but I don't think there's a girl in Step Up that couldn't tell me a personal story" (T. Madsen, personal communication, March 18, 2008). Madsen's intent is to communicate the extensiveness of bullying being experienced by average middle school students and to highlight facilitators' limited ability to address each individual case.

Concerns about capacity are well taken. However, one might also reflect that the widespread exposure to bullying observed by these professionals ought to provide even more justification for the need for youth to be protected from further exposure to harm. The fact that youth are commonly traumatized by bullying may not stand up to scrutiny when questions about revictimization arise. Experts on revictimization believe the presence of even one victimized individual calls for the careful consideration of how to avoid revictimization through intervention techniques (Braithwaite & Parker, 1997 in Strang, 2002). Tactics such as managing contacts with former aggressors and teaching self-advocacy strategies have been cited by experts in trauma and avoiding revictimization (Kubany, Hill & Owens, 2003).

All about the victim. Victim-focused bullying intervention strategies have been frequently used and touted by researchers. In general, these programs are aimed at providing victimized children of bullies with skills needed to prevent or stop victimization as well as improve psychological damage that has been inflicted as a result of bullying. However, the present interview data revealed that such programs may suggest a potentially harmful trend. Some experts have been critical of programs with an

orientation toward adjusting the behavior of targets of bullying, saying that such programs should be spending time dealing with the perpetrator or bystanders who allow the behavior to occur in the first place. For example, in their work on domestic abuse, Dobash and Dobash (1979) note that "…the idea of provocation is a very powerful tool used in justifying the husband's dominance and control" (p. 168). Such experts have pointed out that victim-focused bullying prevention has the potential to blame the victim and stereotype students. Additionally, victim-focused intervention strategies may be linked with decreased empathy responses in social or cultural environments wherein blame is often attributed to victims. Brigham (1991) found that if a bystander believes a victim is responsible for bullying, empathetic responses are reduced and often replaced by anger. Victims with reputations for being provocative for bullying are therefore less likely to attract empathy from fellow students, therefore reducing the likelihood for peers to intervene in bullying on their behalf.

Program directors who stated that their programs aim to train youth in avoiding victimization, teaching better social skills, practicing appropriate responses to bullying and preventing provocation are likely operating under the assumption that if victims could deter bullying themselves, the problem would be solved. Such practitioners have their hearts in the right place, but perhaps not necessarily their lessons plans. As one bullying expert puts it, "Victim-focused programming blames the victim and stereotypes students. This singles out students and encourages peers to label individuals as bullies or victims. Labelling [sic] then creates a pattern of behaviour [sic] for that student which they cannot break" (Craven, Finger & Yeung, 2007). In other words, because victim-oriented bullying prevention imagines that all victims benefit from the same interventions

techniques and skill-building lessons, the implication is that every target is alike. This forces young people with very different bullying scenarios into a conglomerate category, discounting unique circumstances and making potentially false assumptions about individuals.

As an example, Kathleen Keelan of Bully-Proofing Your School describes her program's goal as teaching school-aged children how to avoid getting caught in a perpetrator's need for power. She says, "We teach them…self-protective skills, resiliency….We teach our kids not to be good victims" (K. Keelan, personal communication, February 28, 2008). Keelan goes on to discuss what her program refers to as a "provocative victim," one who lacks certain essential social skills and therefore invites negative attention from others. Similarly, Jeni Rinner of Youth Matters points out that her program aims to mitigate risk and enhance protective factors that are associated with being victimized. She states, "It [the program] was really kind of avoiding bully victimization…I think it was, again more of the victimization or bystander roles…Like if you're the one being victimized, thinking of a way to respond to that and still feel like you're not being lame" (J. Rinner, personal communication, March 24, 2008).

Indeed, such skills and techniques are valuable to have, but the question remains: *Do victim-oriented bullying prevention techniques belong in the realm of so-called bullying prevention programs, or should these lessons be reserved for teaching in the context of social skill building programs not associated with bullying?* Both Power Up and Salvaging Sisterhood provide excellent examples of separating the two concepts and protecting students from negative messages associated with victim-focused programming. Scott notes, "Whenever I look at you and say with my bullying prevention

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hat on, 'you know you are kind-of annoying, you really are,' what I'm saying is 'it's your fault.' And that's what you're going to hear; it may not be my intention at all" (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008). Scott's point is supported by experts who tout the dangers of victim-oriented bullying interventions (Craven, Finger & Yeung, 2007; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Brigham, 1991). She continues, "At that moment, my place is to say 'you are fine the way you are. This is not your problem, this is their problem. They're not fine. They're doing something wrong. It's not you."

Additionally, research that surveyed students on which bullying prevention approaches were most favored by them reported that victim-focused models were not enough to curb bullying (Crothers, Kolbert & Barker, 2006). The study reported that victim-oriented bullying prevention efforts would be strengthened in their efficacy by increasing the role of teachers and other adults in such programs.

Regardless of the language facilitators use to communicate with students, programs that are highly focused on adjusting the characteristics or responses of victims are inadvertently sending the wrong message. The communication victims likely internalize is that it is not okay to be unique and that who they are is not socially acceptable. Ultimately, sending this message does not accomplish educators' goals to help shape strong and self-actualized human beings; rather, it encourages victims to internalize self-blame. Supporting research asserts that such messages are dangerous because victims with self-blaming tendencies are particularly vulnerable to adjustment problems such as loneliness, social anxiety and low self-worth (Graham & Juvonen, 1998).

