

A **Routledge** FreeBook

UNDERSTANDING BULLYING

FROM SCHOOL TO
THE WORKPLACE



BullyingUK

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Statement from BullyingUK



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Foreward from Bullying UK

In support of Anti Bullying Week 2016 we hope you find the below FreeBook from Routledge and Bullying UK informative and useful. Overcoming bullying can be one of the hardest things to do. At Bullying UK we often speak to adults who bear the scars of childhood bullying. They may have trust issues, low self-esteem and self-worth. The effects of bullying can determine someone's behaviour and actions. For those who have experienced bullying, it may be difficult to do the everyday things we take for granted, such as meeting new people, trying out new experiences and challenges and more.

Our most recent anti-bullying survey of November 2016 found that almost 9,000 respondents highlighted that bullying remains a key area of concern for young people, pupils, parents and education professionals and continues to impact negatively on those it affects. There is still a need for stronger partnerships between parents, pupils and teachers to tackle child experiences of bullying in and beyond the school. There are many myths surrounding bullying and some of these myths suggest a big deal is being made out of nothing when that is not the case. We believe it is important to address bullying whether its name calling, social bullying between friends, in the workplace, at school or in the neighbourhood.

It is not uncommon for people to experience some form of verbal bullying at some point in their lives. Many young people we speak to hear insults on a daily basis when they are in school or in a social setting. It is difficult to understand why someone would want to use insults towards others. They might be doing this to impress their friends or build up some type of reputation. They may have been bullied themselves and to deflect the attention or because they are angry, they go onto bully someone else. They might be having problems at home or at school so they are taking this out on someone else

Being socially bullied is also known as covert and relational bullying as it is designed to humiliate and damage someone socially. It includes

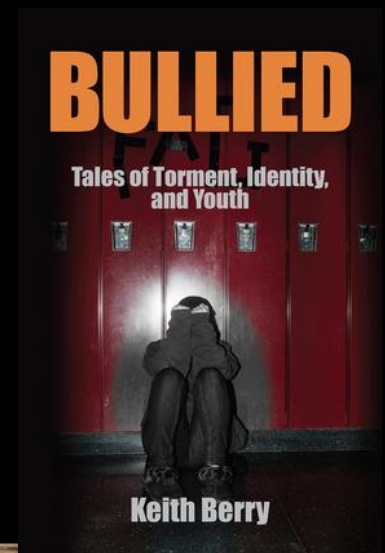
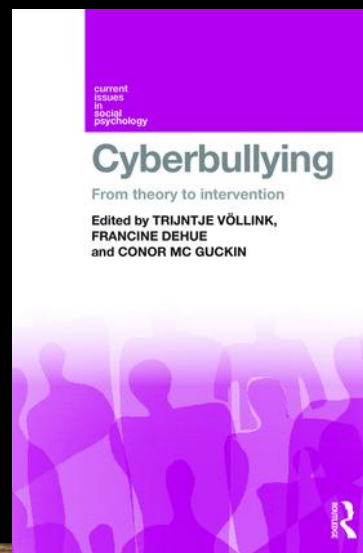
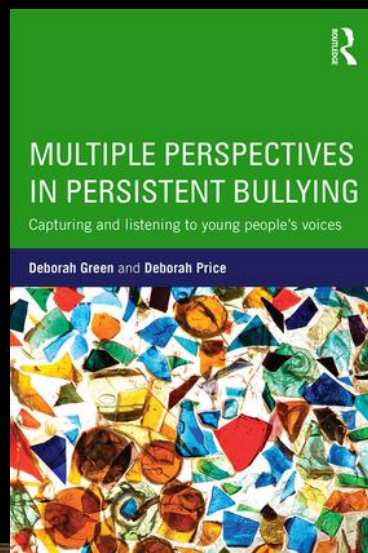
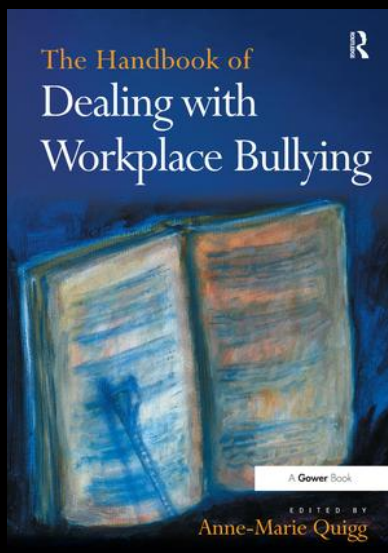
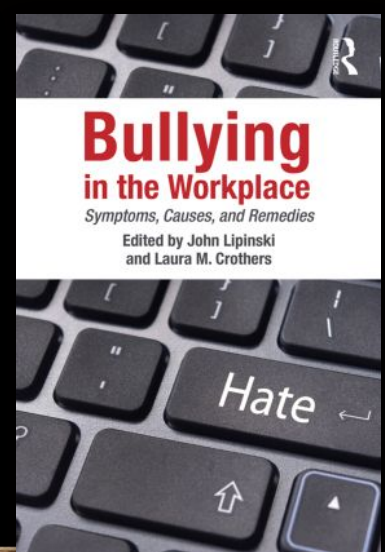
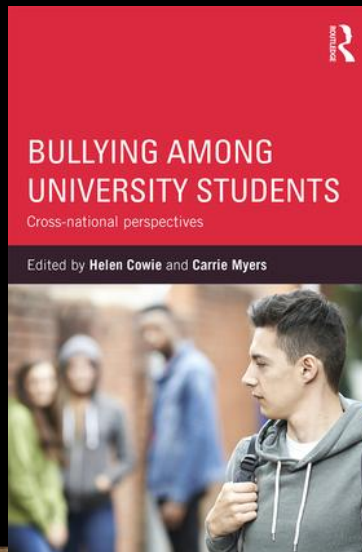
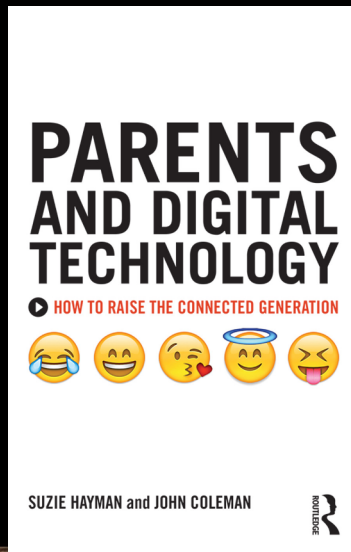
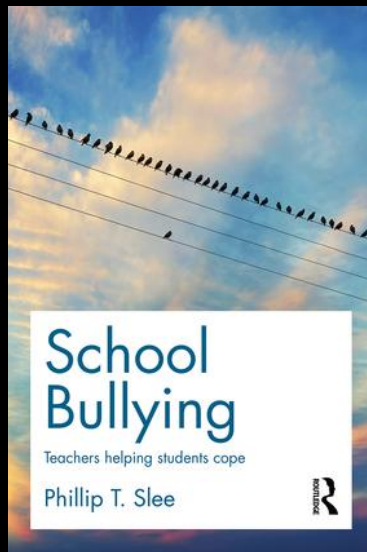


lying, fake rumours and spreading gossip and encouraging others to turn against someone. It isn't easy for someone going through this to accept when the line crossed from being a prank or banter to persistent bullying. In the workplace so many excuses are made for bullying behaviour ranging from 'it's just his robust management style' to 'it's just a bit of banter' when offensive comments are directed at team members. Employees may feel they will lose their job if they mention anything, they would rather say nothing and risk signing off sick with stress or worse still, decide to leave. Either way no one wins.

Bullying frequently happens out of school and is often a source of trouble between neighbours. If the perpetrators are pupils at the same school as their target then this could spill over into school. The Department for Education issued guidance to schools reminding them they can take action on bullying on the journey to and from school so if bullying is carried out by pupils in school uniform it's worth a complaint to the head teacher asking for action to be taken in accordance with the guidance. Parental engagement and an active interest in their child in the school and in the home plays a key role in improving outcomes for children. We know that barriers that prevent parents from taking on an active role in their child's learning remain, and Bullying UK and its parent charity Family Lives remains committed to working collaboratively to help families overcome these barriers.

It's vital that we tackle bullying as a society to ensure its effects do not permeate throughout an entire lifetimes and affect and damage future experiences and relationships. At [Bullying UK](#) we understand the pain and distress bullying can cause and if you are in a situation where you are finding yourself bullied, you can [speak to us](#) for direct support and advice. Our services are free and confidential.

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Introduction

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Understanding Bullying: From School to the Workplace provides a compendium of direct insights and practical advice to help teachers, psychologists, counsellors and parents understand, and take action, against bullying.

In this FreeBook, you'll discover stories from those that have been a bully/victim, the psychology behind it and information and tools that can be used in the classroom, practice, at university or in the workplace. We hope that it will help you develop a better understanding of bullying and allow you to spot the signs and help prevent it.

As you read through this FreeBook, you will notice that some excerpts reference other chapters, please note that these are references to the original text and not the FreeBook. And remember that if you're in search of more in-depth coverage of any of these topics, all of the titles featured are available in full from our website.

CHAPTER 1

In this excerpt from *School Bullying: Teachers Helping Students Cope*, Phillip Slee looks to answer fundamental questions about children and bullying in the early twenty-first century. This chapter outlines what is currently known about schools as 'settings' for school-based interventions, including cyberbullying, and outlines the matter of how students 'cope' with bullying, illustrated by a program developed by the author and their colleagues.

CHAPTER 2

Offering an alternative view of the bully/victim relationship, this chapter from *Multiple Perspectives in Persistent Bullying: Capturing and Listening to Young People's Voices*, by Deborah Green and Deborah Price, presents the life experiences and perspectives of Abbie, who identifies herself as both a bully and a victim.

CHAPTER 3

As popularity of the Internet and social media amongst young people has taken place and evolved, so have the channels that individuals can use for bullying. In this chapter from *Cyberbullying: From Theory to Intervention*, Trijntje Völlink, Francine Dehue and Conor McGuckin consider the individual and social risk



factors that have been associated with involvement in both traditional, and cyber forms, of bullying.

CHAPTER 4

Written for parents who are looking to help navigate their children's use of digital technology, this extract from *Parents and Digital Technology: How to Raise the Connected Generation*, by Suzie Hayman and Dr. John Coleman, outlines the dangers of cyberbullying and provides those working with children rules to help keep their children safe.

CHAPTER 5

Bullying is most often associated with a school environment. But what happens when an individual moves on to university but remain in their role of bully or victim? In this chapter from *Bullying Amongst University Students: Cross-national Perspectives*, Maili Pörhölä explores the continuities in bullying from school contexts to university contexts.

CHAPTER 6

There has recently been an increased emphasis upon identifying and intervening in instances of adult bullying, particularly in the workplace. In this chapter, from *Bullying in the Workplace: Causes, Symptoms, and Remedies*, John Lipinski and Laura M. Crothers review the developmental progression of bullying across the lifespan with the hope that such understanding will lead to more successful prevention and intervention efforts at all age levels.

CHAPTER 7

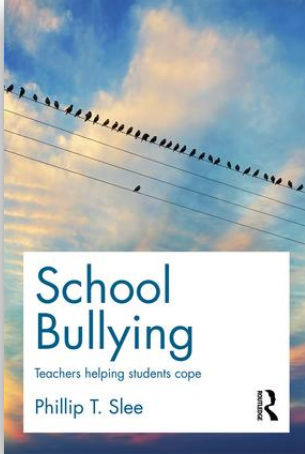
In this final chapter from *Bullied: Tales of Torment, Identity and Youth* the author, Keith Berry, reflects on bullying communication, bullying identities, and the power of stories for bullying research.



Coping with School Bullying

*From School Bullying:
Teachers Helping Students Cope*

Chapter 1: Coping with School Bullying



The following is excerpted from *School Bullying: Teachers helping students cope* by Phillip T. Slee. © 2017 Taylor & Francis Group. All rights reserved.

To purchase a copy, [click here](#).

Key terms: bullying; interventions; victimization; coping; duty of care; mental health

Introduction

We are mad – not merely privately, but publicly. We prohibit manslaughter and isolated murders, but what of war and the much vaunted crime of slaughtering whole peoples?

Seneca

As highlighted in earlier chapters, international research is very clear in showing that bullying occurs in every school, and that it is a physically harmful, psychologically damaging and socially isolating experience for those who experience it. As a consequence it is an imperative to develop successful school-based intervention strategies to help students cope with bullying, including cyber bullying. Research suggests however, that students have a very limited repertoire of strategies for dealing with bullying generally (Owens et al., 2004; Kanetsuna et al., 2006; Murray-Harvey et al., 2012). This chapter outlines what is currently known about schools as 'settings' for school-based interventions, including cyber bullying, and outlines the matter of how students 'cope' with bullying, illustrated by a program developed by the author and colleagues.



Point of interest

Understanding bullying: an overview

Bullying has been conceived broadly as the systematic abuse of power (Smith et al., 2002). It is a deliberate form of aggressive behavior, perpetrated by a more powerful individual or group, that is unfair or unjustified and is typically repeated. The severity of bullying extends along a continuum from acts that are comparatively mild, as in insensitive teasing or taunting, to extremely severe, as in repeated violent physical assaults or deliberate and unjustifiable total exclusion by peers. Bullying may be classified as direct, as in face-to-face physical and verbal harassment, or indirect, as in unfair exclusion or rumour spreading. The latest iteration of bullying, cyber bullying, involves the deliberate (mis)use of technology to target another person, such as the sending of anonymous and abusive messages by email. Researchers (e.g. Campbell, 2005; Cross et al., 2009; Spears et al., 2009) have drawn attention to the emergent forms of cyber bullying and the new understandings regarding definitional issues that have arisen as a result. In contrast to face-to-face bullying, the limits of cyber bullying are difficult to define. For instance, a single image can be forwarded countless times to innumerable people, a message can be pervasive and difficult to stop, an aggressor can remain unidentified, hiding through multiple profiles, maintaining anonymity and making it harder for the victim to defend, escape or identify (and as a result, act to stop the behaviors). It is important to note that while young people are often considered the masters of the cyber world (especially the socializing aspects of it) they are the ones who are at greatest risk of being exposed to cyber bullying behaviors (see Chapter 8). In addition, they are often the ones responsible for

engaging in cyber bullying and other inappropriate behaviors. Furthermore, there is evidence that a large proportion of those who engage in cyber bullying do so against those individuals who are considered friends. Spears et al. (2009) found that bullying behaviors cycled between school and on-line (cyber) and back again, suggesting a clear link with existing relationships. In addition, research evidence at the present time is a little conflicting, with some evidence suggesting that although there is an overlap between those who engage in face-to-face and cyber bullying, a large number of those who engage in cyber bullying behaviors or were victimized were not involved in face-to-face bullying (Campbell et al., 2010).

Schools as 'settings' for interventions and health promotion

Schools have ready-made populations of students that can be identified for general, as well as specific, health promotion initiatives such as school bullying. The focus of such initiatives in schools has moved, in accordance with World Health Organisation recommendations, towards a 'settings' approach, which is reflected in the concept of the health-promoting school (Slee and Skrzypiec, 2016). As defined by King (1998, p. 128), 'A settings approach locates public health action in the social, cultural and physical places in which children live, learn and play.' Such initiatives include the Australian 'KidsMatter Primary' (Slee et al., 2009) and 'KidsMatter Early Childhood' (Slee et al., 2012).

Schools are complex organizations that pose significant challenges for the delivery and evaluation of health promotion initiatives (Askell-Williams et al, 2008). Spears et al. (2011) further highlighted





the role that facilitators and barriers to educational change play in the successful implementation of initiatives, such as whole school approaches to bullying. The idea of a 'whole school' approach to addressing bullying is discussed further in Chapter 10. Even within a cluster of settings that may be structurally alike in some ways (such as schools within the same educational system), conditions can vary widely. For example, Askell-Williams et al. (2009) identified a range of personal and social conditions, such as students' and teachers' background knowledge, existing programs, availability of resources, and leadership commitment to the aims of the initiatives, that vary across schools. These types of factors may impact on the success or otherwise of anti-bullying initiatives.

In considering schools as sites for mental health promotion initiatives such as school bullying, the matter of how an intervention developed outside of the school is taken up and enacted in the often 'messy' and typically busy world of the classroom is significant. The question of how an intervention program is conducted faithfully in the classroom is a vitally important issue because it reflects on the outcomes of the program, which brings us to the matter of the effectiveness of school-based interventions and factors that enhance and degrade effective implementation.

In Chapter 3 consideration was given to the P.E.A.C.E. Pack (Preparation, Education, Action, Coping, Evaluation) for addressing school bullying (Slee, 2001). The P.E.A.C.E. Pack is an intervention program dealing with bullying in schools and presents school-based strategies that have been shown to reduce school bullying. Teachers, students, principals, parents and school administrators from day-care centres, kindergartens and primary and secondary schools have all contributed to the development of the P.E.A.C.E. Pack. Particularly valuable contributions to the package were made by the representatives of various secondary and primary schools who met in focus groups over the course of two years to develop, implement and evaluate intervention programs for reducing school bullying. The



acronym P.E.A.C.E. has been used to help organize the material presented in this package under the following headings:

- 'P' Preparation and consideration of the nature of the problem.
- 'E' Education and understanding of the issues by those concerned.
- 'A' Action taken and strategies developed to reduce bullying.
- 'C' Coping strategies which are implemented for staff, students and parents.
- 'E' Evaluation and review of the program in place at school.

An important element of the program is 'C', i.e. enhancing the coping skills and strategies of staff, students and parents. All too frequently the focus of anti-bullying programs is on helping students cope, but in an important systemic sense any intervention should also address how important other individuals, such as parents, cope with bullying. Its use in intervention programs will be described later in this chapter but as a precursor attention now turns to the concept of coping.

The nature of coping with school bullying

Spence et al. (2009) have noted the importance of coping skills, given the evidence that ineffective coping (e.g. aggressive response) generally is associated with an escalation of the victimization, contrasting with effective coping, which is associated with a decline in victimization. The same authors report that their research suggests that young people's difficulties in regulating their emotional responses to bullying (e.g. aggression) pose a small but significant risk factor for future victimization. In earlier research Newman (2008) presented the idea of 'adaptive helpseeking', which is essentially teaching students when it is appropriate to seek help. The author described adaptive help-seeking and contrasted it with two

non-adaptive responses to harassment (i.e. seeking help when it is unnecessary and failure to seek help when it is necessary). Kokkinos et al. (2015) reported in a study of Greek adolescents that ineffective coping was also associated with higher levels of victimization, where self-efficacy moderated the effect while higher adaptive coping was associated with greater self-efficacy.

A criticism directed at research relating to school bullying is that it is essentially a-theoretical (see Chapter 3). In fact, various approaches addressing the matter of interventions are generally underpinned by some theoretical understanding that that can be identified in terms of social learning theory, humanistic theory or systems-based models (Shute and Slee, 2015). The position adopted in the present text is that schools are 'relationship saturated' environments (see Chapter 1) and school bullying is a relationship issue (Murray-Harvey and Slee, 2010). The pivotal role of relationships in the student's learning points to the need for schools to not only have policies and procedures for dealing with aggressive behavior, but to also include a positive relationship-building dimension to the interactions among teachers and students and between students at school (Slee, 2001). An important element of this outlook is helping students develop coping skills.



Trends and issues

Emotional regulation and bullying

Emotional regulation has been described as the capacity to moderate one's emotions, the ability to maintain cognitive processes and behavior within a manageable range. The suggested evidence is that children/young people who are victimized and demonstrate poor emotional regulation are at risk for poor coping (Spence et al., 2009).



Evidence-based support on coping with school bullying

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), coping relates to how one deals with stress, where stress refers to environmental elements that impact on physical or psychological functioning in a disruptive manner. Coping strategies may be categorized as 'approach' or 'avoidance' (Causey and Dubow, 1992; Lazarus, 1984) where 'approach' includes positive strategies which may decrease the likelihood of continued victimization, such as seeking help or support from others to stop the victimization. Not quite so effective are 'avoidance' approaches, such as denial and refusal to think about an incident after it has happened. However, as Kochenderfer-Ladd and Ladd (2001) suggest, how effective each strategy might be is dependent on the context, and any strategy which is used which reduces the bullying may be beneficial, while any that result in no change may be harmful. Coping strategies are dependent on internal (self-esteem, intelligence, personality) and external (social support, changes in circumstances) mechanisms and these influence the success of coping (Folkman et al., 1986).

The coping resources of children may be severely taxed by repeated experiences of stress (Lazarus, 1984). Bullying incidents which are frequent and occur over long periods of time may overwhelm the coping capabilities of victims. The type of bullying directed at victims, such as name calling or physical bullying, may also influence how well one copes (KochenderferLadd and Ladd, 2001).



Reflection

Why do you think some students will not report if they are bullied? Does this tendency differ by age and gender?



'Tell someone'

So that children and young people can be helped to address a bullying situation, an important element of many anti-bullying programs is encouraging victims to tell someone (Glover et al., 2000). Indeed, this is the number one coping strategy reported by trainee teachers as the tactic they would most recommend to students (Nicolaides et al., 2002; Spears et al., 2010). In addition, victims are also encouraged to speak to their parents or guardians, and in some schools peer support systems have been developed to counsel or advise other pupils (Naylor and Cowie, 1999; Sharp and Smith, 1994).

However, the fact is that many victims do not seek help. This could be due to a fear of retaliation from bullies and shame over peers' perceptions of them (Naylor and Cowie, 1999, Naylor et al., 2001). Smith and Shu (2000) found that around 30 percent of bullied pupils in English schools told no-one, and this was more likely amongst boys (40 percent) than girls (20 percent). Cross et al. (2009) note that students in Australia report that only in rare cases does the bullying stop when an adult is told, with almost 50 percent indicating it stays the same, while in some instances it gets worse.

Parents and school bullying

Any effective whole-school intervention program to reduce school bullying will incorporate parents. In early research Eslea and Smith (1998) have reported a strong correlation between the involvement of parents in anti-bullying programs and the success of the interventions. Surveys of 433 Australian parents of primary and secondary school students by the author indicated that 88 percent of parents believed students should 'not put up with it and they should tell someone'. Their survey indicated that 64 percent of parents would discuss the problem with the teacher. In all, 47 percent expect teachers to be able to give the most practical advice for dealing with bullying (Figure 9.1). In the

sample, 73 percent of parents wanted some public discussion /consultation about the issue: these parents indicated that if their child was being bullied or was bullying others at school they would want the school to contact the parents of the students involved.

Furthermore, Australian research by the author suggests that, unfortunately, parents would not always know if their secondary school child was being bullied at school. In matching parent and child responses the research discovered that while 80 percent of parents believed that their child would tell them if they were being bullied, only 30 percent of secondary students indicated that they would in fact tell their parents (Slee, unpublished).



Reflection

If you had been bullied at school would you have told your parents?

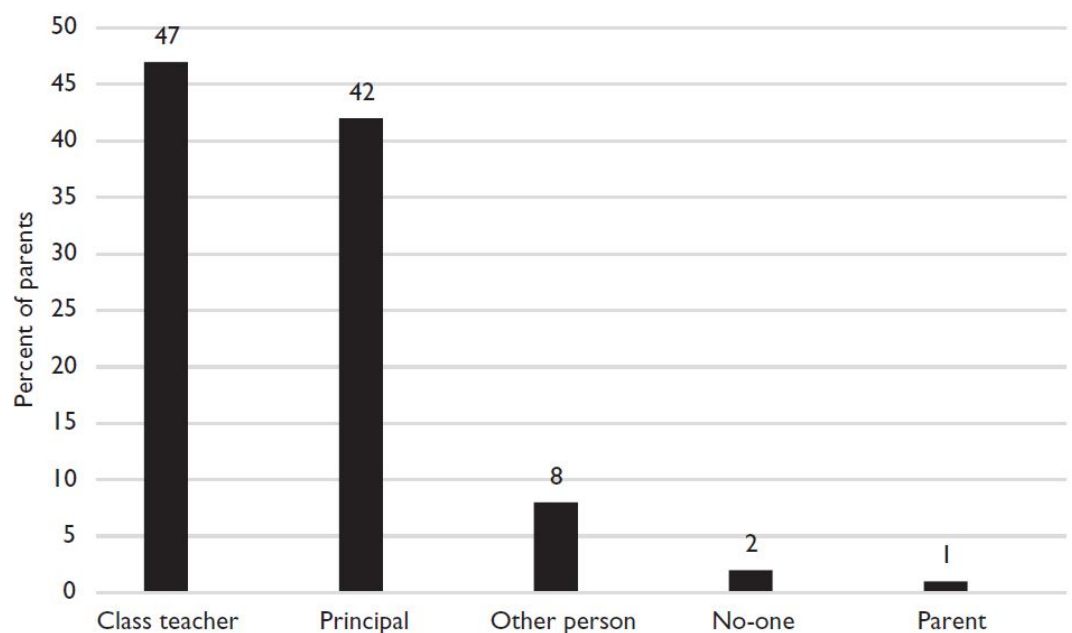


Figure 9.1 Parents' views about who would give the most practical advice if their child was being bullied

Teachers and school bullying

Askill-Williams and Murray-Harvey (2016) have discussed the educational needs of adult learners including teachers who are responsible for the delivery of mental health programs. They identified 'structural' (content and mode of delivery of programs) and 'functional' (professional collaboration, active learning and professional practices such as attitudes and beliefs) factors that impact on professional education. That is, these 'structural' and 'functional' factors have an important bearing on the effective delivery of school-based intervention programs. Importantly, they concluded that if such factors are not accounted for in the delivery of programs, 'mental health initiatives that are proven to be successful in small, well-resourced trials are unlikely to achieve their expected outcomes when up-scaled to larger populations' (p. 85). Early research (e.g. O'Moore, 2000) had earlier highlighted the importance of understanding teachers' attitudes and beliefs about bullying as part of any intervention program. In relation to the Olweus Bullying Program described earlier in this book, Kallestad and Olweus (2003) found that factors impacting on the implementation of the program included staff views on the importance of addressing bullying, their familiarity with the program, their perceptions of the degree of bullying in their classroom, their own experiences of victimization as a child, and their emotional responsiveness and empathy towards children who are bullied.

O'Moore (2000) has persuasively argued for both pre- and in-service training to include:

- description of bullying;
- information regarding the frequency of bullying;
- effects and outcomes of bullying;
- causes of the issue;
- intervention strategies.



Spears et al. (2015) examined the role of pre-service teachers' knowledge of bullying and cyber bullying as contributors to school climate when they enter the profession, with a view to sustaining and maintaining anti-bullying interventions already in place. Their research built on that by Bauman and Del Rio (2005; 2006) and Bauman et al. (2008) amongst others. However, the beliefs, attitudes and understandings of pre-service teachers regarding bullying, and more recently cyber bullying, remains largely unclear. In an unpublished pilot study (by the author), third-year pre-service teachers (n = 76) from one South Australian university responded to questions in a larger on-line survey about their understanding of aggression and bullying, including their views regarding the law. Of concern is the main finding that *they largely failed to distinguish between bullying and aggression*, and typically omitted two of the three critical components which distinguish it from aggression per se: the power imbalance and repetition components of bullying behavior. This suggests that they do not have the knowledge or skills at this stage of their pre-service teacher education, to readily or clearly determine which behaviors could be identified as bullying. Further to this, 29.3 percent of the respondents indicated that they *did not feel informed* about school bullying and 45.3 percent *did not feel capable* of dealing with bullying. This small-scale study highlights the need to incorporate more information and content regarding bullying in teachers' pre-service training.

Coping with face-to-face school bullying

In an Australian study (Murray-Harvey et al., 2012) 1,223 students across years 8–10 (i.e. 13–15 years old) in three South Australian high schools completed a 26-item Coping with Bullying questionnaire about how they dealt with bullying, and 82 informed professionals ('IPs' such as school counsellors and researchers) rated the effectiveness of each strategy along with its applicability to different



bullying types (physical, verbal, social, covert). Informed professionals generally agreed on which were effective and ineffective strategies, and there was also a consensus that the same strategies were appropriate for all types of bullying. Productive, Other-focused strategies were regarded by informed professionals as most effective for coping with bullying. Among these were strategies such as talking to family members or professionals outside school, talking to teachers and counsellors at school and using the school's anti-bullying and harassment policies and procedures; all indicative of students eliciting support from others who are well positioned to act for or on behalf of them. However, it was found that seriously bullied students reported under-using the productive, other-focused strategies rated by informed professionals as effective and instead reported using non-productive strategies such as avoidance and denial.

More research is needed to provide evidence about whether telling someone actually helps victims escape from victimization, particularly given the prominence accorded to it in much school anti-bullying work.

Coping with cyber bullying-students

As noted earlier the matter of cyber bullying may in fact raise particular questions with regard to coping, given its 24/7 nature, near-anonymity and the broader audience available, not to mention the power that the written and visual electronic media can have. Another complicating factor is that cyber bullying is often perpetrated amongst 'friends' and not by a relatively unknown third person or persons. Simplistically, education authorities and parent advocates will frequently propose measures to assist with coping in terms of 'banning', 'blocking' or restricting access to technology. As reported by Spears et al. (2011), young people at the Cooperation of Science and Technology (COST) Australian Research Training School on cyber bullying, held in Melbourne in 2010 (COST/DIISR, 2010), called for





opportunities to *be* the teachers and educators of parents, teachers and others, and to *provide* the professional learning in schools. Young people at this event challenged researchers to recognize their lived experiences and expertise and to engage with them as co-researchers, where such partnerships deepen each other's learning and understanding (see Chapter 8). Providing an opportunity such as this, which gave them power through their knowledge and experience, and positioned them as equal to researchers and adults, resulted in the development of a 'Youth Statement' (see Slee et al., 2011, p. 23), in which these young people articulated that they wanted:

- A clear definition of what cyber bullying is,
 - including consequences and effects.
- Clarity around policy, i.e.
 - what inappropriate behaviors do we mean?
- Education for themselves and their parents and peers
 - in cyber safety; e.g. how to use Facebook.
 - privacy settings and what they really mean.
- Adults to acknowledge the importance of how children and young people cope with cyber bullying.
- Research in every country to identify the nature of the problem which feeds into addressing the issues.
- Increased communication between students and teachers.
- To promote the notion that it's OK to talk about experiences of cyber bullying to help those who are victimized in future.
- Researchers to identify strategies for parents, to give support/advice to their children.

Some further complexities of the issues are encapsulated in Campbell et al.'s (2010) attention to the legal aspects in their discussion of the criminal and civil law aspects as applied to cyber bullying (see Chapter 10). As noted earlier, in developing an understanding of the issues associated with cyber bullying (including coping) it is imperative to



listen to the 'voices' of the stakeholders, that is the young people themselves (Spears et al., 2011). false},

The 'Coping with Bullying' intervention program

The Coping with Bullying program is the outcome of 20 years of research by the School of Education at Flinders University, including the successful delivery of the program in countries such as Japan, Australia and Greece (see Skrzypiec et al., 2013). The program is part of the broader P.E.A.C.E. Pack framework for implementing anti-bullying programs in schools, as described in Chapter 3.

Intervention

'Coping with Bullying' (CWB) intervention package

The teacher package includes the 'Coping with Bullying' DVD (including four bullying scenarios, namely physical, verbal, relational and cyber bullying), outlines for eight lessons, supporting information and class activity materials and resources, and pre-and post-questionnaires. The package also includes a short (5-minute) Powerpoint professional development (PD) for the teachers involved. Further details of the CWB program are provided in Slee and Skrzypiec (2016)

Delivery and content of the program

Teachers typically deliver the program over eight lessons as part of pastoral care or home-group curriculum (35–45 minutes). The teachers



participating in the training receive a half-day training session which includes student work books, teacher feedback sheets, pre-and post-questionnaires, and recommendations for bullying/harassment policy.

Data is collected regarding the multiple ways in which students report they are bullied, and the relationship to coping. Data is also collected regarding the coping strategies that 'seriously' bullied students use compared with what school counsellors would advise. The framework is theoretically based on a systems perspective, emphasizing that we must identify key aspects of school systems that influence students' abilities to achieve wellbeing and promote their learning. Questions are also included to assess wellbeing (Slee and Skrzypiec, 2016). The five generally agreed upon core SEL competencies (Durlak et al., 2011) include:

- self-awareness
- self-management
- social awareness
- relationship skills
- responsible decision making.

The quality assurance of a school-based program

The gap between research and practice has been a long-standing concern. The increasing demand for evidence-based practice means an increasing need for more practice-based evidence. As Durlak and DuPre (2008) note:

social scientists recognize that developing effective interventions is only the first step toward improving the health and well-being of populations. Transferring effective programs into real world





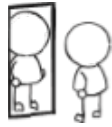
settings and maintaining them there is a complicated, long-term process that requires dealing effectively with the successive, complex phases of program diffusion.

(p. 327)

There is a growing body of research, referred to as translational research, that addresses how best to transfer effective programs into real-world settings such as schools and classrooms. Shute and Slee (2015; 2016) and Slee and Skrzypiec (2016) have examined the issue of quality assurance in relation to mental health, well-being and anti-bullying programs. As Shute and Slee (2015) have described it, quality assurance involves the development of evaluation standards as part of evidence-based practice. Durlak et al. (2011) identified a number of key elements that should be incorporated in the implementation of any school-based program to help ensure quality and maximize outcomes from the intervention:

- Adherence (fidelity, compliance) the core components of a program are delivered as intended.
- Exposure (dosage) the extent to which the original program has been delivered as intended.
- Participant responsiveness assesses participant interest in, and engagement with, the program.
- Quality of delivery relates to the quality of instruction.
- Program differentiation is the extent to which the program is different from other programs.

An understanding of these domains is important in evaluations which seek to test the outcomes and effectiveness of intervention programs, as each poses a threat to program validity (Slee et al., 2011; Skrzypiec and Slee, 2016).



Reflection

Hymel and colleagues (2009) have suggested that a focus on the prosocial aspects of 'moral agency' and the development of 'true empathy' in both bullies and bystanders may be the way forward in research. Discuss this idea.

Implementing programs in classrooms

An important feature of successful programs identified by Durlak and colleagues (2011) related to the nature of the conduct of the intervention. Their review identified that programs which were:

- interactive;
- engaged students with 'coaching and role-playing';
- utilized sets of 'structured activities';
- had 'set goals'; and
- had stronger SEL outcomes. These qualities of program delivery fall under the acronym SAFE (sequenced, active, focused and explicit).

In an earlier review of successful anti-bullying programs Farrington and Ttofi (2009) identified the following components: parent training; improved playground teacher supervision; improved disciplinary measures; school conferences with parents; use of videos as part of the program presentations; provision of information on bullying for parents; and improved classroom management and rules.

Findings from the P.E.A.C.E. Pack school intervention program

As Murray-Harvey and Slee (2010, p. 271) have noted, 'it is important that schools provide an environment that makes it possible for their students to thrive and to achieve, not only academically but in all ways that relate to their overall well-being'. The findings from a range of Australian school interventions at primary and secondary school level have been reported using the P.E.A.C.E. Pack program (Slee, 1994; 1996; Slee and Mohyla, 2007). Typically these interventions have resulted in reductions of self-reported school victimization from 17 percent to 29 percent. Internationally, aspects of the P.E.A.C.E. Pack have been translated into Japanese and the program implemented in a number of Japanese middle schools (Taki, 1997). In the Japanese year-long school-based interventions the implementation of the program has produced reductions in self-reported school bullying of up to 27 percent.

Findings from the P.E.A.C.E. Pack program interventions highlight that for schools considering adopting an anti-bullying program the following factors should be considered:

- whether the program has an identifiable theoretical base;
- whether there have been independent evaluations conducted of the program;
- the extent to which the program identifies the 'pill and dose', i.e. the number, nature and quality of the lessons;
- whether the program is developmentally appropriate and is nuanced to suit the age of the students involved.

Shute and Slee (2015) have also reviewed key elements that provide a platform for the delivery of well-being programs and drawn attention to the contributions that Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)





and Applied Developmental Science (ADS) have made to our understanding.

An example of an international intervention program

Nationally and internationally there is now a long overdue focus on the well-being and health of young people in the education sector (Shute and Slee, 2015). Put simply, the concept of well-being refers to optimal psychological functioning and experience. Schools typically and teachers generally have always seen it as part of their role to support and encourage children's all-round development, including their cognitive, interpersonal, social, aesthetic, physical and moral/spiritual growth. The evidence is now also clear that social and emotional learning promotes academic learning. Now the focus is more strongly on well-being and is reflected in an emphasis on prevention, resilience, building strengths, competence and capacity, and not just intervention. In considering young people's well-being it is necessary to broaden the outlook beyond that of the individual, and there are significant advantages to understanding well-being in a broader community context.