The alternative involves separating the cause of bullying prevention—which should arguably be focused on avoiding perpetrator behavior—from social and coping skill-building. Scott says this is why the Power Up program is focused so strongly on the bystander. Her program teaches, "I don't care how annoying this kid is, do they deserve what happened to them? Is it wrong? Is it wrong for anyone to be treated like that? Yes? Then ok, what are we going to do about it? Because doing nothing is not an option" (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008).

In a similar vein, Salvaging Sisterhood author Julia Taylor recommends using a completely different curriculum when girls in her middle school seem to be in need of improved social skills, including those who frequently get victimized by other students. Taylor's skill-building curriculum, entitled G.I.R.L.S. (Girls In Real Life Situations), covers common social issues confronted by most adolescent females, such as healthy identity formation, body image, life choices, communication, emotion, self-esteem, stress, problem solving skills and reflection. It also provides a section called "Check It Out," which lists books and resources they can go to for slightly touchier topics such as body image, self-injury and depression. Taylor says as a school counselor, she views this curriculum as a more appropriate way to help students with social awkwardness or other skill deficiencies to develop stronger self-concepts and more positive ways of interacting with others. "Groups like that, where girls who might be socially awkward have a chance to feel wanted, can feel like they're included in something or groups that hone on skills" (J. Taylor, personal communication, February 29, 2008). The interview data reveal that many program directors teach social skills and conflict avoidance techniques to victimized youth while carrying the title of bullying prevention specialists. Perhaps the

best way to effectively communicate the need for victim-oriented skill-building is for adults to first remove themselves from the role of bullying preventionist. This way, one may communicate the need for such changes under a distinctly different title.

Summary. Although these bullying prevention programs have been designed to ensure the safety and protection of youth, the programs themselves may not be able to fulfill this promise as long as potentially harmful practices are embedded within them. From risks for revictimization to bullying prevention philosophies where the victim is the central instigator, research reveals that not all bullying prevention curricula are equally safe. The aforementioned programs may be engaging in practices that research and other literature suggests could be harmful. Despite the copious positive contributions these programs have made to the practice of bullying prevention, little can be done to ensure their intended effects while potentially harmful observances are in place. The preceding comments regarding potential harm are intended to communicate caution to these and other practitioners hoping to improve their programming.

Conclusions

In general, the present research findings reflected the major themes found in the field's existing literature. Support was garnered for bullying prevention programs with several key elements. First, those that address numerous modes of aggression including indirect, direct, verbal, physical, relational and emotional were found to be most relevant to today's youth experiences with bullying. Second, programs that place value on gender differences as they relate to bullying styles were able to provide groups of students (males and females) with information most useful to them, rather than losing credibility with groups of students for whom the program was not pertinent. Third, personnel and

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programs that view bullying as distinct from normal conflict were able to provide students with a better understanding of the unique dynamics associated with this behavior. Such programs were found to transcend potential harms that accompany a naive approach to the power imbalance inherent in bullying. Fourth, the need to measure outcomes and call for participant feedback was recognized by several strong programs in the present sample.

Fifth, programs that encourage the development of emotional skills, as well as those that teach bystander intervention techniques, accurately reflect recent literature by addressing some of the primary variables associated with bullying behavior—empathy and the presence of the peer group. Sixth, high performing programs also demonstrated the need to pay close attention to issues of physical and psychological safety by creating an environment protected from trauma, including revictimization. By assuming all members of the participating group may have been affected by damaging bullying interactions in the past, such programs are able to design their prevention curricula in such a way that both protects and appropriately attends to youth who are struggling with psychological trauma as a result of experiences with bullying. Seventh, programs that concentrate on the roles of the perpetrator and bystander rather than the victim are best poised to advocate for bullying prevention, rather than social or communication skill-building. Intentional avoidance of victim-oriented bullying prevention techniques was associated with programs that conformed to research alerting practitioners of these dangers. Eighth, those programs that incorporate positive role models and/or mentoring into their curricula were reflective of research advocating for such practices. Finally, the use of "service-leading" as a way to reinforce concepts from the program offered a

unique and effective method to prevent bullying in a given setting. Known in the literature as "servant leadership," this method of imparting bullying prevention values draw from alternative paradigms.

This research also revealed some interesting outcomes with regard to the issue of gender-specific bullying prevention programs. Contrary to what was expected, gender-targeted and single-sex programs did not correspond with the overall best practices of bullying prevention curricula. Programs noted as demonstrating "best practices" constituted both coeducational and gender-specific programs. However, several program directors demonstrated thoughtful understanding of the need for gender-specific and single-sex bullying prevention. Specifically, those directors who had studied literature on indirect aggression were more likely use this knowledge to both protect and empower their primarily female constituencies. These program directors highlighted the importance of several key issues. First, several interviews pointed to the importance of safety as it relates to a single-sex environment, puberty and verbal aggression. Because adolescent bullying is often exchanged verbally during a volatile time for youth undergoing puberty, the sexual connotation of peer-to-peer insults often has gender-based implications. Therefore, addressing these issues in a single-sex environment may provide the only secure method for ensuring psychological safety and candid dialogue. Additionally, directors with an understanding of the social, neurological and cultural factors that affect adolescents' modes of aggression tended to be those who advocated strongly for a gender-targeted approach to bullying prevention. Reflecting research pointing to the influence of adolescent group mentality, brain function, socio-economic experiences and ethnic norms, programs that take such variables into account are likely to be gender-

specific. The relationship between gender and the facilitator's ability to identify with youth's experiences of bullying was also brought up in several interviews, indicating that directors of gender-specific bullying prevention programs are concerned about the affect of facilitator's own experiences on participants' absorption of information. Finally, it is important to note that in many cases, those program directors working with single-sex curricula recognized the unique challenge with regard to perpetrator accountability in instances of indirect aggression.

Additionally, potential harms were revealed by programs that not only omitted these positive contributions from their curricula, but in some cases, also implemented practices and procedures capable of exposing youth to risk. By overlooking literature documenting the threats of psychological revictimization and research revealing the dangerous messages sent by bullying prevention programs with strong orientations to victims' need for skill-building, some curricula may not be providing the level of safety and protection they believe. As students of medicine first learn to promise "Do no harm," so too should any professional who works with young people in possible turmoil.

Discussion

This study has attempted to document the most positive aspects of general

bullying prevention programs according to existing research as well as highlight aspects

of certain programs that explore benefits of a gender-specific approach to bullying

prevention for youth. Documentation of this sort augments both academic and practical

understanding of how gender and bullying are interrelated, and how both of these topics

can be addressed through prevention-based programming. To the author's knowledge,

this is the only study to this date that has attempted to examine the benefits of bullying

prevention across such a wide range of approaches.

The intent of this assessment is to provide both practitioners and scholars with

information that will better inform their work on the subject of bullying prevention.

Program directors from a variety of sponsoring organizations, including nonprofit

institutions, schools, extra-curricular organizations and youth groups can use the findings

of this study to better understand the theory and research behind their work, thereby

lacing their activities with concepts that are reflective of current literature in the field.

Additionally, those who interact with youth on a daily basis can often get caught

repeating activities again and again. Practitioners may use this thesis to broaden their

horizons and incorporate fresh bullying prevention concepts into their curricula.

Likewise, those researchers and scholars who study bullying and aggression

among youth would do well to learn from the practical experience of program directors

who administer these programs regularly. Many respondents shared that they often

encountered logistical and pragmatic limitations during the course of program

implementation, which academics would do well to consider when advocating for particular approaches. All readers of this thesis should come away with a greater commitment to bridging the gap between theory and practice in the field of bullying prevention among youth.

Nonetheless, this research is not devoid of its own limitations. By virtue of the qualitative nature of interview data, information gleaned from this research is subject to interpretation. Similarly, each program in the included sample presents unique characteristics not studied closely in this research, such as program cost, training, size, teaching method, number of participants, age of participants and geographic location. It is conceivable that in addition to those variables specifically assessed during this study's interviews, these and other diverse variables play a role in the efficacy of each individual program.

Recommendations

Several additional ideas revealed in the interview data provide useful information not only for current program directors of existing curricula to incorporate, but also for the creators of future bullying prevention programs to consider as they develop new programs. The following section will include recommendations gleaned from the experiences and insights of the present research sample that ought to be applied to future programs hoping to address this topic.

Interdisciplinary wisdom

Given all of the themes that have been gleaned from interviews with the present sample of bullying prevention program directors, it would seem that practitioners are working to the best of their abilities given the limitations of their respective disciplines, and in some cases, their ignorance of current literature. For the most part this is true— program directors in bullying prevention are working hard to offer advantageous programming based on the research most easily accessible to them given their background and experiences. However, few have had the opportunity to interact with many of their colleagues from outside programs to learn what other approaches are doing well and what theories these other approaches are based upon.

In this vein, one notable finding that was revealed during the course of the interviews relates to the wide variety of theoretical foundations upon which the programs in this sample are based. When asked what theory or model each program in the sample

was developed around program directors cited theory from numerous fields of study—everything from cognitive adolescent psychology to prevention theory to socio/cultural development to aggression literature to thoughts on feminist empowerment to diversity research and contact theory to, of course, bullying research.

For example, program director Dianne Senn is a school psychologist with an Education Specialist degree. Given this background, she named the "rational-emotive" paradigm as the foundation of her program, Bullying in the Girl's World. One of the fundamental premises of this school of thought is that humans generally do not merely get upset by exposure to adversity, but also through how they construct their individual understanding of reality (Dryden & Neenan, 2003). In contrast, Step Up program director Trish Madsen said her program is most strongly aligned with research on female aggression and female competition, citing the research of Rachel Simmons (2002) and Susan Shapiro Barash (2006).

Words Can Heal is based largely on diversity literature, while Youth Matters' program director Jeni Rinner characterized that program's foundation as being rooted in the "social developmental model" and on prevention research. The social developmental model asserts that the most important units of socialization, family, schools, peers, and community, influence behavior sequentially. Positive socialization is achieved when the opportunity to work to build skills within each unit when those with whom they interact consistently reward desired behaviors (Hawkins & Weis, 1985). Salvaging Sisterhood's theoretical background seems to be in developmental psychology as well as empowerment theory. Finally, Lisa Scott of Power Up cited bullying researchers such as Wendy Craig (2002) and Barbara Coloroso (2004). This revelation—that bullying

prevention programs are rooted in such a wide range of theoretical literature—holds potential for a unique opportunity.

Were bullying prevention specialists to meet in an interdisciplinary setting with experts from related fields of study, a large amount of useful information could be shared. A case study is helpful in understanding how this would benefit practitioners and theorists alike. In 2005, the National Endowment for Financial Education—a financial literacy organization for consumers—did something innovative. Believing they might learn as much or more about how to effectively conduct their work from other disciplines than from their own industry, the organization's staff reached out to experts in other fields hoping to learn new things. This was the first symposium ever to combine financial educators with leaders from other fields, who included experts from neuroscience, change theory, behavioral economics and psychology (*Closing the gap between knowledge and behavior: Turning education into action*, 2005). Topics covered everything from the implications of brain biology on behavior, effective programs that incorporate change theory, observed economic behavior versus traditional economic theory and the psychology of an individual's money personality. Though they were from vastly different backgrounds, all of the participants came together with a common goal of finding new ways to help move people toward taking positive actions to create a healthier financial future. This cross-pollination resulted in a surplus of ideas whereby participants developed a list of exciting next steps: defining research and resources needs, proposing changes and new directions for financial educators and identifying relationships that need to be leveraged to build more effective financial literacy programs.