Challenges facing young people today, for example, arise out of changing family structures and interpersonal and peer relationship issues such as school bullying. Being bullied is a stressful experience – in fact it is one of the most distressing experiences that anyone can face, as we have identified in this book. Bullying occurs in every school, as international research shows, and we now better understand that bullying is physically, socially and psychologically damaging, with the hurt extending beyond the victim to the bully and the bystanders who witness the activity. As such it is very important to develop successful interventions to help students cope with bullying, including cyber bullying. As reviewed in this chapter, students have a very limited repertoire of strategies for dealing with bullying generally, and



they need specific training in making use of effective coping strategies for different types of bullying.

'Flourishing at School and at Home' program

The Maltese Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE), in collaboration with the Centre for Resilience and Socio-Emotional Health at the University of Malta, engaged Flinders University to undertake the evaluation, by a team of researchers located in the Flinders University Centre for Student Wellbeing and Prevention of Violence (SWAPv). The intervention involved pre- and post-test data collection using a purpose-designed 'wellbeing questionnaire' for Form 1 (9–12 years old) Maltese students (n = approx. 2,000) students involving 55 teachers who delivered the program as part of their normal pastoral care lessons. The teachers undertook a professional development workshop delivered by members of SWAPv. Along with specific lessons developed for teachers by well-being teachers, it was emphasized that the lessons needed to be:

- interactive,
- engaging students with 'coaching and role-playing';
- utilizing sets of 'structured activities';
- consistent with 'set goals' for each week.

The framework based on the P.E.A.C.E. Pack is theoretically based on a systems perspective, emphasizing that we must identify key aspects of school systems that influence students' abilities to achieve well-being and promote their learning.

The findings from the implementation and evaluation of the Flourishing at School and at Home program for Form 1 Maltese coeducational middleschool students highlighted a number of significant points. The implementation and quality assurance of a



school-based intervention proved to be a complex, multi-faceted matter requiring careful consideration. For example, although PD was provided for teachers, a follow-up interview with staff at one of the schools where there was a significant reduction in bullying and an increase in student well-being highlighted how easily disrupted even the most carefully planned and delivered program can be. School assemblies, fire drills and student absenteeism were factors disrupting the delivery of the lessons. However, the evaluation confirmed that the issue of bullying is at a significant level amongst Maltese Form 1 students but that teachers can effectively intervene to reduce the level of 'serious bullying' in their classrooms and schools. Cyber bullying was now a reality for one in ten Maltese students. Productive coping strategies can be taught, but further consideration is needed regarding how best to deliver such skills in the classroom context. The well-being of Form 1 'seriously bullied' students improved, with significant gains in enjoyment of school and feelings of confidence in expressing opinions. A broad outline of the program is provided in Table 9.1. As touched upon earlier, important components in the delivery of the program included:

- professional development for the teachers;
- a focus on the five core SEL competencies, e.g. self awareness (described earlier in this chapter);
- discrete lesson plans developed by teachers for the teachers, taking into account the developmental level of the students;
- a DVD on elements of bullying that had been scripted and performed by students;
- an emphasis in the delivery of lessons on interactive group-work delivery, role playing, and diary reflections on personal learning at the end of each lesson;
- a focus in each lesson on the development of new positive coping skills.



Table 9.1 Brief outline of the eight lessons (delivered over four weeks) of the 'Flourishing at School and at Home' program (the lessons provide the basis for the PD sessions which preceded the program)

Week 1

Lesson 1: Introduction and pre-assessment using a purpose designed questionnaire

Lesson 2: 'Inclusion and Relationships' DVD on relational bullying

Week 2

Lesson 3: 'Resilience' DVD on verbal bullying

Lesson 4: 'Self Concept' DVD on physical bullying

Week 3

Lesson 5: 'Optimism' DVD on cyber bullying

Lesson 6: Student voice – focus on strengthening bystander intervention

Week 4

Lesson 7: Evaluating school policy documents relating to bullying and grievance procedures

Lesson 8: Celebration – post-test assessment using a purpose-designed questionnaire

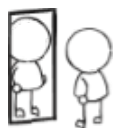
Overall, the Malta intervention using the P.E.A.C.E Pack highlighted that teach coping skills in an explicit manner is more effective than teaching about bullying generally. Students who are bullied use a different array of 'coping' strategies than those which 'experts' advocate. Students bullied in multiple ways were coping less well than other bullied students (Slee, Skrzypiec, Cefai and Fabri, 2016).

Some implications for school practice

As Murray-Harvey and Slee (2010, p. 271) have noted, 'it is important that schools provide an environment that makes it possible for their students to thrive and to achieve, not only academically but in all ways that relate to their overall well-being'. It is well accepted that education is positively related to health, and that schools play a key role in promoting healthy behaviors and attitudes. The responsibility

of educators as reported by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (McGoldrick, 1991) for protecting children's quality of life and their rights to be educated in a safe environment, free from all forms of violence, victimization, harassment, and neglect, is understood (Cross et al., 2011). The National Safe schools Framework (2010) affirms the need for all Australian schools to provide a learning environment free from bullying and harassment.

Given the sheer quantity of research and the ready availability of antibullying programs, the daunting task facing school administrators concerns how to choose the best quality programs that are underpinned by an evidence base, and how these may translate into effective anti-cyber bullying approaches.



Reflection

Hymel and Craig (2009) report that over time boys and girls use different coping styles in relation to victimization. Why might this be so?

Summary

In summary, school bullying, including emergent forms of cyber bullying, is an all too frequent aspect of young people's lives and it has a negative impact on the well-being of all those involved. Evidence with regard to translational research indicates that schools are a very obvious setting for well-being and health-promotion activities, and that teachers can effectively deliver evidence-based programs that make a difference to the well-being of young people. Australia is one of the few countries in the world to have in place a national framework (the National Safe Schools Framework – <http://safeschoolshub.edu.au/>, accessed 24 September 2016) within which

to consider the matter of the well-being of young people in our schools. To continue to provide leadership in the field of matters that affect the wellbeing of our students, it is very important to maintain a focus on research to inform our practice. In particular, the contemporary issue of cyber bullying is one that requires urgent attention to meet the needs of the young people affected, the families involved and the educational institutions which are at the forefront in addressing the matter at both a policy and practical level.



Guidelines for practice

In this chapter we have referred to schools as 'settings' for anti-bullying interventions and we referred to King (1998, p. 128), who noted that 'A settings approach locates public health action in the social, cultural and physical places in which children live, learn and play.' As generally noted, the key principles of a settings approach include community participation, partnership, empowerment and equity. However, it was also noted in this chapter that various barriers and facilitators are evident which impact on the development and delivery of health promoting programs, such as anti-bullying initiatives, students' and teachers' background knowledge, availability of resources, leadership, etc. *Think about your school and identify the various barriers and facilitators to implementing an anti-bullying program.*



Activity

Survey the students in your school to identify their strategies for coping with bullying. Evaluate the list against the criteria for 'productive' and 'non-productive' coping discussed in this chapter.



What have you learnt?

1. Describe what a 'settings approach' is.

2. Coping strategies may be categorized as 'approach' or 'avoidance' – describe characteristics of each.

3. Discuss the idea that 'telling someone' is an effective coping strategy.

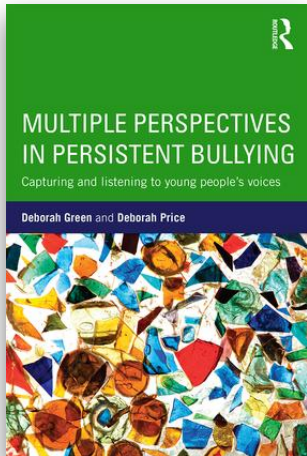
4. True or false?
 - Coping relates to how one deals with stress. (T/F)
 - The type of bullying directed at victims, such as name-calling or physical bullying, may also influence how well one copes. (T/F)
 - Translational research addresses how best to transfer effective programs into real-world settings such as schools and classrooms. (T/F)
5. Discuss why 'quality assurance' is important for the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs.



Abbie: Bully/Victim

*From Multiple Perspectives in Persistent
Bullying: Capturing and Listening to Young
People's Voices*

Chapter 2: Abbie: Bully/Victim



The following is excerpted from *Multiple Perspectives in Persistent Bullying: Capturing and listening to young people's voices* by Deborah Green and Deborah Price. © 2017 Taylor & Francis Group. All rights reserved.

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My first day at high school I went to PE and I came back from PE and I went to my schoolbag and my school uniform ... my dress was in there and had all this crap written all over it like for no reason ... I had done nothing at this stage I was just a little Year 8.
(Abbie, 23 years old)

On another occasion 'Abbie' recalls:

I saw her out and I kicked her ... I know that was so wrong of me but I took it out on her ... I said 'how dare you say in front of 40 people my business when you are supposed to be my friend' ... so I kicked her. It was not very nice.

Bully/victims are bullies in some instances and victims in others (Craig 1998; Pellegrini, Bartini & Brooks 1999). Problematically, they make up approximately one-third of the student population and they experience the most severe outcomes of all bullies and victims (Marini, Dane, Bosacki & YLC-CURA 2006). Unlike Abbie, these students are usually physically strong, and more assertive than victims; they are easily provoked and frequently provoke others. They demonstrate high levels of aggression, low academic competence, low prosocial behaviour, low self-control, low social competence and self-esteem, and generally function more poorly than bullies and victims (Batsche & Knoff 1994; Haynie et al. 2001; Veenstra, Lindenberg, Oldehinkel, De Winter, Verhulst & Ormel 2005). Bully/victims view themselves as more troublesome, less intelligent, less physically attractive, more anxious, less popular and unhappier than 'pure' bullies, which impacts on their self-concept (Marini et al. 2006; O'Moore & Kirkham 2001; Schwartz 2000). It is not surprising that these students also report the lowest self-esteem of all groups and hold a very poor self-concept (Olweus 1993; O'Moore & Kirkham 2001). They are most at risk of aggressive behaviours towards their peers (Unnever 2005), are more



likely to carry weapons than bullies or victims and are more likely to be victimized by others using weapons (Haynie et al. 2001; Stein, Dukes & Warren 2007).

Chapters 2 and 3 presented the voices of Leah and Brooke who had been victimized at school. The voice of someone who engages in bullying behaviour and is themselves bullied will provide another lens to consider bullying and particularly persistent bullying. Chapter 4 therefore presents the lived experiences and perspectives of Abbie. Prior to our conversation, Abbie had completed an intensive summer school on peer relationships. Part of this course focused on bullying and aggression. With this knowledge and understanding, Abbie identified herself as a bully in some instances and a victim in others which suggests that she was a bully/victim (Salmivalli & Nieminen 2002; Schwartz 2000). She believes that some children get bullied because *'they are easy targets, they don't look like they are very strong... they are not strong characters and people think "oh they're easy targets"'*. For her, the impact of being bullied was devastating. She explains that she couldn't show how she felt as this would lead to further bullying: *'I couldn't even show these people what the effects of going to school was doing to me, I was becoming a shell of a person'*. At home however, Abbie *'would just start crying, I went from someone who was in every sporting activity'* to someone who was depressed and suicidal.

Abbie is 23 years old and in her fourth year of a Bachelor of Education. Abbie's schooling included a co-educational independent primary school, a single-sex independent religious high school, and a Government school in Year 12. She is a relatively petite young lady whose cultural background was different from her peers and this had an effect on her peer relationships as she was often restricted in areas that her peers were not. This left her feeling isolated and lonely.



To overcome this, she formed an alliance with others among her peer group who were in a similar situation and together they lied to their parents so that they could socialize and gain a sense of belonging.

Family and peer relationships

Abbie was raised in a family of four: mum, dad and a brother who is eight years older than her. Her parents employed what appeared to be an authoritarian style of parenting: *'you do this and that's the way it is done ... you live under my roof'*. In line with this style of parenting, Abbie's parents were strict and expected unquestioning obedience, the preservation of order and tradition and demanded respect for authority (Mussen, Conger, Kagan & Huston 1990; Slee 1993). There was never any discussion about her behavior; Abbie was just told what to do and, when disciplined, *'my dad never said why'* which confused and annoyed Abbie. She saw her parents as strict and felt that she did not have a voice in things that were important to her. While this had a negative impact on her relationships with her parents at the time, she is now reasonably close to them and enjoys spending time with her family.

Like Abbie, many bully/victims report that their families lack cohesion and warmth. Typically, there is a power imbalance between parents, with the father often dominating. Bully/victims tend to be more overprotected or neglected than either bullies or victims (Bowers, Smith & Binney 1994; Smith, Bowers, Binney & Cowie 1993; Stevens, De Bourdeaudhuij & Van Oost 2002). These students perceive their home lives as harsh, disorganized and potentially abusive (Schwartz, Dodge, Pettit & Bates 1997) with unsupportive and uninvolved parents (Schwartz 2000). For Abbie, such family dynamics caused feelings of difference and alienation which possibly influenced her peer interactions.





Bully/victims experience difficulty with peer relationships as they are inclined to attack those who are stronger as well as those who are weaker than them, upsetting the equilibrium of the group. As a result, they are often rejected by the peer group (Schwartz 2000; Warden & Mackinnon 2003). Abbie reported difficulties with her peer relationships which, at times, caused her to feel rejected, victimized and lonely. Although she never had a best friend, Abbie was considered a leader among her peers, much to her own surprise. Being elected as a student representative on the SRC (Student Representative Council) was among her proudest moments. However, mixing with the wrong crowd and engaging in unhealthy behaviours resulted in Abbie losing friends, something that she later regretted. Such behaviour is not uncommon among bully/victims as they search for acceptance and belonging (Kristensen & Smith 2003). When Abbie entered high school she was bullied even more, and she became 'unapproachable'. She stopped eating and lost interest in everything that once meant a lot to her. Abbie started feeling depressed and suicidal.

I lost lots of weight in high school because I just wasn't eating because I was that depressed because I didn't want to go there ... and then by the end my grades ... 'cause I was pretty good in primary school ... Year 8 my grades were okay ... by the time I was in Year 11 I was on Ds and I was never ... at Year 11 ... I was really bad because I think I probably would have committed suicide.

Ongoing victimization had a significant impact on Abbie's self-esteem and self- concept. At this time, teachers described her as having

so many problems they would probably say we didn't notice ... there were times I would walk into the classroom crying because someone said they were going to strangle me and my teacher is, like, 'What's wrong?' ... I said I just don't want to talk about it but



by the end of school they would say 'Yeh she is naughty she is always in trouble'... but at the beginning I was fine.

Abbie's understandings and experiences of bullying and persistent bullying

Abbie understands bullying to be an ongoing act against another person that includes '*spitting on someone or whatever, but it is verbal... you can really put some- body down*'. Unlike Rebecca and John, whose voices will be heard in later chapters, Abbie's definition of bullying focuses on repetition and harm, possibly because of the impact that persistent bullying had on her personally. Mirroring her own experiences, Abbie explains that verbal and psychological attacks are more detrimental than physical bullying, something that was also evident in an Australian study of covert bullying by Donna Cross and colleagues (2009).

Someone could kick me and I might have been bruised but I would have got on with it, the things that got said to me that 'you're a slut' and you're like this ... that really hurts ... some things still play in my mind now that people have said.

Soon after she started school Abbie was victimized by her peers. She was then persistently victimized throughout her school life. As she entered high school the bullying escalated and threats were made against her life.

When I would be in the courtyard and they would ... you know I am going to slit your throat ... At home on the weekends I would get phone calls on my mobile saying 'I'm going to bury you six feet under'.



Due to her own experiences and the devastating effects of persistent victimization, Abbie believes that bullying should never be seen as a normal part of growing up. In her eyes, differences in popularity and physical appearance invite bullying, aligning with other studies (Frisén, Jonsson & Persson 2007; Sweeting & West 2001; Voss & Mulligan 2000).

Some kids get picked on by people who aren't 'in' ... all schools have a pecking order ... there's the cool people ... and then there's the not so cool people the kids that just get picked on by everybody. I don't know, it's sometimes because they're overweight ... because they are just easy targets, they don't look like they've got a very strong character and people think oh they're easy targets.

Most of the bullying that Abbie experienced occurred in the presence of her peers, yet very few intervened, which left her feeling unsupported and powerless. Eventually the bullying escalated, so Abbie avoided areas where the bullies frequented.

Having endured persistent bullying for some time, Abbie turned to her parents for help. Initially her parents blamed her, but as time passed and things didn't change her mum suggested that she ask the girls to stop picking on her. Her father advised that she should '*go straight to the teacher ... hang around a teacher if you know that they are coming*'. Unlike Brooke, once Abbie's parents realized the extent of her victimization, they approached the school and actively sought help for her. At this time, Abbie was feeling very depressed and suicidal.

I wouldn't want to go ... just it depressed me that bad ... my behaviour ... my attitude, my behaviour towards other people ... I was more withdrawn by high school ... I stuck to my little group of people and I wouldn't really move out of there.





As a result of the consultation, Abbie visited the high school counsellor, yet the strategies provided failed and no action was taken against the girls who bullied her. This appeared to send a clear message to the peer group that bullying was acceptable and the bullies were powerful enough to avoid consequences. Concurrently, Abbie started bullying others and by the time she was in Year 9 she bullied others approximately once a week. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Pepler et al. (2008) proposed four bullying trajectories: starts low and increases; starts moderate and desists; starts moderate and remains moderate; and starts high and remains high. Abbie's profile fits the first trajectory of starting low then increasing; she did not engage in bullying when she started school, but by the time she left school she was bullying at moderately high levels.

I would just be really mean to them ... terrible ... I would do it all the time ... I probably embarrassed them ... it was really not nice to do but I thought, oh well they were lower in the hierarchy ... the pecking order of the school ... there was popular and they were below me so I just took it out on them.

Matching her understandings of why some students are victimized, Abbie targeted students who she perceived as unpopular and lacking power. Through bullying, Abbie increased her power and status among the peer group, which was important to her given that she often felt powerless and desperately needed to be accepted by her peers.

I thought they're easy targets so I will just take it out on them. They're not going to threaten or strangle me or slit my throat or bury me six feet under ... so I took it out on them.

On one occasion, Abbie physically attacked another student. This



incident was reported to the police but no charges were laid. Although Abbie justified her bullying behaviour at the time, she expressed a deep sense of remorse at the time of the interview, something overtly absent in the narrative of both Rebecca, which will be presented in later chapters.

Abbie clearly recognizes the impact of persistent bullying and is in a good place to provide her perspectives and suggestions. She reasons that many factors, particularly one's home life, influence persistent bullying:

I don't know what their home life is like ... I think they watch too much junk on TV because it's acceptable ... because mum and dad aren't home as much ... but it's not the parents' fault ... we are in financial difficulties ... the parents have to work and kids are in after school care and ... there is the internet as well ... and that is worse ... at least in the old days you bullied at school and then you went home and you slept it off.

To reduce persistent bullying, Abbie recommends developing and fostering a sense of belonging among the school community whereby empathy and tolerance for diversity are embedded. This worked to reduce her own bullying.

If there was an overweight child I think they should say look okay obviously John is a little bit overweight but you don't have to be mean ... they could talk to the kids and maybe ... I remember writing a lot of letters about empathy ... really promoting empathy, but what about promoting empathy within your own classroom?

Based on her own experiences in a single-sex independent religious



high school, Abbie queries whether a school's competitive ethos may reinforce persistent bullying. In this setting, she perceived that those who bullied were given specialized treatment due to their academic abilities, in stark contrast to the Government setting where she completed her schooling.

What's good for one person is good for everybody but we weren't allowed to have hair colour or nail polish or anything like that ... it was an all girls' Catholic school ... one person would get away with it ... it depends who you were... they [teachers] absolutely had their favourites.

In addition, there were no consistent consequences for bullying and often bullies were not reprimanded for their behaviour. In Abbie's eyes, this reinforced persistent bullying, sending a message to the peer group that the behaviour was acceptable while adding to the bully's perceived power.

No one ever ... no one did anything about it ... the teacher just spoke to me quickly and then 'Oh sorry, I've got too much to deal with'.

Some teachers were themselves harassed by students which also had an impact on persistent bullying.

One poor man ... he was getting picked on by the kids ... he had a really weak personality ... he was really quiet and the kids would give him such a hard time ... they would send him to tears.

Such intimidation seemingly enhanced the bully's status and power





among the peer group and had an impact on Abbie as a victim because she felt unable to talk to anyone or do anything about what was happening. She therefore recommends more professional development for teachers in the area of bullying, particularly conflict management. When considering her own situation, Abbie blamed the school, believing that some teachers escalated bullying situations by what they said or failed to do. She therefore strongly suggests that strict consequences should apply and, more importantly, these consequences should be applied consistently. In fact, studies have found that teachers who view bullies favourably assign blame to the victim (Nesdale & Pickering 2006) which was evident in Abbie's narrative. Popular students have an influence over their peers; bullies who are popular may therefore be less likely to be reprimanded by teachers or their peers for their behaviour (Nesdale & Pickering 2006). A lack of action by teachers informs peers that bullying may be acceptable, which in turn decreases future disclosures (Pepler, personal communication 2012; Unnever & Cornell 2004), a pattern noted in Abbie's case.

Risk factors and protective mechanisms

Why is it that some students who are victimized are at risk of engaging in bullying behaviours? Little is known about the risk and protective factors of this group of students, however it is recognized that bully/victims, like Abbie, tend to display high levels of social anxiety which places them at risk of being both bully and victim (Marini et al. 2006). They are also found to engage in more externalizing or aggressive behaviours as a means of coping with bullying (Kristensen & Smith 2003; Olafsen & Viemerö 2000) which makes them more unpopular with their peers. Consequently, this group of students are also placed at a higher risk of depression, suicidal ideation and poor academic achievement (Haynie et al. 2001), all of which were evident in Abbie's narrative.



So what enabled Abbie to cope and become a successful undergraduate pre-service teacher? There were a number of factors that helped to support her. For instance, she had a group of friends who shared similar cultural backgrounds and together they were able to form an alliance and provide each other with a sense of belonging. She also shared a close relationship with one of her cousins which further provided a sense of belonging and security. This group of friends and her cousin acted as a protective mechanism for Abbie.

Although Abbie's parents did not support her initially, once the effects of bullying escalated in high school they provided her with support which, in turn, helped her to cope. Part of this support resulted in Abbie moving to another school. The new school provided her with a sense of belonging, both with her peers and the school community generally. In this environment Abbie no longer engaged in bullying behaviour nor was she bullied, breaking the cycle and enabling her the space to recover from the effects of previous victimization. Abbie was also proud of her achievements which helped her during the darkest times and reduced the impact of bullying on her self-confidence.

Chapter summary

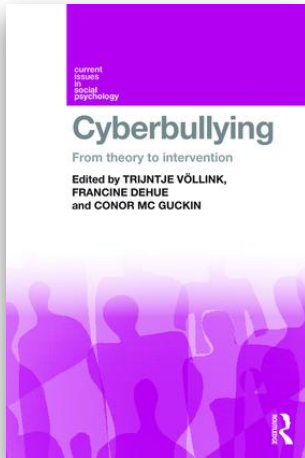
Abbie's understanding of bullying is underpinned by her own experiences. Although she initially looked to the school for help, no meaningful assistance was provided. She therefore turned to bullying others to gain power and status. During Abbie's high school years her teachers, through favouritism and inconsistent sanctions, appeared to reinforce the power imbalance between bully and victim. Some teachers also felt intimidated and bullied themselves, which appeared to further enhance the power and status of persistent bullies. Abbie highlights the effects of persistent bullying and suggests that family backgrounds may play a large role.



Individual and Social Determinants of Bullying and Cyberbullying

*From Cyberbullying: From Theory to
Intervention*

Chapter 3: Individual and Social Determinants of Bullying and Cyberbullying



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Introduction

Delineating the risk factors for involvement in cyberbullying is crucial for identifying those who are in need of support, and enables interventions to be developed and targeted towards specific at-risk groups. Some researchers argue that it is incorrect to consider cyberbullying as a distinct phenomenon; rather cyberbullying is a part of, or an extension of, traditional bullying behaviours (Li, 2007; Olweus, 2012). Hence, it is important to compare risk factors for cyberbullying with those for traditional bullying to identify key similarities and differences between the behaviours, determining whether cyberbullying is due to a unique set of individual and social risks, or arises from similar circumstances as found for traditional bullying. Identifying these similarities and differences can help in developing targeted interventions that go beyond the school environment, and may provide greater encouragement for anti-bullying and anti-cyberbullying programs to work together to eradicate all forms of bullying.

This chapter considers individual and social risk factors that have been associated with involvement in both traditional and cyberforms of bullying. Five main groups of risk factors which have been previously considered in relation to traditional bullying (Wolke & Stanford, 1999) are addressed: (a) demographic characteristics including age, sex, and ethnicity; (b) psychological characteristics including self-esteem, internalising behaviours, empathy, and aggression; (c) family and household factors such as parenting, socioeconomic status, and sibling relationships; (d) school and peer factors such as school climate and peer relationships; and finally (e) availability and use of technology, which considers the frequency, patterns, and nature of children's electronic interactions.

In reviewing factors that may be differentially related to traditional and cyberbullying, there is a clear need to establish whether these are



two separate types of bullying, or whether cyberbullying is simply an extension of traditional bullying, which is used to attain the same aims (e.g., social dominance, peer acceptance, and access to resources) (Volk, Camilleri, Dane, & Marini, 2012), but carried out through different means. Evidence tends to suggest the latter, as many studies report a significant overlap between involvement in traditional and cyberforms of bullying (Beran & Li, 2008; Dehue, Bolman, & Völlink, 2008; Gradinger, Strohmeier, & Spiel, 2009; Li, 2007; Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007; Smith et al., 2008; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004a). Few children appear to only be involved in cyberbullying; many also experience traditional forms of bullying at school. Dehue, Bolman, Völlink, and Pouwelse (2012) found among a sample of adolescents that only 7.1% were exclusively involved in cyberbullying, while 22.8% had experienced both cyberbullying and traditional bullying, as either a victim, bully, or bully victim. Furthermore, roles taken in traditional bullying appear to transfer over into cyberbullying, whereby victims at school are more likely to be cybervictims, and school bullies more often perpetrate cyberbullying (Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007; Smith et al., 2008; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2009). For example, Smith et al. (2008) found that over 80% of cybervictims were traditional victims, and three quarters of cyberbullies were also traditional bullies. Raskauskas and Stoltz (2007) compared roles of involvement in traditional and cyberbullying, finding that 85% of cybervictims were also traditional victims, and 94% of cyberbullies were traditional bullies. Olweus (2012) reports that only 10% of children involved in cyberbullying have not experienced traditional bullying, and argues that few new victims or bullies are created by cyberbullying – rather, bullying is just transferred from one setting (the school) to another (the virtual world).

As such, the strongest risk factor for involvement in cyberbullying is whether children participate in traditional bullying. Juvonen and Gross (2008) found that after controlling for other risk factors, the experience of being bullied at school led to a seven-fold increase in the risk of being victimised online. While much of the literature



suggests that bullying roles remain consistent across settings, an additional link between traditional victimisation and cyberbullying perpetration has been speculated, whereby children who are victimised at school enact revenge on their attackers from the safety of their own home. First suggested by Ybarra and Mitchell (2004a) this has come to be termed as the “revenge of the nerds hypothesis” (Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2009). There appears to be some support for this; among 65 cyberbullies identified by Smith et al. (2008), almost two thirds were also victimised at school. The authors suggest that many of these may have been traditional bully-victims, and this is supported by Dehue et al. (2012), who found that a greater proportion of traditional bully-victims cyberbullied others when compared with traditional victims. Despite this, other studies have reported no association between traditional victimisation and cyberbullying perpetration (Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007; Slonje & Smith, 2008).

Although there is still some debate over the exact relationship between roles in traditional and cyberbullying, it is clear that there is a significant overlap, and the two forms of victimisation are strongly linked. Many incidents of cyberbullying can be seen to originate within the school environment, as most victims of cyberbullying know their attacker in real life (Mishna, Khoury-Kassabri, Gadalla, & Daciuk, 2012; Slonje & Smith, 2008; Smith et al., 2008). As the findings suggest, cyberbullying is not a new type of bullying, but rather a continuation of traditional bullying behaviours, which is carried out through virtual rather than face-to-face interactions. Considering traditional and cyberbullying as extensions of the same behaviour has two important implications in identifying potential risk factors. Firstly, we would expect risk factors to be associated with traditional and cyberbullying roles in fairly similar ways. Secondly, valid conclusions are only possible if comparisons can be made between those who are involved in only traditional or only cyberbullying, and those involved in both traditional and cyberbullying. Such comparisons have rarely been performed, and where this has been attempted, there have been





too few cases of children only involved in cyberbullying to allow for any meaningful comparisons (Dehue et al., 2012; Gradinger et al., 2009). Thus, these two considerations need to be kept in mind when examining existing research on risk factors.

Demographic characteristics

Age

Self-reports of traditional victimisation steadily decrease with age (Craig et al., 2009; Olweus, 1993; Solberg & Olweus, 2003). More children report being victims at primary school than at secondary school (Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, & Hamby, 2005; Nansel et al., 2001), and this decrease has been attributed to older children acquiring social skills and coping strategies that enable them to deal more effectively with incidents of bullying (Smith, Madsen, & Moody, 1999). The most recent data from a United Kingdom household survey (Tippett, Wolke, & Platt, 2013) shows a similar trend of reducing victimisation over time during adolescence in traditional bullying. Similarly, the number of bully-victims has been found to decline with increasing age (Solberg, Olweus, & Endresen, 2007). Rates of bullying perpetration vary less by age, and reach their peak during early adolescence (Analitis et al., 2009; Nansel et al., 2001; Scheithauer, Hayer, Petermann, & Jugert, 2006), which may result from the tendency of bullies to pick on children who are younger than themselves (Smith et al., 1999).

Although a strong determinant of traditional bullying, the relationship between age and cyberbullying is less clear due to a lack of consistent findings. Most studies report no association with cybervictimisation (Beran & Li, 2008; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2007). For example, a comparative study of cyberbullying in Italy, England, and Spain found that rates of victimisation through both mobile phones and the Internet did not differ across a sample of 12 to



16 year old adolescents (Genta et al., 2011). Others, however, find significant variation by age, indicating that victimisation either increases with age, reaching its peak at around 13 to 14 years (Kowalski & Limber, 2013; Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak, & Finkelhor, 2006) or shows a similar decline to traditional victimisation, occurring more frequently among primary than secondary school children (Dehue et al., 2008; Mishna et al., 2012; Slonje & Smith, 2008). A meta-synthesis suggests a curvilinear relationship, whereby rates of victimisation (not including bully-victims) increase up until the ages of 12 to 14 years and then gradually decline thereafter (Tokunaga, 2010).

Fewer studies have considered cyberbullying perpetration. However, Mishna et al. (2012) found self-reported rates of cyberbullying perpetration increased with age among a sample of middle and high school students, despite younger students more often being victims of cyberbullying. Similarly, Kowalski and Limber (2007) found 7th to 8th graders (aged 12 to 14 years) were twice as likely to cyberbully others than 5th graders (aged 10 to 11 years). This increase across early-to-mid-adolescence is reported in several studies (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008b; Wolak et al., 2007); however, by late adolescence rates of cyberbullying perpetration appear to decline substantially (Williams & Guerra, 2007). Despite only limited findings, a similar effect has been found for cyber bully-victims, with self-report rates highest among mid-adolescents (Mishna et al., 2012; Sourander et al., 2010). An additional consideration concerns the type of media used for cyberbullying, as this may vary with age. Smith et al. (2008) found that older students were more likely to have cyberbullied others using text messages, photo/video clips, and instant messaging, but less so through other means.

Sex differences

Early studies found that males were more often involved in traditional bullying than females (Boulton & Underwood, 1992; O'Moore &



Hillery, 1989; Whitney & Smith, 1993); however, more recent research suggests that these sex differences are less clear than first thought (Seals & Young, 2002; Stassen Berger, 2007). Boys do appear more likely to be bullies and bully-victims (Haynie et al., 2001; Nansel et al., 2001; Scheithauer et al., 2006), but are as likely, or only slightly more likely, than girls to be victimised (Analitis et al., 2009; Espelage, Mebane, & Swearer, 2004; Veenstra et al., 2005). A meta-analysis by Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, and Sadek (2010) found bully and bully-victim roles to be moderately associated with the male sex, but only a weak relationship was observed for victimisation. Type of bullying is an important consideration; young males have been found to use direct forms of bullying (Wolke, Woods, Stanford, & Schulz, 2001) and to be more often physically bullied by their peers (Finkelhor et al., 2005; Nansel et al., 2001), while females more often bully others and are bullied through indirect forms (Craig, 1998; Crick & Grotpeter, 1996; Nansel et al., 2001). These sex differences are only found in younger children, however, and disappear by around 12 years of age (Analitis et al., 2009; Wolke et al., 2001). Meta-analytic evidence suggests that most of those who are involved in one form of bullying (e.g., direct) are also involved in other forms (e.g., indirect or relational), with adolescent girls tending to use relational means slightly more often (Card, Stucky, Sawalani, & Little, 2008). Thus, the empirical evidence for sex differences in traditional bullying, at least in adolescence, is less clear than often portrayed.

The nature of online communication led to initial speculation that cyberbullying may hold greater appeal for girls, as it offers them the opportunity to carry out indirect methods of aggression, such as spreading rumours and gossip. Some confirmation has been found for this, with girls reporting greater rates of cybervictimisation than boys (Dehue et al., 2012; Genta et al., 2011; Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Li, 2006). However, findings are not consistent, with other studies finding that males are more often victims of cyberbullying (Arıcak et al., 2008; Slonje & Smith, 2008), or that both males and females are victimised at fairly similar rates (Beran & Li, 2008; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Smith et





al., 2008; Wolak et al., 2007; Ybarra et al., 2006). Tokunaga (2010) concludes that, overall, the research shows there are no predominant sex differences in cybervictimisation. Fewer studies report on bullies or bully-victims; however, current findings suggest that females are equally as likely, and in some cases more likely, to perpetrate cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008b; Rivers & Noret, 2010; Smith et al., 2008), or to report being cyber bully-victims (Mishna et al., 2012).

Ethnicity

Examining the relationship between traditional bullying and ethnicity has been a problematic issue, compounded by the difficulty in obtaining representative samples which enable comparisons between individual ethnic groups. Studies which used class or school-based samples generally found no difference in rates of victimisation or bullying perpetration between ethnic groups (Durkin et al., 2012; Eslea & Mukhtar, 2000; Monks, Ortega-Ruiz, & Rodríguez-Hidalgo, 2008; Siann, Callaghan, Glissov, Lockhart, & Rawson, 1994). However, more recent research using larger, representative samples have found significant differences, which indicate that ethnic minority children may be more likely to participate in bullying others, but are at no greater risk of being victimised than the ethnic majority (Carlyle & Steinman, 2007; Sawyer, Bradshaw, & O'Brennan, 2008; Tip-pett et al., 2013; Wang, Iannotti, & Nansel, 2009).

At present, there is very limited evidence on ethnicity and cyberbullying. Hinduja and Patchin (2008b) examined the association between ethnicity and cyberbullying, and found no significant differences in either cybervictimisation or bullying perpetration. Similarly Ybarra, Diener-West, and Leaf (2007) reported no difference in the frequency of Internet harassment between youths who were either White, Black, or of mixed ethnicity. In contrast, Wang et al. (2009) compared involvement in four types of bullying among ethnic



groups using a nationally representative sample of US schoolchildren, finding that compared to White youth, African Americans were more likely to be cyberbullies, while Hispanic students were more likely to be cyber bully-victims. Adolescents in the combined “Other” ethnic group more often reported being victims of cyberbullying. The limited studies to date suggest there may be small differences in the likelihood of being victimised or perpetrating cyberbullying according to ethnic group.

Psychological characteristics

Aggression and anti-social behaviour

A strong association has been found between traditional bullying involvement and aggressive or anti-social behaviour. Bullying perpetration is strongly linked to delinquent behaviour (Barker, Arseneault, Brendgen, Fontaine, & Maughan, 2008; Perren & Hornung, 2005), and both bullies and bully-victims display greater levels of aggression from a young age (Carney & Merrell, 2001; Griffin & Gross, 2004; Perren & Alsaker, 2006). Examining a range of individual and social risk factors for bullying perpetration, Farrington and Baldry (2010) found that anti-social and troublesome behaviour between the ages of 8 and 10 years most strongly predicted bullying perpetration at age 14. There is substantial evidence that children who endorse aggressive beliefs are more likely to engage in peer aggression and traditional bullying, as both bullies and bully-victims (Bentley & Li, 1996; Huesmann & Guerra, 1997; McConville & Cornell, 2003), and in particular, positive attitudes towards aggression have been reported to predict pure bully roles (McConville & Cornell, 2003). Similarly Salmivalli and Voeten (2004) found that pro-bullying attitudes were able to moderately predict whether children perpetrated acts of traditional bullying. Boulton, Bucci, and Hawker (1999) found that although the majority of children believe that bullying is wrong and exhibit anti-bullying attitudes, children that express the weakest



anti-bullying attitudes are more often nominated as bullies and bully-victims by their peers. In contrast, there appears to be little association between aggression and pure victim roles. Victims show similar levels of aggression as children not involved in bullying (Salmivalli & Nieminen, 2002), and are less likely than bullies and bully-victims to endorse aggression-supporting beliefs (Bentley & Li, 1996).