Similarly, leaders in the bullying prevention and intervention field would do well to communicate with each other, and others further outside the genre of bullying and aggression research, to glean new insights into their own work. One imagines a conference or symposium similar to the one hosted by the National Endowment of Financial Education, where experts in bullying prevention meet and learn from leaders in criminal justice and delinquency, neuroscience and behavior change, character education, leadership development, service-learning, developmental psychology, gender studies, body image, identity formation, violence and abuse prevention, group mentality and competition, interpersonal communication, trauma studies and so on.

This research, along with pre-established literature on the topic, has shown that there is no one path to bullying, victimization or intervention. Therefore, to be successful in shaping healthy and competent young people, bullying prevention practitioners must be willing to consider the benefit of incorporating a diverse range of philosophies and techniques into their programming. This may mean expanding the field's perceived theoretical boundaries. Much wisdom and growth can result from such interdisciplinary communication.

From the top

Once ready for implementation most bullying prevention programs will work with any school, after-school organization or youth-oriented audience that has an interest in applying their curricula. It is useful to consider how the present sample's programs compare to one another in terms of access to a youth constituency and the consequent variance in administrative support. These are important issues since they have direct implications for the consistency with which programs can be applied, the capacity to

build trust between facilitators and participants, the ability to track long-term progress, the ability to garner wide-spread support from other caregivers and the need to deliver reinforcing messages—just to name a few. Some programs, such as Bully-Proofing Your School and Bullying in the Girl's World, find themselves in a position of having an entire student body at their fingertips, as is the case with many similar programs which function within whole-school models. In these situations, the curricula are often mandatory for all students and enjoy widespread support from teachers, staff and administration.

Other programs in the present sample reside outside the school setting as independent nonprofit organizations offering bullying prevention as one of their services or consulting organizations for a plethora of prevention programs for diverse clientele. Don't Laugh at Me and Youth Matters are examples of these programs, which must rely on the permission of administrators and occasionally certain faculty members to permit them to enter schools and consume class time. As one can imagine, these programs are often met with less-than-receptive attitudes, as teachers, school authorities, after-school caregivers and other youth workers have multiple items already on their primary agendas. In the cases where access to youth is granted, these external organizations may only get the chance to work with a limited number of students—say just the sixth grade or only Mrs. Smith's classes or only for one term.

Then there are those programs that exist somewhere in the middle of the school-based and non-school-based continuum. These programs are identified and taught by individual teachers or school counselors within a given community, but are also not typically offered to a widespread collection of students at that site. Rather, participants for such programs are often hand-picked by the facilitator and it is the facilitator him- or

herself who oversees the program's implementation. Little high-level support is provided for these programs. Salvaging Sisterhood is an example of one such program since it is often picked up by a school counselor but no other staff or faculty are involved in its implementation. Alternatively, Words Can Heal is a program of the Boys and Girls Club of Metro Denver, an after-school program provider with a ride range of goals. Participating students self-select to participate in the program and have little concrete incentive to remain involved through completion.

The main purpose for reviewing these differences is to emphasize the fact that each of these programs enjoys extremely different levels of support from administration and staff. Several program directors expressed dissatisfaction with the level of school- or community-wide backing for their curricula, saying top-down support is infinitely valuable yet rarely enjoyed. The interviews revealed there are several reasons for such high-level and widespread support in a youth environment.

First, students are extremely perceptive about the feelings and opinions of the adults around them. If there is disagreement between a teacher and principle, students often sense the climate of conflict. Trish Madsen has observed this in her work with local middle schools in Kansas City. She says, "And girls watch every move especially their female teachers make. Every move. They see the dirty looks, they see when all the teachers isolate one teacher" (T. Madsen, personal communication, March 18, 2008). When faculty cannot present any program—but especially one about bullying prevention—in solidarity with their colleagues, their messages about the need to have respect for peers and to learn conflict resolution techniques are empty.

Madsen notes that in this work, adult modeling often means reconciling with one's one own struggles with bullying in order to have maximum efficacy. "I think the outcomes for the girls is going to be really good if the adult woman has really taken a look, been introspective and seen how her relationships with other teaching staff and other women, the good and the bad, are being dealt with" (T. Madsen, personal communication, March 18, 2008). Because adults' feelings and behavior are easily perceived and internalized by students, the lessons ingrained in the program gain credibility if it operates within an environment that reinforces its principles. It is therefore critical for bullying prevention program directors, even if their base exists outside of the school or organization at which they are presenting their program, to work fervently to garner support and solidarity from local administrators, colleagues and staff.

Additionally, facilitators of bullying prevention curricula who enjoy this type of top-level, administrative buy-in report having more positive interactions and outcomes with students. For example, Don't Laugh at Me program director Joyce Bignell has implemented her curriculum in schools with little authoritative support as well as in schools whose principals and staff are wholly committed to the program. She asserts that there is a marked disparity between her experiences with students in these different environments. "At some schools I know I'm just being tolerated…They [the school administrations] think, 'they're coming in and telling us what we need to do at our school,' and they don't like it." She continues by contrasting these negative experiences with others in schools where the decision-makers have decided to embrace the Don't Laugh at Me Program and what it has to offer. "In a school where you have faculty and administrators who support it, you see the students respond to it as well. They say 'ok

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yeah, this is what we're about'…It becomes part of the climate...It makes a difference"

(J. Bignell, personal communication, February 22, 2008). This climate that Bignell refers

to is the key component that can make or break a program's success. When students

understand that all of the trusted adults in their world are on the same page, that they will

all support one another and the students in the pursuit of a safe and comfortable place for

kids, the culture of the establishment changes for the better—along with student behavior.