While similar evidence regarding cyberbullying is limited, studies have found that children who cyberbully others score higher on measures of aggression, and exhibit greater levels of anti-social or delinquent behaviour (Beran & Li, 2008; Dilmac, 2009; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004a). Both Schultze-Krumbholz and Scheithauer (2009) and Sontag, Clemans, Graber, and Lyndon (2011) found that cyberbullying perpetrators scored higher on measures of proactive and reactive aggression. Taking into consideration the strong links between traditional and cyberbullying, Gradinger et al. (2009) found that children who were both traditional and cyberbullies reported the highest levels of reactive and instrumental aggression, while traditional and cyber bully-victims scored higher on both measures when compared to uninvolved students or only traditional bully-victims. Furthermore, cyberbullying perpetrators have been found to display more aggressive attitudes. Williams and Guerra (2007), using multiple indicators to measure moral approval of bullying, found a single point increase raised the odds of being an Internet bully by 24%, and similarly Calvete, Orue, Estévez, Villardón, and Padilla (2010) reported that children who engaged in cyberbullying were more likely to believe that the use of violence was justifiable.

Internalising behaviour

Children with internalising problems, such as withdrawal, anxiety, and depression, show an increased risk for being traditionally bullied in





childhood (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Reijntjes, Kamphuis, Prinzie, & Telch, 2010). It has been suggested that the behaviour exhibited by anxious and depressed children may send signals to their peers that they are easy targets, and will not retaliate against acts of aggression (Arseneault, Bowes, & Shakoor, 2010). Although some find internalising problems to be an antecedent to bullying, evidence from longitudinal research also shows that the experience of victimisation in adolescence can significantly predict internalising problems in both the short and long term (Reijntjes et al., 2010; Sweeting, Young, West, & Der, 2006). This suggests the two are locked in a vicious circle, whereby internalising problems can be a cause for, but also an outcome, of victimisation by peers (Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpelä, Rantanen, & Rimpelä, 2000; Reijntjes et al., 2010). Bully-victims have also been found to display internalising behaviour, including anxiety and depression (Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2000), and to score higher than all other bullying roles on psychosocial adjustment problems (Klomek, Marrocco, Kleinman, Schonfeld, & Gould, 2007).

Similar associations with internalising problems have been found in studies on cyberbullying. Raskauskas and Stoltz (2007) found that victims of cyberbullying were more likely to report feeling sad, hopeless, or anxious than non-victims, and to score highly on measures of depression (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004b). In addition, Navarro, Yubero, Larrañaga, and Martínez (2012) found that internalising problems, which included social anxiety, poor social skills, and difficulties communicating with peers and friends, all increased the likelihood of children being victims of cyberbullying. Similar to traditional bully-victims, cyber bully-victims also appear to show significant internalising problems, and have been found to display significantly poorer psychosocial functioning (e.g., depressive symptoms) than both cyber victims and cyberbullies (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004b).



Self-esteem

Self-esteem has been identified as both a risk factor and an outcome of traditional bullying. Victimization in particular is associated with low self-esteem (Egan & Perry, 1998), and both victims and bully-victims have been found to report substantially lower self-esteem than their peers (Egan & Perry, 1998; O'Moore & Kirkham, 2001; Wild, Flisher, Bhana, & Lombard, 2004). The relationship with bullying perpetration is less clear; while some studies found bullies exhibited lower self-esteem than non-involved children (Frisén, Jonsson, & Persson, 2007; Jankauskiene, Kardelis, Sukys, & Kardeliene, 2008), others suggest that bullies have the highest levels of self-esteem within their whole peer group (Rigby & Slee, 1991). Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, Kaistaniemi, and Lagerspetz (1999) found that levels of self-esteem predicted children's roles in traditional bullying, with bullies scoring high on measures of defensive egotism and self-concept, while victims scored low across all measures. Self-esteem itself can act as a protective factor against involvement in traditional bullying by reducing the negative effects of being bullied (Sapouna & Wolke, 2013), and improving individuals' self-esteem has been identified as a potential route for intervention programmes (O'Moore & Kirkham, 2001).

Similar associations have been found between cyberbullying and self-esteem. Katzer, Fetchenhauer, and Belschak (2009) found that children who were victimised through chatrooms had a significantly lower self-concept than their non-involved peers, and Patchin and Hinduja (2010) reported moderate negative associations between self-esteem and cyberbullying victimisation and perpetration. Brighi et al. (2012) compared the self-esteem of adolescents involved in cyberbullying across three European countries and found that victims of cyberbullying reported significantly lower self-esteem than non-victims. Additionally, concurrent involvement in traditional bullying was also considered, with the findings indicating that children who were victims of both traditional and cyberbullying scored



significantly lower on measures of global self-esteem than those who were victimised only traditionally or only online. Sticca, Ruggieri, Alsaker, and Perren (2013) assessed cyberbullying over a six-month period. Although no association between cyberbullying perpetration and self-esteem was found at time 2, cyberbullies scored significantly lower on self-esteem at time 1. Similarly, a moderate negative correlation was found between self-esteem and the experience of cybervictimisation.

Empathy

Empathy can be divided into two major dimensions: affective empathy, which is the ability to experience and share the emotions of others, and cognitive empathy, which is the ability to understand the emotions of others (Ang & Goh, 2010). Empathy differs significantly across roles in traditional bullying. Jolliffe and Farrington (2006) found that bullies had significantly less affective empathy than those who did not bully, or had only bullied others once or twice. Similarly, Shechtman (2002) reported that boys who bullied others showed lower affective empathy than non-bullies, although there were no differences in levels of cognitive empathy. There is some debate in the literature over whether bullies have high or low levels of cognitive empathy. Some argue that bullies lack social skills or social understanding (Crick & Dodge, 1999), and therefore continue to bully as they do not understand the pain that it causes. Endresen and Olweus (2001) found that a positive attitude toward bullying mediated the association between empathic concern and the frequency of bullying others. In other words, children with high empathic concern tended to view bullying as negative, hence they bullied less. In contrast, others argue that bullies are in fact skilled manipulators, who possess good cognitive empathy, and are highly attuned to the feelings of others, which they use to their advantage (Sutton, Smith, & Swettenham, 1999). Woods, Wolke, Nowicki, and Hall (2009) found that bullies did not differ from either victims or non-involved children on measures of





both cognitive and affective empathy. While much of the research has focused on bullying perpetration, there has been little consideration of other roles. Victims have been found to show similar empathic levels to children not involved in bullying (Woods et al., 2009), but no studies report levels of empathy among bully-victims.

A number of studies have similarly looked at the association between empathy and cyberbullying, finding some evidence that lower empathy is related to cyberbullying perpetration. Steffgen, König, Pfetsch, and Melzer (2011) found that cyberbullies demonstrated lower empathic responsiveness, and suggest that a lack of empathy may be considered a risk factor for cyberbullying behaviour. Similarly, longitudinal research by Sticca et al. (2013) found that children who cyberbullied others scored significantly lower on empathic concern, and this association was found to be stable across the six-month period of the study. No similar association was found for victims of cyberbullying, whose level of empathic concern did not differ from non-involved children. Other studies, however, report contrasting results. Almeida, Correia, and Marinho (2009) found that although cyberbullies tended to score lower than non-bullies on measures of empathy, these differences were not significant. Victims of cyberbullying appeared more likely to exhibit both cognitive and affective empathic skills, whereas cyber bully-victims scored significantly lower on all empathic measures. A summary of individual psychological characteristics and involvement in either traditional or cyberbullying as victim, bully-victim, or bully is given in Table 3.1.

Family and household factors

Parenting characteristics

Parenting shows strong links to traditional bullying, and the way in which children are parented can significantly impact on the likelihood of being victimised or of bullying others. From a social learning

perspective (Bandura, 1977) parenting is seen as a key influence upon children's peer relationships, as the child-rearing behaviour that they experience serves as a model for their own social behaviour (Ladd, 1992). Similarly, family system theory proposes that conflict within one or more of the intra-family relationships increases the likelihood of children's conflict with peers (Ingoldsby, Shaw, & Garcia, 2001).

TABLE 3.1 Psychological characteristics associated with traditional and cyberbullying

	<i>Traditional Bullying</i>			<i>Cyberbullying</i>		
	<i>Victim</i>	<i>Bully-victim</i>	<i>Bully</i>	<i>Victim</i>	<i>Bully-victim</i>	<i>Bully</i>
Aggression	Low aggression	High aggression	High aggression	?	High aggression	Highest aggression
Internalising Problems	Display range of internalising symptoms	Aggressive attitudes Display range of internalising symptoms	Aggressive attitudes No association	?	Aggressive attitudes Display range of internalising symptoms	Aggressive attitudes No association
Self-esteem	Low self-esteem	Low self-esteem	Unclear association	?	Low self-esteem	?
Empathy	No association	?	Low empathy	?	Low empathy	Low self-esteem Low empathy

All roles in traditional bullying have shown links to particular parenting practices. Children who are victimised by peers tend to experience maladaptive parental practices, which include harsh discipline and abuse (Baldry, 2003; Duncan, 1999; Schwartz, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 2000), overprotection (Rigby, Slee, & Martin, 2007; Veenstra et al., 2005), and authoritarian parenting practices (Baldry & Farrington, 1998). These characteristics are to an extent shared among bully-victims, who also have been found to experience harsh punishment and abuse (Schwartz, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1997), poor parental attachment, and a lack of parental involvement or supervision (Bowes et al., 2009; Marini, Dane, Bosacki, & Cura, 2006). A meta-analysis of research by Lereya, Samara, and Wolke (2013) found that both victims and bully-victims were more likely than non-victims to experience negative parenting behaviours, including abuse, neglect, and maladaptive practices. In addition, victims were also more likely to have overprotective parents. In contrast, parental characteristics such as good communication, warm and affectionate relationships, and adequate supervision protected children against the risk of traditional



victimisation.

Traditional bullying perpetration is also linked with certain parental behaviours, including poor relationships and a lack of supervision (Pepler, Jiang, Craig, & Connolly, 2008). In particular, bullies report problematic and conflicted relationships with their parents, characterised by a lack of warmth and support (Bowes et al., 2009; Perren & Hornung, 2005), poor supervision (Smith & Myron-Wilson, 1998), and harsh or infrequent discipline and maltreatment (Carney & Merrell, 2001; Shields & Cicchetti, 2001).

Few studies have explored the association between parenting and cyberbullying. Initial research has found that both cyberbullies and bully-victims experienced less parental monitoring and reported poorer emotional bonds with their parents than children not involved in cyberbullying (Ybarra et al., 2007; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004a). Wang et al. (2009) assessed parental support in relation to cyberbullying using four measures: (a) whether parents provided help when needed, (b) were loving, (c) understood children's problems, and (d) were able to make them feel better when upset. The authors found both cyberbullies and cyber-victims experienced significantly less parental support than children not involved in bullying, but no significant differences were observed for cyber bully-victims. Additionally, the effect of parenting style on involvement in cyberbullying has been considered. Dilmaç and Aydoğan (2010) found that both authoritarian and protective parenting styles were associated with cybervictimisation, while only authoritarian parenting was related to bullying perpetration. Dehue et al. (2012) examined the relationship between cyberbullying and parenting characteristics, while adjusting for children's involvement in traditional bullying. Children who were involved in both traditional and cyberbullying, as victims, bullies, or bully-victims, reported having parents who were less responsive to their needs, but were also more demanding. Additionally, cyber and traditional bullies were more likely to have neglectful parents, while cyber and traditional victims more often reported having authoritarian





or neglectful parents. Interestingly, most children who participated in cyberbullying were also involved in traditional bullying; there were too few only cyber bullies or victims for any meaningful analysis.

Overall, the findings suggest that parenting characteristics are related to roles in traditional and cyberbullying in similar ways, with bullies tending to experience more neglectful parenting practices, while victims are more often exposed to authoritarian or restrictive parenting styles. One additional factor identified through the research that specifically relates to cyberbullying is the extent to which parents monitor children's use of technology and have an element of control over their child's online behaviour. Twyman, Saylor, Taylor, and Comeaux (2010) found that victims of cyberbullying were more likely to have an e-mail account not accessible to parents, and it appears that cyberbullying more often occurs where parents do not have control over their child's online activities. Sengupta and Chaudhuri (2011) report that using the Internet in private, without parents being able to monitor activity, is associated with a 60% increase in the likelihood of being cyberbullied on social networking sites. In terms of protective factors, Mesch (2009) found that setting rules appeared to be particularly effective; although parental mediation in online behaviour and the use of filters to block access to certain websites were not related to victimisation, setting rules which identified sites children were allowed to visit significantly decreased the risk of online victimisation.

Domestic and sibling violence

Literature on traditional bullying suggests there is an association between exposure to violence at home and involvement in traditional bullying. Children who witness harsh discipline and violent behaviour at home are more likely to engage in bullying at school (Bowes et al., 2009; Lereya, Winsper, et al., 2013; Lereya & Wolke, 2013; Smith & Myron-Wilson, 1998). Baldry (2003) found that, after controlling for



child abuse, which in itself is a risk factor, both traditional bullies and victims were more likely to have been exposed to inter-parental violence. Sibling violence has also been associated with traditional bullying roles. Youth who are victimised by siblings are more often victims of bullying by peers, while those who bully their siblings are more likely to be traditional bullies or bully-victims at school (Duncan, 1999; Tippett & Wolke, submitted; Wolke & Samara, 2004). A longitudinal study on sibling and peer violence found that anti-social behaviour between siblings at age 3 predicted bullying of peers at age 6, indicating that experiencing violence within the home at a young age can increase the risk of later involvement in peer bullying (Ensor, Marks, Jacobs, & Hughes, 2010).

As yet there is little concurrent research on cyberbullying. However, Calvete et al. (2010) examined the relationship between cyberbullying perpetration and a combined measure of violence exposure which considered whether children were exposed to violence across four settings: the school, the neighbourhood, at home, and on television. Cyberbullying perpetration was significantly associated with greater exposure to violence across all settings. Although this does not identify whether domestic violence in itself is a risk factor for cyberbullying, it suggests there may be some association, and future research is needed to identify whether inter-parental or sibling violence increases the risk of children of cyberbullying involvement.

Socioeconomic status

Several studies have explored the association between traditional bullying and socioeconomic status. However, findings differ greatly between studies, depending upon the sample and which socioeconomic measure was used. In general, both victims and bully-victims are more likely to come from low socioeconomic families (Alikasifoglu, Erginoz, Ercan, Uysal, & Albayrak-Kaymak, 2007; D. Jansen, Veenstra, Ormel, Verhulst, & Reijneveld, 2011; P. W. Jansen et al., 2012). However, not all studies confirm this association (Garner &

Hinton, 2010; Ma, 2001). Similarly, while several studies report that perpetrators of traditional bullying more often come from low socioeconomic households (D. Jansen et al., 2011; Wolke et al., 2001), others find no evidence of this association (Ma, 2001; Veenstra et al., 2005). A meta-analysis of research by Tippet and Wolke (in press) finds that both victims and bully-victims are slightly associated with low socioeconomic status. However, no association was found for bullying perpetration, with bullies likely to be found among all socioeconomic strata.

Several studies on cyberbullying have included measures which pertain to socioeconomic status, and as with traditional bullying, it appears that this relationship varies greatly between studies. Ybarra and Mitchell (2004a) compared roles in cyberbullying on household income and found no significant difference between cybervictims, bullies, or bully-victims compared to non-involved children. Similarly, Sengupta and Chaudhuri (2011) found no significant association with rates of cybervictimisation in their study, which used both parental education and household income as measures of socioeconomic status. In contrast, other studies have found a link between cybervictimisation and measures of low socio-economic status, including low household income (Ybarra et al., 2007) and poor parental education (Mesch, 2009). The associations between individual, family, and household factors and involvement in either traditional or cyberbullying are summarised in Table 3.2.

TABLE 3.2 Family and household factors associated with traditional and cyberbullying

	<i>Traditional Bullying</i>			<i>Cyberbullying</i>		
	<i>Victim</i>	<i>Bully-victim</i>	<i>Bully</i>	<i>Victim</i>	<i>Bully-victim</i>	<i>Bully</i>
Parenting	Parental maltreatment Over protection	Parental maltreatment	Parental maltreatment Poor relationships with parents	Parental maltreatment Over protection	Parental maltreatment	Parental maltreatment
Domestic violence	Parental and sibling violence	Sibling violence	Parental and sibling violence	?	?	Exposure to violence
SES	Low SES	Low SES	No association	Low SES	No association	No association





School and peer factors

School climate

Students who report being traditionally victimised feel less safe in school (Varjas, Henrich, & Meyers, 2009) or perceive their school as less harmonious (Wong, 2003). Yoneyama and Rigby (2006) showed that victims perceived both school and classroom climate negatively. Furthermore, Lee and Wong (2009) found that students' experience of harmony within school was an important predictor of bullying behaviour. Traditional bullying has been found to be more prominent in high-conflict and disorganised schools (Kasen, Berenson, Cohen, & Johnson, 2004). Additionally, low levels of supervision within school settings have also been associated with higher rates of bullying (Craig, Pepler, & Atlas, 2000).

Given the strong association between bullying at school and cyberbullying, the school environment itself may be considered a risk factor. Although limited, there is some evidence that a poor school climate is associated with greater rates of cyberbullying. Sourander et al. (2010) incorporated measures of school environment in their research, finding that cybervictims, bullies, and bully-victims all felt significantly less safe at school, and were more likely to report that their teachers did not care about them. Bayar and Ucanok (2012) found that adolescents involved in cyberbullying perceived their schools and teachers less positively. In addition, Williams and Guerra (2007) found that rates of cyberbullying perpetration were lower among youth who rated the school climate as trusting, fair and pleasant, and who perceived themselves as being connected to the school. On the other hand, Varjas et al. (2009) found only limited evidence to support the association between cyberbullying and feeling less safe at school.



Peer relationships

Studies that have investigated the association between traditional bullying involvement and friendships have shown that victims as well as bully-victims usually have few friends (Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Rigby, 2007; Wolke, Woods, & Samara, 2009) and suffer more often than those not involved in bullying from long-lasting social isolation and loneliness (Cook et al., 2010; Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003; Veenstra et al., 2005). Hodges, Malone, and Perry (1997) have argued that there are three factors that prolong the duration of victimisation: (a) few friends, (b) the quality of friends, and (c) general standing in the peer group (extent of peer rejection). Indeed, positive friendships have been found to act as a protective factor against peer victimisation (Bollmer, Milich, Harris, & Maras, 2005). Rigby (2005) demonstrated that Australian elementary and middle school students' negative attitudes toward the victim was significantly associated with bullying behaviour, whereas friendships were protective against victimisation. Similarly, Boulton, Trueman, Chau, Whitehand, and Amatya (1999) reported that young people without a best friend were at risk of being bullied at school. Bullies have also been identified as being friendless, lonely, and rejected by their peers (Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Österman, & Kaukiainen, 1996; Warden & Mackinnon, 2003). However, there is also evidence suggesting that bullies are perceived as cool and popular and even leaders in their peer culture (Juvonen et al., 2003). Although these results may seem contradictory, it is possible that bullies may be rejected (disliked by the victims) but still perceived as popular by most classmates (Estell, Farmer, Pearl, Van Acker, & Rodkin, 2008; Rodkin, Farmer, Pearl, & Van Acker, 2006). Moreover, in some studies, bullies were only rejected by children who represented a potential threat (Veenstra, Lindenberg, Munniksmä, & Dijkstra, 2010). Furthermore, it has been suggested that although bullies tend to be popular in earlier grades, this popularity declines in later years (Olweus, 1997).

Although findings on cyberbullying are limited, it appears that children

involved in cyberbullying share similar peer relationship problems to those involved in traditional bullying. Victims of cyberbullying have been found to rate their friendships as being less trusting, caring, and helpful (Williams & Guerra, 2007) than children not involved in bullying, and both cybervictims and bully-victims score significantly higher than non-involved children on peer relationship problems (Sourander et al., 2010). In contrast, cyberbullies showed good peer relationships, but along with cyberbully-victims, scored significantly lower on measures of prosocial behaviour. While these findings reflect those observed for traditional bullying roles, other studies find little evidence of an association between cyberbullying and peer problems. Katzer et al. (2009) report that although victims of chatroom bullying rated themselves as less popular, they were no less socially integrated than their peers within the school. Furthermore, no association between cybervictim or bully roles and loneliness (Şahin, 2012) or peer rejection or social acceptance (Calvete et al., 2010) have been reported. A longitudinal study on the stability of cybervictimisation found no evidence that victims of cyberbullying were less popular, or perceived themselves to be less popular, than non-victims (Gradinger, Strohmeier, Schiller, Stefanek, & Spiel, 2012). A summary of the associations between school and peer factors and involvement in either traditional or cyberbullying is shown in Table 3.3.

TABLE 3.3 School and peer factors associated with traditional and cyberbullying

	<i>Traditional Bullying</i>			<i>Cyberbullying</i>		
	<i>Victim</i>	<i>Bully-victim</i>	<i>Bully</i>	<i>Victim</i>	<i>Bully-victim</i>	<i>Bully</i>
School Climate	Less safe, less harmonious schools	?	High conflict Disorganised schools	Less safe	Less safe	Less safe
Peer Relationships	Few friends, lonely	Few friends, lonely	Few friends, lonely, controversial but popular	Peer relationship problems	Peer relationship problems	Good peer relationships

Use of technology

Unsurprisingly, the way children use technology appears to be a key





determinant for whether they experience cyberbullying. In particular, which technologies children use, the frequency of use, and the ways in which they are used all appear to increase the risk of being victimised or of bullying others online.

Firstly, the amount of time that children spend using technology significantly increases the risk of their becoming involved in cyberbullying. Smith et al. (2008) found that victims of cyberbullying used the Internet more often than those who were not victims, with high Internet usage in particular associated with victimisation through websites, chatrooms, e-mail, and instant messaging. Similar results have been observed elsewhere, with victims found to engage in high levels of Internet use (Wolak et al., 2007) and to spend more hours per day using a computer than those who are not victimised (Mishna et al., 2012).

Furthermore, this association appears to extend across all roles in cyberbullying. Twyman et al. (2010) reported that youths who were identified as either cyberbullies, victims, or bully-victims spent a greater amount of time on the computer engaging in computer-based social activities, including e-mailing, instant messaging, and posting in chatrooms. The authors suggest that the more time spent online by an individual, the more likely they are to communicate with others, and, as result, are exposed to a greater risk of being targeted or of targeting others online.

The way in which children communicate online also matters. Comparing rates of victimisation across different online activities, Mesch (2009) found that participating in social networking sites and chatrooms significantly increased the risk of children being bullied online.

Furthermore, Twyman et al. (2010) report that children who had a social network profile, a personal website, or a personal e-mail account that was not monitored by parents, were at greater risk of being involved in cyberbullying. Posting detailed personal information online offers greater opportunities for being cyberbullied, and having



a social networking profile appears to be a particular risk, as it enables aggressors to easily obtain personal information and contact details of their victim, and use this material to abuse, threaten, or make fun of them (Mesch, 2009). The risk of cyberbullying is not simply limited to social networking; it extends to cybervictimisation and bullying perpetration in relation to instant messaging programs (Dehue et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2008; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004a), e-mails (Aricak et al., 2008; Kowalski & Limber, 2007), mobile phone calls or text messages (Smith et al., 2008), and chat-rooms (Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Walrave & Heirman, 2011).

Furthermore, the way in which children use technology increases the risk of cyberbullying. In particular, engaging in risky online behaviour, such as posting private information, sharing passwords, or interacting with anonymous strangers, can significantly increase the risk of children being victimised online. Among several forms of risky behaviour, Mesch (2009) reports that children's disclosure of private information significantly increased the risk of being cyberbullied. Similarly, Vandebosch and Van Cleemput (2009) found that indicators of risky online behaviour, including talking to people who were only known online, posting personal information, and passing on a password to a friend were all associated with an increased risk for victimisation.

One study which examined the association between cyberbullying and social networking sites reported that it was not use of social networking, but rather participants' online behaviour, including posting pictures, disclosing information about their school or home, and flirting with unknown people, that significantly increased the risk of being victimised (Sengupta & Chaudhuri, 2011).

While the findings suggest that children involved in cyberbullying are more likely to engage in risky behaviour, it may in fact be that they are not sufficiently aware of the risks that their behaviour entails. One study which examined children's perception of online risky behaviour found that those who were more often cyberbullied were less aware of



the risks associated with using the Internet, including sharing passwords with others or talking with individuals they did not know in their offline lives (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008a). Similarly, Mishna et al. (2012) found that victims of cyberbullying were more likely to share their passwords with friends, which the authors suggest is indicative of a lack of awareness of online safety and of the dangers entailed in sharing private information. That victims of cyberbullying are more likely to be unaware of the risks associated with online behaviour suggests that large-scale awareness campaigns are likely to be an effective route in preventing cyberbullying (Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2009). A further interesting finding concerns children's technological ability and their skill in using the Internet and other social media. Compared to victims of cyberbullying, cyberbullies appear to be much more capable at using technology. Ybarra and Mitchell (2004a) found that cyberbullies were twice as likely to rate themselves as almost expert or expert at using the Internet. Cyberbullies generally appear to be heavy Internet users, using the Internet more frequently, and rating their technological skills more highly than non-involved children (Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2009; Walrave & Heirman, 2011). Walrave and Heirman (2011) suggest that the amount of time cyberbullies spend online allows them to improve their skills, becoming adept users who are then able to utilise their technological skills to create an imbalance of power over the less capable victim.

Conclusion

In summary, research on cyberbullying has identified a range of factors that can increase the risk of children becoming involved in cyberbullying, ranging from individual traits through children's home and school environments. The literature is far from comprehensive. Only a few studies have specifically investigated a comprehensive range of risk factors, and there is a lack of longitudinal research that





could identify the pathways to children being cyberbullied or cyberbullying others. The strongest risk factor for involvement in cyberbullying that has been identified is being involved in traditional bullying; many cybervictims are also traditional victims, and many cyberbullies also perpetrate traditional bullying at school. Furthermore, the risk factors for traditional and cyberbullying are similar. Traditional and cybervictims tend to lack self-esteem, have internalising problems and problematic peer relationships, and experience maladaptive parenting practices which impact on their ability to form and maintain positive relationships with peers. Bullies, both traditional and cyber, are more aggressive, and experience more harsh or neglectful home environments. There is still less research on traditional or cyber bully-victims, although findings indicate that they experience significant individual and environmental difficulties.

That the same factors predict involvement in both traditional and cyberbullying further supports the view that these are *not* separate phenomena, but rather extensions of the same behaviour, albeit carried out in different ways. This strong relationship has implications for interpreting research findings. On the positive side, findings on traditional bullying can be generalised to most of those involved in cyberbullying, and can inform the design of interventions. However, insight will remain limited if research continues to examine cyberbullying without considering whether children are also involved in traditional bullying. To determine whether specific risk factors for cyberbullying exist, research must distinguish between children who are only involved in cyberbullying, those only involved in traditional bullying, and the largest group, involved in both traditional and cyberbullying. The low prevalence of cyberbullying and high degree of overlap with traditional bullying requires large samples for research. However, this research is necessary to ultimately determine whether there are specific risk factors for roles in cyberbullying. Of the findings currently available, there are some aspects of cyberbullying that may be considered unique, in particular the frequency and way in which children use technology. To conclude, considering the strong

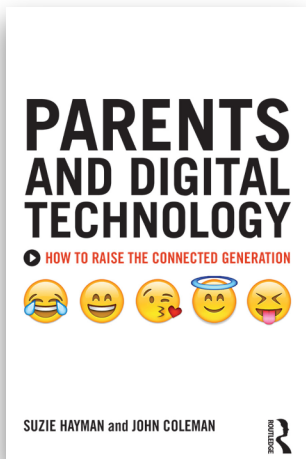


association of traditional and cyberbullying, interventions will only succeed if they target both traditional and cyberbullying. Interventions should include aspects specifically tailored to address cyberbullying, such as teaching children how to use the Internet safely. However, ultimately the most effective interventions must address risk factors associated with all forms of bullying, including improving the school and family environment, raising social skills, and encouraging positive and supportive peer relationships.



The Actual Threats of the Digital World

*From Parents and Digital Technology:
How to Raise the Connected Generation*



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Foreward by Suzie Hayman

Whilst it may be difficult to remain continuously ahead of the curve, parents, professionals and children must be supported to equip themselves with the resilience to recognise the signs of bullying, in particular cyberbullying. Parents and other family members may feel its an uphill struggle to familiarise themselves with ever evolving digital technology.

Technology has become part of the tapestry of family life and plays an increasingly prevalent role in day to day family activity. It is not something that parents or children are at the mercy of. All too often we forget that the online world is a controllable experience. The same common sense needs to be applied to the online world as to any other area of parenting. It's about critical thinking and making smart choices for a healthy balance between digital life and real life.

Its important to set boundaries early on, particularly around screen time, and instill from the start a rule that devices are switched off at bed time. The second thing is to lead by example: the same rules apply for the adults as for the kids. If a parent is continually engrossed on their gadget, or checks work emails during family time, then it makes that behaviour appropriate, and it's hardly surprising children do the same. At Bullying UK we think the key is to not wait for conflict, but put boundaries in place to ensure a healthy balance, and to deal with issues as and when they arise. Parents have always worried about their children's use of existing and emerging technologies. We encourage parents to have conversations with their children as the consequences of accessing inappropriate & violent sites can be extremely damaging and can distort perceptions about real life and relationships. Parents, carers and education professionals should monitor how much time children in their care spend online and encourage them to openly talk about what they're looking at. Young people are also more likely to seek help and advice from parents who



listen and are supportive.

Just as we teach children how to cross the road and how to swim, online activity and social media interaction should be supervised. Where possible, try to keep any devices in a room used by all the family and monitor how much time your child spends on the computer. Adults may feel they are behind the technological curve and may not know enough to feel confident protecting their children from online harm. It's important to continue to increase this knowledge as children grow older and migrate from school PCs to laptops to handheld devices. Vulnerable children can become so consumed by negative online comments towards them, it is crucial that a sense of perspective and proportion is injected by a role model to avoid issues spiralling out of control.

Cyberbullying

"My child was a victim of cyberbullying at school. It was swiftly dealt with by the head of year." - Mother of son now 21

"My daughter's head absolutely insisted his school did not have a bullying problem, no matter how many times we contacted him. When we produced evidence and he couldn't deny it was happening, he then switched tactics and said since it was online it was out of school (some of the nasty texts were clearly timed as having been sent during a school day!) so none of their responsibility. We took her out of school and eventually found somewhere better with a head who took her school's responsibility seriously. But although we rescued our child and she's fine now, I felt I'd failed as I left other children to bear the brunt of what was still going on." - Mother of a 13-year-old



Most parents have heard of cyberbullying – bullying through the medium of the internet and social media. It is a huge worry to many. However, parents might not realise just how bad it can be, and how powerful. It might be easy to spot physical bullying, with bruises and grazes, torn clothing or 'lost' belongings giving the game away. Even then, children will often deny there is a problem, blaming it all on accidents. Children who are bullied tend to accept the tormentor's assertion that they bring it on themselves – that they deserve to be pushed around for whatever reason the bully will pick out and target. Bullied children thus often feel shame and responsibility and hide what is happening even from their nearest and dearest and those who could help. Cyberbullying is several stages worse than this. It is psychological so doesn't leave obvious bruises. It can take place at any time, in any locale. While a child being beaten can come home and close the front door or bedroom door and feel safe, cyberbullying follows you home and pops up in your refuge – there is no refuge.

Bullying is nothing new – it has always existed and many positive advances have been made in tackling it, in schools and in the workplace. There are plenty of examples of good practice and all schools now have to have a bullying policy. However, having a policy does not seem to mean all schools put it into practice, either at all or effectively. And even though cyberbullying is actually easier to prove than physical bullying, many schools either don't understand the import of it or feel it is off school grounds so not their responsibility.

Cyberbullying can be posting jokes or insults about someone on their own social media page or on a social media site open to all, or in texts or messages. It can be threats of harm or even death, or instigations to harm themselves. It can be posting a fake invitation from the victim so that they get mails or posts taking up the offer placed in their name – often of an extreme sexual nature. It can be creating a whole website or social media page to invite as many people as possible to say they hate the victim or wish they were dead. It can, since so many young people have digital skills, be of (otherwise) admirable sophistication.





Online bullying is several stages more dangerous and harmful than real-world bullying, for quite a few reasons. One is the ubiquity of the platform. Hardly any young people are offline and, once on, however unpleasant the experience, very few are willing to come off. You might say “Just ignore it – don’t go and look at what they are saying” but very few youngsters would be willing to do that.

Online access seems to be encouraging cyberbullying. Partly this is because being at arm’s length of anything they say and not having to see the other person’s face when they hear it, it’s easy to escalate insults and remarks. Young people may not yet have fully developed the ability to be empathetic – they simply don’t think what it might feel like to have these things said to them. Even if they do, the medium and the audience encourage them to reassure themselves it’s just a joke and means nothing. A large part of the problem is the sheer scale, and the fact that it’s often a complete stranger you are joining in hounding – not only can you not see their face, you won’t have to do so next morning at your school. The sort of mob mentality that drives face-to-face bullying is multiplied in cyberbullying because so many people can become involved – people who know the victim being joined by people who do not, often not only in other towns or regions of the same country but other parts of the world. Ringleaders of bullying very rarely work on their own.

They need acolytes – helpers. These are usually the ones who actually administer the blows and the insults. Or, by being an audience, they cheer on and encourage the main protagonist. When you factor in the massive audience – it could actually be millions in some cases – who are part of this, it’s easy to see how cyberbullying can get out of hand and extreme. Each one vies with others to go one better in the smart, wounding quip – it’s a game. It’s not real. Except to the victim. Being ‘smart’ and ‘clever’ in insults has become, to many of our young people, a way of life. After all, they see it all the time in reality television programmes and game shows. Dismissing someone with a witticism is the name of the game – and if adults do it on screen, young



people feel they have permission to do so too. But when you add together this mob mentality with the anonymity of the internet and the ability to gather large numbers of people together this can tend towards bullying and aggression on a truly frightening scale.

Cyberbullying can also so much more easily become the resort of someone who has been bullied. People who bully never do so for the fun of it. They do it because at some point in their lives they have been exploited and abused – they have had the experience of feeling powerless and out of control. They bully someone else to get back a feeling of being confident and competent, and in command, which is sadly why people who have had it done to them can become the ones dishing it out. They may do so face-to-face, when they are older and bigger than when they experienced it. They may do so to peers or younger children, in reaction to being bullied at home or by older, bigger people. They may do it to younger members of their family, in response to being bullied at school. Or, they may find they can do so online when no-one can see them.

In a strange twist, some people have used the very anonymity of the internet to use cyberbullying to garner support, by posting anonymous insults directed at themselves, hoping that other users will jump in with reassurance and kindness.

Cyberbullying is a serious threat because so many applications on the internet seem to facilitate it. You'd almost come to believe, rather than simply not thinking it through, some designers have designed websites and mobile phone applications to make it easy to use them to make other people's lives difficult. There are websites that allow users to post anonymously. The positive reason is that it allows young people who have genuine anxieties – about sex and gender, about a myriad of issues that worry young people – to post a question and get an answer without disclosing their identity. Except, they have been used to post insults and innuendo about targeted individuals. One, the Yik Yak app, sparked a scandal in the US as high-school students used it to spread nasty messages about their fellow pupils. Users of the free app do not



need to create a profile or provide a username, they can simply post an anonymous message visible to any other user within a 1.5-mile radius. The designers say that it was designed as a 'local bulletin board' to share funny and interesting news within a community, and will disable it within certain locations if asked. A significant number of US schools have had to ask just that, as very little funny or interesting news was shared, but an awful lot of insults and unpleasantness.

Ask your children to keep to these rules

We'll look at many more ways to help your children manage the online world in the final chapter. But for now, start with this.

When you're about to say something on a social media site, ask yourself:

- Would I say this to this person or any other person to their face?
 - If someone said it to me, would I feel hurt or rejected or that they were ganging up on me?
 - Would I be happy for my granny to see what I posted?
- If the answer to these is 'NO!', 'YES!' and 'NO!', then DON'T PRESS 'SEND'.



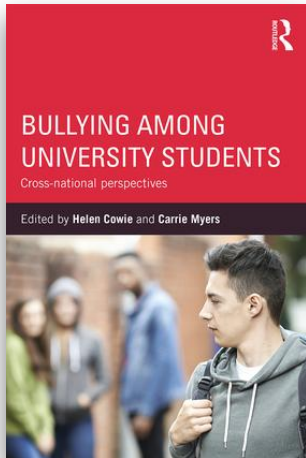


Do the Roles of Bully and Victim Remain Stable from School to University?