Thus, while bullying prevention program directors often do not have control over

the level of support they might receive in a given school or organization, they can work

to educate their communities about the importance of modeling and solidarity. If a

program director is going to enter an environment where the values of their program are

not being embraced, they should be cognizant about the consequences of this and work to

the best of their ability to gather a cadre of committed adults at that site who will work to

defend and accommodate the program. Positive results from students will likely follow.

The prevention-intervention model

Surprisingly, program directors often struggled with questions asking them to

differentiate between a "preventative" approach to bullying—where lessons are designed

to prevent a problem from occurring among youth, and an "interventionist" approach—

where lessons are designed to address existing problems in a community where bullying

is a known problem. Some began to answer by bluntly stating that they found this to be a

difficult or controversial issue, while others adamantly named a single category.

However, many of these decisive responses would be contradicted later in the context of

answering other interview questions.

The present findings reveal that most bullying prevention programs, whether they know it or not, are operating under a combination of both. This thesis will name the model "prevention-intervention." As described by program director Lisa Scott, bullying prevention is one of a few educational subjects that, because of both its prevalence and tangibility, cannot operate in a prevention-only vacuum. She explains, "Because there's going to be some girl in that group, who got targeted that day. And for her, it's an intervention moment. And because our program is very bystander focused, the likelihood is that we are intervening with bystanders *and* preventing it for the future" (L. Scott, personal communication, March 6, 2008). Scott's use of terminology clearly communicates that for her, Power Up cannot be only preventative or interventionist—it is always both.

Those programs that purport to be prevention-only may be putting students at risk for revictimization by exposing potentially victimized students to the topic of peer abuse without appropriate safeguards. Therefore, all bullying prevention programs may benefit from adopting the assumption that their programs serve as a form of intervention for participants who, unbeknownst to the facilitators, are currently experiencing these situations, or have experienced them in the past. Bullying literature supports this as a central tenant of effective bullying prevention, as it influences youth's perception of safety both physically and psychologically (Davis, 2005; Patton & Morgan, 2002). Incorporation of the prevention-intervention principle of programming around bullying is a precautionary measure used by some practitioners to insulate vulnerable students from harm. The result of incorporating intervention techniques into the bullying prevention

model is likely to curb bullying behavior while protecting those most at risk of revictimization.

Summary

This thesis has attempted to determine which aspects of currently utilized bullying prevention programs can be considered most effective according to contemporary research on the topic of coeducational and gender-specific bullying. Nearly every program in the current sample made some attempt at applying scholarly research on the topic to their programs. Exceptionally positive contributions to the field, where bullying prevention program directors demonstrated a unique application of current research, are represented in the list of "New Best Practices." Additionally, the present thesis has documented the particularly positive contributions of programs whose practices reflect insight into what is known about gender differences in bullying—showing that the activities of gender-specific curricula are supported by research as long as programs also oblige the criteria established for general, coeducational bullying prevention programming (See Table 2).

The present study can be used by those interested in bullying and its prevention in a variety of ways. First, this thesis has attempted to draw a closer connection between existing literature from a variety of disciplines (including bullying, gender and aggression, prevention programming, single-sex education, etc.) and the practice of bullying prevention with coeducational and gender-specific audiences. Future programs intending to address this topic could glean useful information from the present interview data about how to create curricula that are reflective of current research and scholarly knowledge. The upshot of shortening this connection would not only standardize the

practices of a philosophically scattered field, but may also increase program efficacy by doing so.

Second, the present list of "New Best Practices" can be used both to develop new programs and improve existing ones. The thought of a single bullying prevention curriculum incorporating all of the positive aspects contributed by each of the present sample's approaches would have the potential for extraordinary outcomes. When used together, these best practices could form an effective foundation for those interested in studying and practicing bullying prevention and behavior change.

Finally, academics, researchers and scholars interested in bullying prevention could benefit from the candid experiences shared by current program directors about their triumphs, challenges and overall experiences working with youth around this issue. As those on the front-lines of raising healthy and conscientious young people, these individuals have enormous insight to offer. In addition, the sharing of their experiences may pave the way for future research studies aimed at exploring nuances, patterns, administrative constraints and practitioner experiences in bullying prevention.

Research on the topic of best practices in bullying prevention and awareness of gender differences in both prevention and intervention programs must continue. Future studies might investigate the effect of other variables on program efficacy, how participants in these programs perceive their experiences and the extent to which the direct involvement of adolescents' families in bullying prevention programs affects participants' learning outcomes.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A
Coeducational Interview Questions

Program History/Theoretical Foundations
1.) What would you consider your program's primary goals/objectives?

2.) Do you have a mission statement for the program? What is it?

3.) Some literature differentiates between a "preventative" approach to bullying, where lessons are designed to prevent or stop a bullying problem from occurring among all youth, and an "interventionist" approach, where lessons or activities are designed to address existing problems with bullying in a community where it is a known problem. Given these differing definitions, in which category would you place your own program?

4.) What other bullying prevention programs are you aware of that might be similar to your own approach? Or, is there a particular program that yours is based on?

5.) If I wanted to do more reading on the particular approach to bullying taken by your program, is there a theory I could look at?

Participants

6.) What population has your program identified as its primary target audience? Why?

7.) How are youth brought into the program?

8.) What, if any, screening processes have you implemented for incoming participants? What makes an ideal participant?

9.) What do you think about the idea of leading a group of all bullies, all victims, all bystanders, or youth who constitute a mix of all these groups?

10.) What kinds of records are kept about the population served? Can you share the demographic background of the youth participating in your program?

Program Administration
11.) Who teaches the program?

-What percentage of your staff is volunteer or paid staff? How do you use volunteers, if at all?

12.) What do you look for in people who teach your program?

13.) Please describe the training process for staff/volunteers leading program sessions directly with youth.

14.) In addition, does your program utilize mentors (by mentors I mean older, influential individuals, such as alumni of the program, brought in to serve as positive role models)? If so, how?

15.) Please describe the structure/schedule of your program. (How often do youth meet, what are the average group sizes, how long do sessions typically last, how many sessions/meetings are there in the curriculum?, etc.)

Program Content

Safety

16.) Some people have said that when it comes to bullying prevention programs, special care should be taken to ensure that spaces are safe for young people (both psychologically and physically) to talk about their experiences with bullying and other related issues. In what ways does your program create safe spaces for youth to discuss their experiences with bullying?

Gender philosophy

17.) How does your program value gender differences in bullying? Have you observed differences in the ways girls and boys bullying one another?

18.) Some research has shown that girls and boys are prone to different forms of aggressive behavior, with girls being more indirect (gossip, exclusion) and boys being more direct (verbal confrontations, physical fighting). Have you observed this? How does your program take into account both indirect and direct forms of bullying?...You've made this observations, but does your program make that distinction?

19.) Experts tend to say that there are several forms of bullying common among adolescents—for example social, verbal, relational, and physical bullying. What, if any, forms of bullying does your program most try to combat/address?

20.) Do you approach all bullying in the same way? If not, how do you handle each type of bullying differently? Are the solutions different? The suggestions you are offering?

Reinforcement versus consequences

21.) If you had to take a rough estimate, what percentage of your program focuses on avoiding negative behavior, versus promoting positive behavior?

22.) Do you offer rewards for good behavior? Can you explain why or why not? If so, how does it work?

23.) One strategy to promote behavior change in young people emphasizes the need for youth to avoid negative behavior at all costs, while another encourages youth to develop alternative behaviors that might be used as replacement behaviors. In your program, are students mainly encouraged not to display certain types of unwanted behavior or are alternative behaviors suggested? If the latter, what kinds of things do students come up with?

Promoting healthy relationships

24.) How does your program address the issue of relationships in general (by relationships I mean friendships, romantic relationships, etc.)?

25.) How does your program tackle the inevitable occurrence of conflicts *within* friendships or cliques, as opposed to conflicts between non-friend peers?

26.) How would your program respond to an adolescent's fear that conflict ends friendships/relationships?

Social skill-building: general

27.) What are the three most important skills adolescents who complete your program will learn to apply?

28.) When dealing with an adolescent who may be socially deficient, what steps would your program take to try to teach or impart better skills for social proficiency?

Social skill-building: empathy

29.) Do role-playing exercises play a part in your curriculum? Are these important to the concepts your program is trying to impart? Why or why not?

30.) Do narrative-based exercises play a part in your curriculum (memoirs, video stories, autobiographies, current events of bullying, etc)? Why or why not?

31.) In turn, some experts have proposed that the capacity to experience empathy is an important step in bullying prevention. Do you agree with this?

32.) Can you gives me some examples of activities in your program that are designed to build empathy?

Cyberbullying
33.) We know that technology plays an important role in the lives of adults and youth alike in today's world. However, the use of electronic information and communication devices such as e-mail, instant messaging, text messages, mobile phones, pagers and defamatory websites to inflict harm upon others constitutes a new form of aggression called "cyberbullying" that can be used by youth to bully one another.   Drawing on your experience or observations, how much cyberbullying is going on among adolescent youth?

34.) How does your program address the problem of cyberbullying, if at all?

35.) What kinds of trends or differences have you observed about the type of youth who tend to engage in cyberbullying (gender differences, etc.)? Do you think adolescent girls and boys are equally likely to use employ cyberbullying as a tool of aggression? Why or why not?

36.) Does cyberbullying belong in the realm of bullying prevention programs in schools or otherwise? Why or why not?

Avoiding re-victimization
37.) Exposure to further harm during an attempted intervention or discussion is always a risk when dealing with individuals who have been victimized by a crime or social injury, including bullying. To avoid this, is usually considered important to have some basic knowledge about individuals' previous experiences. In working with youth, how do you know if bullying has occurred?

38.) If you learn about an individual in your program who has been a victim of bullying are they treated differently from the rest of the group? What is done to address his or her history of victimization?

39.) What steps does your program take to prevent re-victimization within the group?

Individual versus group blame
40.) Schools and organizations have very different policies with respect to how they hold individuals accountable for incidents of bullying. Some emphasize accountability of a single individual, others focus on groups or cliques such as 'queen bees,' while others focus on determining how the target might have played a role in being victimized. How is the concept of 'blame' addressed in the context of your curriculum?

41.) On a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being the least and 5 being the most) how much does your program emphasize finding the person(s) who are responsible for starting a particular bullying event?

42.) In a scenario in which a nasty bit of gossip has been spread through a large group of youth and many students are involved, how is blame addressed? How would your program explain what needs to happen in this situation?

43.) In your view, who should be held responsible for bullying (the individuals most affected, the clique leader(s), parents, the target, the community)?

Feedback loop
44.) How much input do youth have into the topics being raised or the direction of the discussions?

45.) Has any type of participant feedback loop been employed as a way to learn about your program from the youth's perspective? Example: Do former participants have an outlet to express their feelings/ideas about the program after they have been through it? If yes, what have you learned from this feedback?