Theoretical Considerations

From *Bullying Among University Students: Cross-national perspectives*

Chapter 5: Do the Roles of Bully and Victim Remain Stable from School to University? Theoretical Considerations



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This chapter explores the continuities in bullying from school contexts to university contexts, and discusses the possible reasons why some people remain in the role of bully or victim over time and through various social contexts, whereas others find a way to escape these roles. Two theories – *peer community integration theory* and *positioning theory* – are reviewed to examine the ways in which engagement in bullying processes at school is associated with the development of individuals' peer relationships and their position within the peer group; the impact of bullying on their perceptions of themselves and others; and how bullying affects the establishment of future peer relationships through which these individuals integrate into social communities in later life. The chapter concludes by discussing the impact that supportive peer relationships have for an individual who has been engaged in bullying. The significance of the social cognitive processes in which individuals make sense of their bullying experiences are emphasized, as they are able to re-determine their peer group position and change their role as bully or victim.

Introduction

Individuals integrate into groups and communities through their interpersonal relationships. It is the quality of our interpersonal relationships that often promotes or prevents us from succeeding in the integration process. Hence, becoming an equal and accepted member of one's social community is important for our individual well-being and success. Bullying is widely identified as a pervasive social problem, which can prevent individuals from becoming equal and accepted members in groups and social communities in which they need or wish to integrate (Pörhölä and Kinney 2010).

As schoolmates comprise the most important peer community for children and adolescents for a number of years, successful integration



into this peer community becomes crucial for the psychosocial well-being and development of individuals, and forms the foundation for their ability to integrate into other communities, such as campus life during the undergraduate years. Being engaged in bullying at school therefore poses a severe developmental risk for individuals, whether they are in the role of bully, victim, or act in dual roles. In addition to causing several kinds of psychosocial and physical health problems (Due *et al.* 2005; Hawker and Boulton 2000; Houbre *et al.* 2006; Kaltiala-Heino *et al.* 2000), being engaged in bullying can prevent individuals from becoming integrated into their peer communities during childhood and adolescence, and even in young adulthood.

This chapter first reviews research on the continuities of abusive peer relationships in individuals' lives, focusing on repeated bullying and victimization experiences. The chapter continues by providing theoretical perspectives to help understand why these continuities tend to persist in individuals' peer relationships from one social context to another, hampering their integration into their peer communities.

Continuities of bullying and victimization

The studies examining the continuity of abusive peer relationships suggest that the roles of bullies and victims remain quite stable from elementary to middle school and high school (Boulton and Smith 1994; Salmivalli *et al.* 1998; Schäfer *et al.* 2005; Sourander *et al.* 2000). For example, Schäfer *et al.* conducted a six-year longitudinal study following German second and third graders through to the seventh and eighth grades, and found that bullying behaviour in elementary school was likely to continue at the later age, although being victimized by peers did not have similar continuity. However, in their eight-year longitudinal study among Finnish students, Sourander *et al.* found that bullying at age eight was associated with bullying at age 16, and being



bullied at age eight was associated with being bullied at age 16.

Evidence also exists to suggest that the roles of bully and victim tend to remain stable from childhood to adulthood and from school settings to higher education and workplace contexts. For example, in a retrospective study by Chapell *et al.* (2006) in the United States, it was found that 54 per cent of individuals who admitted to having bullied as adults had also bullied during childhood and adolescence. In Canada, Curwen, McNichol, and Sharpe (2011) examined 159 female and 37 male undergraduates who had bullied a fellow student at least once since coming to university and detected that most of the bullies at university had a history of bullying at school. Bauman and Newman (2013) examined a sample of 709 university students in the USA and found that 3.7 per cent of the students had been bullied at university at least occasionally. Of those who were bullied at university, 84.6 per cent reported that they had been bullied in junior high school as well, and 80.8 per cent reported that they had been victimized in high school; 73 per cent had been victims of bullying at both school levels. Being a stable victim from junior high school to high school and then to university was more characteristic for male than female students (100 per cent of males, 64.7 per cent of females). Furthermore, a nationally representative sample of 5,086 university students in the University Student Health Survey 2008 in Finland revealed that 51 per cent of those individuals who had bullied their fellow students during higher education had also bullied their schoolmates. While 47 per cent of those who had been victimized during their higher education had previously been subjected to school bullying (Pörhölä 2011a). It is worth noting that those who bully at school are most likely to continue to engage in various kinds of abusive behaviours in their social relationships. Particularly males who bully at school have been shown to have a heightened risk for sexual harassment (DeSouza and Ribeiro 2005; Pellegrini 2002), and dating violence (Connolly *et al.* 2000; Pepler *et al.* 2002).

Preliminary research also exists to link experiences involving bullying





at school with continued exposure in the workplace. Smith, Singer, Hoel and Cooper (2003) conducted a retrospective study in which 5,288 British working adults reported on whether they had been bullied at school and whether they were being bullied in their workplace, and found a clear relationship between having been bullied at school and being bullied in their workplace. Those who had been in both roles at school, bullying others and simultaneously being victimized, were even more likely to be bullied as adults at work.

As a social problem, taking place between individuals in their interaction processes, bullying can have serious negative effects on the developmental courses of the involved individuals' peer relationships. Being victimized by the majority of one's classmates and having only a minority of defenders among them, which is often the case (Hodges and Perry 1996; Salmivalli *et al.* 1996), can result in an inability to trust any of one's peers and, consequently result in difficulty in establishing and sustaining friendships with them. Indeed, evidence shows that during their school years, victims of bullying tend to avoid social contacts and events (Crick and Grotpeter 1996; Slee 1994) and suffer from loneliness (Kochenderfer and Ladd 1996). For example, in a cross-cultural comparison in seven countries conducted in primary and secondary schools, Eslea *et al.* (2003) found that victims of bullying reported having the fewest friends and being left alone at playtimes most often, and those who occupied dual roles (bully-victims) reported similar experiences on a less frequent basis. Furthermore, a meta-analysis of 18 longitudinal studies conducted by Reijntjes *et al.* (2010) revealed significant associations between peer victimization and internalizing problems including anxiety, depression, withdrawal and loneliness among primarily middle school students over time.

However, those who bully also tend to have a range of difficulties in their peer relationships. Recent studies have indicated that children who bully consistently at a moderate or high rate from elementary through high school have peer relationship problems, including high



conflict with peers, association with similarly aggressive peers, and susceptibility to negative peer pressure (Pepler *et al.* 2008). Further, a cross-cultural, cross-sectional survey including nationally representative samples from 25 countries indicated that bullies, victims and bully-victims report higher levels of health problems and poorer school adjustment than non-involved youth. Victims and bully-victims reported poorer emotional adjustment and relationships with classmates, whereas bullies and bully-victims reported greater alcohol use (Nansel *et al.* 2004). The nationally representative sample of Finnish university students also revealed significantly higher levels of substance abuse among those university students who had a history of bullying their schoolmates, as compared to victims and those without a history of being engaged in bullying processes during their schooling (Pörhölä 2011b).

In another study in Finland among seventh and eighth graders (Pörhölä 2008, 2009b), it was found that victimized students reported the most peer-relationship problems (e.g. having fewer or no close friends; not feeling valued and being actively disliked by peers; having few contacts with classmates; being unsuccessful in the establishment of peer relationships; and being afraid of peers in general). These problems occurred less for bullies, who usually had a group of close friends and companions, felt highly respected and valued by their peers, and found it easy to establish social relationships with equals, although they were also simultaneously afraid of losing their friends and, except for their best friends, were also poorly integrated with the rest of their schoolmates. Finally, individuals uninvolved in bullying reported the highest quality in their peer relationships and acceptance in peer communities.

Previous studies have revealed that even in their later lives, former victims of school bullying tend to have difficulties in maintaining friendships, suffer from loneliness and display lowered levels of self-esteem (Schäfer *et al.* 2004). Further, victims of bullying have been found to have a tendency to anticipate negative evaluation and



experience high levels of anxiety in social situations (Storch *et al.* 2003; Storch and Masia-Warner 2004). Young people victimized by their peers in adolescence also still tend to have negative perceptions of their peers' behaviour toward them in young adulthood (Salmivalli and Isaacs 2005). This set of peer relationship problems might partly explain formerly victimized individuals' lower levels of trust and satisfaction in their friendships during young adulthood (Jantzer *et al.* 2006). In the following sections, two theories will be discussed to examine how individuals' interpersonal relationships with other peer group members in childhood, adolescence and young adulthood affect their success in peer integration processes and determine their current position, and direct their future position, in peer communities, enabling the continuities of abusive peer relationships into the university years.

Bullying and peer community integration

The peer-community integration theory (Pörhölä 2009a, 2009b) describes how interpersonal peer relationships either promote or prevent individuals from integrating into their peer communities. While peers are usually understood as people who are at the same level with an individual in their cognitive, emotional and social development, *peer community* refers here to the crowd of peers with whom an individual has, or could, have an interpersonal relationship (Pörhölä 2009a). During childhood and adolescence, school peers, and particularly the student's own class, form an important peer community. In their school class, students tend to develop some sort of interpersonal relationship with each of their classmates. In addition to their school and classmates, children and adolescents might establish peer relationships, for example, with individuals living in their neighbourhood, with relatives of the same age, or peers who get together because of their shared leisure-time activities, or peers who communicate only virtually, for example, via the Internet. Successful integration into one's peer community is a reciprocal process which





can be defined as the individual feeling accepted, liked and valued by peers; as well as showing acceptance, care and respect for peers; and, consequently, feeling an equal member of the peer community (Pörhölä 2009b; Pörhölä and Kinney 2010).

The basic assumption in the peer-community integration theory is that individuals become integrated into the surrounding peer community through their interpersonal peer relationships. In the integration process, different kinds of dyadic peer relationships have different impacts or *weights*. Five kinds of relationships are distinguished on the basis of the impact these relationships have on the integration process: (i) *friendships* in which partners show mutual commitment, trust, support, valuation, love and care, are assumed to have the highest value, *+2*; (ii) *companionships*, which are characterized by a substantial amount of time spent in shared activities, also hold positive value, *+1*; (iii) *neutral relationships*, which can be characterized by a mutual lack of interest in the company of the other, are considered neutral in value, *0*; (iv) mutually hostile *enemy relationships* carry negative value, *-1*; and (v) *abusive relationships*, such as bullying relationships, which carry the most negative value, *-2*, for both perpetrator and victim (Pörhölä 2008, 2009b).

While enemy relationships can be characterized by mutual verbal, non-verbal or physically hurtful behaviour, manifested as repeated conflicts and fights, an abusive relationship is characterized by an imbalance of power, unilateral subjection and hurtful behaviour, and the victim's inability to affect the nature of the relationship. As compared with the mutually hostile enemy relationship, an abusive relationship, such as a bullying relationship, can be presumed to be more devastating for both parties. In this relationship, the victim, as the less powerful party, can only lose without being able to terminate or change the nature of the relationship. However, as the winner of each confrontation with their victims, bullies have only positive outcomes from their behaviour, which increases their tendency to continue this kind of behaviour, and even extend adopting it in various



peer relationships. In the end, this would result in these individuals failing to achieve integration into their peer community.

The peer-community integration theory (Pörhölä 2009a, 2009b) suggests that the nature of individuals' peer relationships determines how well they succeed in integrating into the peer community. While friends and companions pull an individual toward the centre of the peer community, enemy relationships and abusive relationships operate in the opposite direction, pushing individuals away from the centre of the peer community. Each relationship affects the integration process in accordance with its weight. The more enemy relationships, and particularly abusive relationships, a person has, the less successful the integration process will become for him or her, and vice versa: the more supportive relationships, like friends and companions a person has, the more successful he or she will be in integrating into the surrounding peer community.

Furthermore, the peer-community integration theory assumes that the level of an individual's integration into their peer community during childhood and adolescence is reflected in later life in their ability to integrate into other peer communities. Individuals who have failed to integrate into their peer community because of being bullied by their schoolmates, and who move on to the next educational level (university), are likely to see the new peer community as a threat rather than as a positive challenge. They may be frightened of their new peers, have difficulty trusting them, feel insecurity in their presence, and expect that they will not be approved of, valued and liked by their new peers, and that their peers will not want to be in their company. After having had only limited opportunities to practice their communication skills with their peers, and having received mostly negative feedback from their interactions with peers, they may also have deficiencies in peer interaction skills, which could help in establishing and maintaining rewarding peer relationships. Suffering from long-lasting and severe problems in their psychosocial well-being and health can further lower their ability to integrate into



the new peer community at university.

Individuals who have bullied others for several years at school, and have therefore failed to integrate into their peer community, may also lack peer interaction skills because of their previous experiences of biased peer feedback, which may have prevented them from being able to practise their skills as an equal member of the peer community. After having bullied their schoolmates, they might also experience being disliked by most peers, and therefore see the new peer community at university as a threat. In this situation, they might end up gathering a group of trusted companions, but ignore the rest of the peer community or even start bullying some of them. Hence, both the roles of victims and bullies may transfer from one social context to another (Pörhölä 2009b; Pörhölä and Kinney 2010).

To conclude, the theory of peer community integration aims to explain how engagement in bullying is related to the development of the relationships of individuals within a group of peers, eventually forming a peer group position, which tends to remain stable for quite a long time in the individuals' lives. While this theory operates on interpersonal relationship and group dynamics levels, it does not yet offer explanations to the question *why* these developmental courses take place in individuals' lives, enabling the continuities of bullying and victimization from one social context to another. The following section will provide theoretical perspectives on some social, cognitive-level phenomena, which, in turn, could explain why these developmental courses take place.

Bullying and positioning

Applying the positioning theory by Harré and colleagues (Harré and van Langenhove 1999; Harré and Moghaddam 2003b), to examine the continuities of bullying experiences in individuals' lives can extend our understanding of the ways in which engagement in bullying processes might affect the development of individuals' social





positions within a peer group, and also have an impact on their self-positioning. Self-positioning, in particular, can further explain the ways in which peer group positions, being embedded in group structures and internalized by individuals, have a tendency to remain stable from one social context to another. The positioning theory (Davies and Harré 1999; Harré and van Langenhove 1999; Harré and Moghaddam 2003a) focuses on the ways in which identities, social positions and the meanings related to them are constructed in the course of interaction. Positioning can be seen as a way of building and rebuilding one's own and others' social positions and identities through interaction. Positions exist as patterns of beliefs in the members of a relatively coherent social community, and they are shared in the sense that the relevant beliefs of each member are similar to those of others in the community. Positions are relational – meaning that adopting a particular position for oneself assumes a position for other interaction partners as well. Although positions are jointly produced and reproduced, a person can either appropriate a particular position within a social group or community, or it can be given to him or her. Once having taken up, or been given, a particular position, the person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position.

One of the essential facets of position theory is the power dynamics, which shapes and is shaped, by interaction in positioning processes. A position can be seen as a set of rights and duties that delimit the possibilities of behaviour. Hence, a position implicitly delimits how much and what the person in that position can say and do, in a particular context and to particular interaction partners (Davies and Harré 1999; Harré and Moghaddam 2003a). For example, individuals in more legitimate positions are presumed to produce more relevant and worthy ideas, and, therefore, are more entitled to speak and to be heard. In each social community, individuals can adopt a realm of positions: they can strive to locate themselves in, be pushed into, be displaced from or be refused access to, or recess themselves from, in dynamic ways in their interaction processes.



In the positioning theory (e.g. Harré and Moghaddam 2003a; van Langenhove and Harré 1999), there are different categories of positioning, including the distinction between self-positioning and the positioning of others, both of which can be either deliberate or forced. Deliberate self-positioning takes place when someone intends to portray a particular identity, usually in pursuit of a particular goal (for example, by using social or physical power to raise one's own status in a peer group). Forced self-positioning occurs as an obligatory response to the request of an external power (for example, the victim of bullying withdrawing from others' company, or responding with counter violence as self-defence). Deliberate positioning of others can take place in the presence (for example, by selecting persons to be included and excluded in a sports team or group work) or absence (for example, by gossiping and mocking someone behind the target person's back) of those to be positioned. The forced positioning of others can occur in cases when bystanders are required to position others, for example, bystanders in bullying situations can feel themselves being forced to turn their back on the victim, for fear of becoming bullied themselves if they refuse.

Applying the positioning theory, we can visualize what would happen in bullying processes in terms of positioning, to individuals in different bullying roles, and, in particular, how the ways of being positioned within a peer group could affect the peer group integration of victims later in life. In interaction processes, in which the role of bully is both taken by particular persons and given to them by the peer group, the bullies learn to position themselves as the authority above others. Through their communication, behaviour and physical acts, they appropriate the right to choose other people to be included in and excluded from the group, and decide which rights and duties others in the peer group have.

Positioning oneself as this kind of authority would not be possible without the approval of the majority of the peer group. Again, in interaction processes within the peer group, the members of the group



approve a particular person to have the right to use power, give orders, choose other members of the group and decide on their rights and duties. Hence, the right to be believed, obeyed and followed must be given by others to the person who strives to appropriate the position of authority. For example, by bullying and excluding some of their peers, these individuals succeed in convincing others of their extensive rights, thus further strengthening their position of authority in the peer group.

The position of the victims is determined in the bullying processes. For example, by mocking the target person's personal qualities (e.g. by calling the person dumb, stupid or an idiot), the bully shows others that the target person has characteristics which mean that individual does not have the right to be heard and valued in the peer group. By accusing the victim of lying or something that they deny having done – which is quite typical in bullying situations – the bully would show that this person has lost the right to be believed. As the bullying continues, the victim's rights are usually taken away while their duties are increased. Eventually, the victim's position can be made so low that they barely have the right to talk at all in the peer group, or even join the group. By means of physical forms of bullying (e.g. physical violence, stealing or destroying their property or plagiarising their university assignments), the bullies can show that the target person no longer has the right to physical integrity, or to keep their own property, money or acknowledge their achievements. Victims can even lose the right to their own intellectual capacity, for example, by being told to do the bully's university work.

Due to their lack of rights within the peer group, victims usually find it very difficult to affect the position that they have been given. However, bullies have also taken and been given the right to reposition the victim with respect to others, thus being able to re-determine their victims' rights and duties. Sometimes this right can be used to return at least some of the rights to the victim, or releasing the person from their duties. This kind of repositioning could result, for





example, at school level, from an intervention by teachers, parents or other classmates, or, at university level, by an event or change in the peer group dynamic that would motivate a re-evaluation of the victim's position and generate a repositioning process.

So, how does the theory of positioning increase our understanding of the tendency for victims to be revictimized later in life? Although the theory includes the assumption that repositioning is possible, and empirical findings exist to suggest that some victims of school bullying do succeed in escaping their roles as victims (Smith *et al.* 2004), the experiences of bullying victimization may have a long-term impact on the self-positioning of victims in peer groups. After having learned to position themselves as a person with only duties and without any rights in the peer group, the victims may have created quite a permanent way to see themselves among peers. This perception can probably affect the ways in which they expect and accept to be positioned by new peers in new social contexts.