Outcomes
46.) What, if any, changes in behavior have you yourself observed among the youth in your program as a result of their completion of the curriculum?

47.) What do you think are the most effective aspects of your program, in terms of behavior change on the part of participating youth?...what activities are most effective in prompting behavior changes?

48.) What kinds of reports about your program have you heard from others (parents, colleagues, teachers, school counselors, etc.) regarding specific behavior changes in the youth who have participated in your program?

49.) Do you conduct a formal evaluation of your program to assess the degree of behavior change in your participating population? Why or why not? If yes, what does the evaluation involve and what are some of the major findings?

Gender-Specific Interview Questions

Program History/Theoretical Foundations

1.) How did your program get started?

2.) What would you consider your program's primary goals/objectives?

3.) Some literature differentiates between a "preventative" approach to bullying, where lessons are designed to prevent or stop a bullying problem from occurring among all youth, and an "interventionist" approach, where lessons or activities are designed to address existing problems with bullying in a community where it is a known problem. Given these differing definitions, in which category would you place your own program?

4.) What other bullying prevention programs are you aware of that might be similar to your own approach? Or are there existing programs you based yours on during development?

5.) If I wanted to do more reading on the particular approach to bullying taken by your program, is there a theory I could look at?

Participants
6.) What population has your program identified as its primary target audience? Why?
.
7.) How are youth brought into the program?

8.) What, if any, screening processes have you implemented for incoming participants? What makes an ideal participant?

9.) What do you think about the idea of leading a group of all bullies (queen bees), all victims, all bystanders, or youth who constitute a mix of all these groups?

10.) In what kinds of settings is your program primarily used? With extra-curricular groups, in classrooms, after-school programs, etc.

Program Administration
11.) Who teaches your program? Paid staff, volunteers?

12.) What kind of background or qualities would you like facilitators of your program to have? Are there characteristics it is important for them to have before leading this program?

13.) Please describe the training process for staff/volunteers leading program sessions directly with youth.

14.) In addition, does your program utilize mentors (by mentors I mean older, influential individuals brought in to serve as positive role models)? If so, how?

15.) Please describe the structure/schedule of your program. (How often do youth meet, what are the average group sizes, how long do sessions typically last, how many sessions/meetings are there in the curriculum?, etc.)

Program Content

Safety

16.) Some people have said that when it comes to bullying prevention programs, special care should be taken to ensure that spaces are safe for young people (both psychologically and physically) to talk about their experiences with bullying and any other related issues. In what ways does your program create safe spaces for girls to discuss their experiences with bullying?

Gender philosophy

17.) Your program is clearly gender-specific. Can you tell me what has led you to believe that a different approach to bullying prevention is needed for each gender? If so, how do you see gender-specific programs as being essential?

18.) Experts tend to say that there are several forms of bullying common among adolescents—for example social, verbal, relational, and physical bullying. What, if any, forms of bullying does your program most try to combat/address?

19.) Do you approach all bullying in the same way (such as the categories listed above)? If not, how do you handle each type of bullying differently?

Reinforcement versus consequences
20.) If you had to take a rough estimate, what percentage of your program focuses on avoiding negative behavior, versus promoting positive behavior?

21.)   Do you offer rewards for good behavior? Can you explain why or why not? If so, how does it work?

22.) One strategy for promoting behavior change in youth emphasizes the need to avoid negative behavior at all costs, while another encourages youth to develop alternative behaviors that might be used as replacements. In your program, are students mainly encouraged not to display certain types of unwanted behavior or are alternative behaviors suggested in their place? If the latter, what kinds of things do students come up with?

Promoting healthy relationships
23.) How does your program address the issue of relationships in general (by relationships I mean friendships, romantic relationships, etc.)?

24.) In addition to conflicts between peers or classmates, how does your program tackle the inevitable occurrence of conflicts *within* friendships or cliques? …talk more about acquaintance conflict or conflict between friends?

25.) How would your program respond to an adolescent's fear that conflict signals the end of a friendship?

Social skill-building: general
26.) What are the three most important skills adolescents who complete your program will learn to apply?

27.) When dealing with an adolescent who may be socially deficient or awkward and is getting picked on for that reason, what steps would your program take to try to impart better skills for social proficiency?

Social skill-building: empathy
28.) Do role-playing exercises play a part in your curriculum? Are these important to the concepts your program is trying to impart? Why or why not?

29.) Do narrative-based exercises play a part in your curriculum (memoirs, video stories, autobiographies, current events of bullying, etc.)? Why or why not?

30.) Some experts have proposed that the capacity to experience empathy is an important step in bullying prevention. Do you agree with this? To what extent do participants in your program have the opportunity to build their empathy skills?

Cyberbullying
31.) We know that technology plays an important role in the lives of adults and youth alike in today's world. However, the use of electronic information and communication devices such as e-mail, instant messaging, text messages, mobile phones, pagers and defamatory websites to inflict harm upon others constitutes a new form of aggression called "cyberbullying" that can be used by youth to bully one another. Drawing on your experience or observations, how much cyberbullying is going on among adolescent youth?

32.) Does your program address the problem of cyberbullying, if at all? Why or why not?

33.) Do you think adolescent girls and boys are equally likely to use employ cyberbullying as a tool of aggression? Why or why not?

34.) Does cyberbullying belong in the realm of bullying prevention programs? Why or why not?

Avoiding re-victimization
35.) Exposure to further harm during an attempted intervention or discussion is always a risk when dealing with individuals who have been victimized another person. To avoid this, it is usually considered important to have some basic knowledge about individuals' previous experiences. In working with youth, how does your program assess participants past experiences with bullying?

36.) If you learn about an individual in your program who has been a victim of bullying or other social trauma, are they treated differently from the rest of the group? What is done to address his or her history of victimization?

37.) What steps does your program take to prevent re-victimization within the group?

Individual versus group blame
38.) Schools and organizations have very different policies with respect to how they hold individuals accountable for incidents of bullying. Some emphasize accountability of a single individual, others focus on groups or cliques such as 'queen bees,' while others focus on determining how the target might have played a role in being victimized. How is the concept of 'blame' addressed in the context of your curriculum?

39.) On a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being the least and 5 being the most) how much does your program emphasize finding the person(s) who are responsible for starting a particular bullying event?

40.) In your view, who should be held responsible for bullying (the individuals most affected, the clique leader(s), parents, the target, the community)?

Feedback loop
41.) How much input do youth have into the topics being raised or the direction of the discussions?

42.) Has any type of participant feedback loop been employed as a way to learn about your program from the youth's perspective? Example: Do former participants have an outlet to express their feelings/ideas about the program after they have been through it? If yes, what have you learned from this feedback?

Outcomes
43.) What, if any, changes in behavior have you yourself observed among the youth in your program as a result of their completion of the curriculum?

44.) What do you think are the most effective aspects of your program, in terms of behavior change on the part of participating youth?

45.) What kinds of reports about your program have you heard from others (parents, colleagues, teachers, school counselors, etc.) regarding specific behavior changes in the youth who have participated in your program?

46.) Do you conduct a formal evaluation of your program to assess the degree of behavior change in your participating population? Why or why not? If yes, what does the evaluation involve and what has it found?

Informed Consent Form

THESIS RESEARCH

Assessing the relative contributions of differing bullying prevention programs.

You are about to participate in a study that will seek to assess the relative merits of various approaches to bullying prevention among adolescent youth. This study is being conducted to fulfill the requirements of a graduate degree thesis, conducted by Master of Arts candidate Rena Dulberg. Results will be used to determine the relative merits of a wide variety of approaches to bullying prevention. Rena can be reached by phone at (720) 231-0407 or by email at rgardens@du.edu. This project is supervised by professor of conflict resolution and director of the Center of Research and Practice, Dr. Tamra Pearson d'Estree, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208. Dr. d'Estree can be reached by phone at (303) 871-7685.

This interview is designed to take place in two installments, lasting no more than one hour each. These separate interviews can be combined if you find that option to be more convenient. Interview questions will pertain to your professional experience in the field of bullying and your organization's approach to bullying prevention. Participation in this project is strictly voluntary. The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort you are free to discontinue the interview at any time. We respect your right to choose not to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

With your permission, the researcher would also like to tape-record the interviews in order to have an accurate and detailed record of what was said. If you wish for your identity or the identity of your organization to be kept confidential, you may simply indicate this desire prior to commencing the interview. In this case, only the primary investigator and faculty supervisor will have access to your name and the name of the organization for which you work. Audio tapes will be destroyed after they have been transcribed, which is anticipated to be within two months of completing the interview. Only descriptive information about you (gender, etc.) will be retained with the research records.

However, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. Although no questions in this interview address it, we are required by law to tell you that if information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, it is required by law that this be reported to the proper authorities.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the interview, please contact Dennis Wittmer, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-2431, or Sylk Sotto-Santiago, Office of Sponsored Programs at 303-871-4052 or write to either at the University of Denver, Office of Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

You may keep a copy of this page for your records. Please sign the below if you understand and agree to the above. If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher any questions you have.

I have read and understood the foregoing descriptions of the study called Assessing the Relative Merits of Coeducational and Gender-Specific Bullying Prevention Programs. I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form.

__ I would like my identity and my organization to remain confidential.
__ I give permission for my identity to be revealed in the final report of this research.

Signature _____ Date _____

___ I agree to be audiotaped.
___ I do not agree to be audiotaped.

Signature _____ Date _____

___ I would like a summary of the results of this study to be mailed to me at the following postal or e-mail address:

THESIS RESEARCH

Assessing the Relative Merits of Gender-specific and Coeducational Bullying Prevention Programs.

Primary Investigator will read:

Hello, my name is Rena Dulberg. I am a graduate student from The University of Denver conducting research for my thesis about bullying prevention programs. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview.

Interview questions will pertain to your professional experience in the field of bullying and your program's approach to bullying prevention. Please know that your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. This means that you do not have to participate in this telephone interview unless you want to, and you are free to skip any questions you do not want to answer. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

With your permission, I would also like to tape-record the interviews in order to have an accurate and detailed record of what was said and so that I don't have to take notes so fast. I will do this by conducting this interview by speakerphone in a private office and putting a tape recorder nearby to record the content of our conversation. Is this okay with you? **YES or NO**

If you wish for your identity or the identity of your program to be kept confidential, please indicate this to me. In this case, only my advisor and I will have access to your name and the name of the program with which you work. Audio tapes will be destroyed after they have been transcribed, which is anticipated to be within two months of completing the interview. Only descriptive information about you (gender, type of program, etc.) will be retained with my records. **YES or NO**

However, should any information contained in this study, including your identity, be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena. Although no questions in this interview address it, we are required by law to tell you that if information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, it is required by law that this be reported to the proper authorities.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the interview, please contact Dennis Wittmer, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-2431, or Sylk Sotto-Santiago, Office of Sponsored

Programs at 303-871-4052 or write to either at the University of Denver, Office of Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

Do you have any questions? **YES or NO** (If no, continue. If yes, do not continue until all questions have been satisfactorily answered.)

Do I have your permission to begin asking you questions? **YES or NO**