Positioning oneself as an outsider, without the right to be heard, believed, valued or cared about, would presumably result in avoiding or defensive behaviour in a new peer group. Instead of eagerly joining others, making friends with them, and displaying the self-disclosure that is needed for building social relationships, these people would most likely withdraw from social interaction, limit their self-closure, and hesitate, or even show defensiveness, in situations where peer relationships are established. Due to this behaviour, they would increase the risk of again being positioned as outsiders with duties but no rights. In turn, this kind of peer group position would put them at risk of further victimization and abuse.

Those who have occupied the bully's position have learned to see peer relationships as social battlefields on which individuals must fight for their rights, in order to gain social power over others and to avoid being given the position and duties of the victim. As the establishment of new peer relationships is not difficult for this group of individuals (Pörhölä 2008, 2009b), they would quickly be able to gather a new



group of peers around them, and, with the assistance of these companions, take on a leading position within the new peer community at university. As they have previously gained social power by bullying others, the risk of them repeating the same strategy is high.

The impact of friends on stopping the continuities of peer victimization and bullying

Friends can play a significant role in peer community integration processes, by affecting the positioning and self-positioning of individuals. For example, Hodges *et al.* (1999) found that aggressively behaving children avoided bullying children who had friends. They suggested that, in addition to serving a physically protective function, friends may improve the self-esteem and social skills of the victims of bullying, and provide emotional and cognitive support. It has even been shown that some victims have managed to escape their role as victim by acquiring new friends (Smith *et al.* 2004). Having friends can also reduce the negative consequences of bullying. Evidence shows, for example, that having pro-social relationships with some classmates moderates the relationship between victimization and loneliness felt by the victim (Storch and Masia-Warner 2004). Correspondingly, Newman *et al.* (2005) found that victimization by peers during high school damaged most those who also felt isolated, whereas those who were bullied frequently in high school, but received social support from peers, reported fewer stress symptoms in college. Hence, the benefits of peer support for coping with victimization seem obvious. Storch and Masia-Warner (2004) suggest that supportive peer relationships may provide an arena in which negative beliefs about oneself and others can be corrected, thereby reducing the loneliness and enhancing the self-esteem of the victimized person.



Why do friendships have such an important meaning to the victims of bullying? Can friends contribute to the positions of victims in the peer group and their prospect of being revictimized in the future? The peer-community integration theory (Pörhölä 2009a, 2009b) assumes that friendships in which partners show mutual commitment, trust, support, valuation, love and care, are the most powerful relationships to pull individuals towards the centre of the peer community. Having peer relationships, in which a person shares mutual rights and duties with their partner, can have a significant impact on that individual's peer group positioning. Even though friends might not be able to prevent the person from being bullied by other peers, they are able to affect the victimized person's self-positioning and, in this way, can contribute to the future peer group positioning of that person. When the victimized person perceives that they can have equal rights and duties in a peer relationship, this perception can change their expectations of future peer relationships. It can encourage a more positive self-positioning as a potential insider of a peer group, which in turn, would affect their behaviour when entering a new peer group. Having friends would also provide opportunities for the victims of bullying to practice their peer interaction skills, which would further help them to be able to establish rewarding peer relationships and to integrate them into new peer communities, for example, when moving from school to university.

Regarding those who bully, friends can contribute by changing the course of their behaviour and preventing their bullying behaviour. With feedback from their friends, bullies can be helped to re-determine their own position in the peer group and give up the rights they have appropriated and been given to determine the positions of others in the peer group. In this way, the bullies would also have a better chance of having balanced peer relationships and success in integrating into the peer community at university, and have due respect for the rights of others to study and socialize in harmony with their peers.

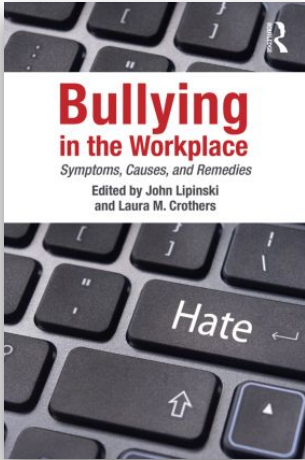




Schoolyard Scuffles to Conference Room Chaos: Bullying Across the Lifespan

From *Bullying in the Workplace:
Causes, Symptoms, and Remedies*

Chapter 6: Schoolyard Scuffles to Conference Room Chaos: Bullying Across the Lifespan



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Introduction

Although bullying was once considered to be a social problem unique to childhood, research conducted during the last few decades has suggested that the behaviors associated with bullying continue into adulthood. Bullying is a form of instrumental aggression, meaning that it is proactive and frequently not a response to aggressive behavior demonstrated by a victim (Espelage and Swearer, 2003). Also, a power differential exists between the perpetrator and victim, and results in the victim feeling unable to defend him or herself from the bully's aggression (Espelage and Swearer, 2003). Bullying behavior tends to be repeated over time, although in some cases, a single incident can also be seen as an instance of this type of aggression (Olweus, 1993).

As previously mentioned, although bullying has been extensively studied in childhood, less attention has been paid to adult bullying in the research literature. However, there has recently been an increased emphasis upon identifying and intervening in instances of adult bullying, particularly in the workplace. In this chapter, the authors will review the developmental progression of bullying across the lifespan with the hope that such understanding will lead to more successful prevention and intervention efforts at all age levels.

Why a Developmental Perspective of Bullying is Helpful in Understanding Bullying in the Workplace

Bullying has often been considered a childhood problem. Such behavior has a long history, with numerous references in classic childhood literature (e.g. *Oliver Twist*), and is international in both breadth and scope as it has been documented and studied in Norway, Finland, and Sweden, as well as Japan, Australia, the United Kingdom,



Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, and Switzerland (Batsche, 1997; Smith and Brain, 2000). Evidence has been provided establishing the normative (routinely occurring) nature of bully–victim relationships in schools (Smith and Brain, 2000). Certainly, bullying is recognized as one of the most common and widespread forms of school violence, and involves approximately 30 percent of American students during their school careers (Nansel *et al.*, 2001). Because it has often been conceptualized as a problem of childhood and adolescence, less attention has been paid to bullying in adulthood, although research conducted in the last decade has sought to remedy that deficit by providing studies of bullying in the workplace. Nevertheless, both the theoretical and practical understanding of bullying in the workplace can be enhanced by reviewing the literature pertaining to bullying during childhood.

Developmental Progression of Verbal and Physical Bullying

Indeed, bullying is a problem that may begin in childhood, but extends into adulthood. Dilts-Harryman (2004: 29) illustrates this concept by stating that “society is learning that little bullies grow into big bullies ...change a few words, and the adult bully was once the young bully who sat in your classroom.” Olweus (1993), the preeminent Norwegian bullying researcher, suggests that children who engage in direct bullying and aggressive behaviors in early childhood are likely to continue that trend into adulthood by displaying elevated levels of aggression in the workplace, in intimate relationships, and within family relationships. This sequence of direct bullying from early childhood into adulthood has distinct characteristics, which look developmentally different at various ages.

Before discussing such differences across various age populations, it is important to understand the various types of direct bullying behaviors. Episodes involving physical bullying may entail hitting, kicking,



punching, pinching, slapping, destroying property (Griffin and Gross, 2004), or restraining another (Olweus, 1993). These types of behaviors are often easily observed, and tend to be reported with greater frequency than less overt forms of bullying. Moreover, physical bullying often has physiological consequences (i.e. physical injuries), which can be documented and visibly detected.

Verbal bullying is also considered to be a form of direct bullying as it often manifests itself overtly, but is observed and documented less frequently because the consequences are less evident. These behaviors involve name calling, teasing, and insults about intelligence or attractiveness (Griffin and Gross, 2004). Furthermore, researchers have found that the most common victimization involves being belittled about looks or speech (Nansel *et al.*, 2001). It is important to recognize that the descriptions presented represent a short list of possible direct bullying behaviors. Since bullies tend to choose their tactics based on their learned experiences, a wide variety of aggressive acts could be completed in order to bully others. Regular social development follows a marked path through which all typically developing children and adults progress. When deviations or deficits occur, the individual tends to engage in age-inappropriate maladaptive behaviors in an attempt to make sense of his or her world, given his or her underdeveloped skill set (Siegler *et al.*, 2006). Typically developing children begin their maturation progression by acquiring social skills through engaging in cooperative play and developing perspective taking abilities, permitting growth away from previous egocentric thinking (Beauchamp and Anderson, 2010; Siegler *et al.*, 2006). Moreover, these skills are practiced over time, and perfected through reinforced attempts. Thus, the development of the social skill set is directly related to a child's opportunities to interface with other children (Beauchamp and Anderson, 2010). It should be noted that physical aggression demonstrated around age 2 is considered a part of normal social development. The problem begins when children continue their successfully learned maladaptive behaviors into early childhood and beyond.





If social development deviates from the typical trajectory in early childhood, one can see elevated levels of aggression that exceed those found in normal development. These increased levels of physical aggression can manifest as a method of necessity, in an attempt to obtain or achieve whatever the child is seeking (i.e. obtaining food and toys). Troubling behaviors at this age are often ignored because they seem harmless, but if unmitigated they become a successfully learned technique. Such behavior patterns are utilized until other means of obtaining the desired results are appropriately developed. However, these behaviors tend to gradually decrease as the child ages and attains advanced language development (Alink *et al.*, 2006).

As children enter middle childhood, typically developing youth continue to utilize language as a primary method of social interaction, and decrease their levels of physical aggression (NICHD and Arsenio, 2004). Within middle childhood social development, children begin to build upon their learned language skills and start to master cognitive and social skills as a method to competently function as they enter school. This new environment creates the need to understand and adhere to rules and social norms, which enable children to interface successfully and cooperatively with their peers (Siegler *et al.*, 2006). Typically, during this developmental stage, children begin to model behaviors seen by peers and parents, and tend to incorporate the observed methods into their personal interactions with peers. This process helps children to model appropriate social interaction, but also can embed maladaptive methods to handling interpersonal conflict within a child's functioning.

Learning from parents establishes a foundation from which children interact with peers and typically carries over into adolescence and adulthood, thus determining the extent and type of aggression they will exhibit (Letendre, 2007). Moreover, when this social developmental sequence deviates from a typical trajectory, one tends to see individuals in middle childhood continuing to engage in heightened levels of physical aggression. This exhibition of direct



physical aggression becomes more problematic in middle childhood because the behavior is no longer socially and developmentally acceptable. Furthermore, these maladaptive behaviors illustrate that the child cannot resolve problems appropriately, which is often associated with emotional regulation problems, conduct problems, and peer rejection (Card *et al.*, 2008).

As youth in middle childhood move into adolescence, their social development changes dramatically, typically maturing through an increase in personal independence and appropriate peer group interaction (Beauchamp and Anderson, 2010; Bowie, 2007). These behaviors are often seen through adolescents becoming more autonomous, searching for independence from their previous sources of emotional connection. Adolescents start to develop enhanced peer to peer and peer group relationships, which helps them to develop their own personal identity. Moreover, successful identity formation is related to adolescents' chosen peer groups, their understanding of social interactions, and increase in group dynamics (Siegler *et al.*, 2006).

When adolescent social development deviates from the typical trajectory, different forms of aggression begin to present themselves. If aggression was a successful method of socializing in early and middle childhood, during adolescence these methods tend to become refined and escalate if unchecked (Loeber and Hay, 1997). It is within this period of social development that forms of aggression are most distinctly divided between girls and boys (Letendre, 2007). More specifically, relational aggression is seen as more socially acceptable for females (discussed later in this chapter), and physical aggression more appropriate for males (Bowie, 2007).

To that end, at this stage of social development, girls tend to develop more interest in their relationships and interactions with others, leading to relational aggression as a method for solving problems with peers. Conversely, boys are typically goal-directed in their behavior, and maintain autonomy in their relationships, which tends to lead to



more physical aggression as a method for problem solving with others (Letendre, 2007). Despite these theoretical gender differences, research has found that as adolescents age, both boys and girls tend to engage in relational aggression with similar frequency (Crothers *et al.*, 2009b). Similarly, with adolescence typically comes a decrease in physical bullying behaviors (Crothers *et al.*, 2009b).

Of course, as adolescents transition to adulthood, it is typical for them to graduate from secondary or post-secondary education to the workplace. With that change, workplace behavioral expectations and social dynamics evolve into a social hierarchy within the employment setting. A dominance hierarchy often becomes established, in which certain employees become leaders, while others assume roles that are subordinate to their peers. While perpetrators of workplace bullying may be superiors, colleagues, subordinates, or clients, bullying by superiors against subordinates is the most common form of peer aggression (71 percent; Namie, 2003a). Lutgen- Sandvik (2006: 406) suggests that “adult bullying at work is a pattern of persistent hostile discursive and nondiscursive behavior that targets perceive as efforts to harm, control or drive them from the workplace.” These behaviors include “public humiliation, constant criticism, ridicule, gossip insults, and social ostracism” (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006: 406).

Research predicts that unaddressed workplace conflict tends to lead to workplace bullying when behaviors are allowed to progress into violence and abuse (Ayoko *et al.*, 2003). Over one million individuals are the victims of violent crimes in the workplace each year, with 60 percent of these crimes being characterized as simple assault by the Department of Justice (Randall, 1998). With regard to the violent crimes in the workplace, 75 percent were fistfights or similar altercations; 17 percent were shootings; 8 percent were stabbings; and 6 percent were sexual assaults (Randall, 1998). Additionally, of the 54 percent of the incidents perpetrated by one employee against another, 13 percent were an employee against a manager; and 7 percent were incidents of customer workplace bullying. Understandably, targets of





workplace bullying often anticipate the workday with dread and a sense of impending doom (Lutgen-Sandvik *et al.*, 2007). Victims of workplace bullying tend to feel profoundly ashamed of being victimized and often are upset with their inability to fight back and protect themselves (Lutgen-Sandvik *et al.*, 2007). In summary, given the prevalence of physical and verbal workplace bullying, and its significant emotional, physical, and psychological impact upon victims, intervention is imperative to ensure a safe working environment for all employees.

Developmental Progression of Relational and Social Aggression

In the workplace, like in most society, direct aggression is not typically tolerated. At an early age, children are taught that it is unacceptable to be physically aggressive, learning instead to express frustrations verbally. By elementary school, children are socialized against demonstrating verbal aggression as well. While first parental and then societal boundaries suppress most directly aggressive behaviors, such limits do not necessarily assuage the anger and frustration that can lead to directly aggressive acts (Coie and Dodge, 1998). This can cause aggressive behaviors to become covert, with the perpetrator using means that cannot immediately be identified as aggressive. Researchers speculate that this is how indirect aggression is initially developed.

Non-physical forms of aggression have primarily been given three different names: indirect aggression, relational, and social aggression. Although some debate exists regarding actual differences between indirect, relational, and social aggression (Archer and Coyne, 2005), we will discuss relational and social aggression as related but separate constructs given that Crothers *et al.* (2009b) found support for such a viewpoint.



Relationally aggressive acts are defined by their specific intent: they are directed at another individual with whom one has an existing relationship with the specific aim of causing psychological harm to that person or negatively impacting the target's social status. Relational aggression may be overt or covert and includes gossip, cruel rumors, or physically excluding another among others. The focus of the perpetrator in relational aggression is to establish power or inflict harm within a dyadic relationship. Within a female friendship, for example, an individual may wish to register her displeasure with her friend by excluding her from a social interaction, avoiding her, threatening to end the relationship, insulting her personal appearance or qualities that the perpetrator is aware of as a result of the intimacy of the relationship, initiating seemingly helpful behavior of which the purpose is to undermine the target's self-confidence (e.g. volunteer to take the target shopping to update the target's wardrobe), insulting persons who are important to the target, or withdrawing or failing to follow through on previously agreed forms of support.

In social aggression, the focus of the aggressor is to impact social status, either by diminishing the target's status, or enhancing one's own status. Behaviors that might be used to decrease the status of a victim include sharing intimate information about the target, spreading false information about the target such as questioning sexual behavior or sexual orientation, excluding the target from group interactions (e.g. social ostracizing), and organizing a group's response or view of the target. In the case of a perpetrator attempting to elevate his or her status among peers, social aggression is manifested by pursuing eminence by undermining others, engaging in deception, or pursuing power in a manner that harms another person. For example, a perpetrator may reveal intimate information about a victim in order to gain favor with peers, pursuing or stealing a coveted friend or boyfriend, and taking out the competition by belittling their qualities or undermining their qualities to better one's own achievement.

While the capacity for relational and social aggression involves a



sophisticated set of social skills and cognitive complexity, there is research suggesting that relational aggression can begin early in a child's life. Generally, relational and social aggression are more likely to occur as children develop the verbal and social-cognitive skills that are necessary to execute subtle social behaviors (Björkqvist, 1994). These skills rely upon the development of language skills as well as the ability to ease away from the egocentric thought that is typical of early childhood. These developments allow the child not only to have the language skills necessary to manipulate a relationship socially, but also to have the ability to see a situation from another child's perspective, thus being able to predict potential outcomes of their behavior and understand what is likely to bother others.

These skills are likely to develop in early childhood and can lead to the development of such relationally aggressive behaviors as a child threatening to end a friendship if a friend does not do what the child wants, not inviting a child to a party, threatening to exclude a child if he or she does not do what the child wants, or refusing to listen to someone with whom he or she is angry (at this young age, perhaps even literally covering their ears; Archer and Coyne, 2005). Children learn how to execute new behaviors from observing the behaviors of those who are older than they are (Bandura, 1986). Thus, it is likely that these children are learning relationally aggressive behaviors by copying social behaviors that they observe their parents and siblings using. This provides an explanation as to how these indirectly aggressive tactics are learned by young children and also how they are perpetuated across generations.

As children move into early adolescence, their cognitive and language skills as well as social skills develop to a point where relational aggression is used with greater sophistication. It is also a period when children attempt to minimize parental influence and instead use their peers as their primary reference group (Siegler *et al.*, 2006). The intersection of these two developmental trends is a reason why early adolescence is a period in which relationally aggressive tactics





flourish. Children begin to have more independence and start to engage in more adult-like social interactions. For example, they will begin to go to the mall or parties and interact with other children in situations that are not directly supervised by adults. It is during such occasions that some children begin to use their growing social repertoires to manipulate social relationships.

There is less research regarding social aggression in comparison to physical and verbal bullying, but it can be argued that adolescents' acquisition of abstract reasoning leads to the emerging capacity of social aggression. Crothers *et al.* (in press) found that there was a stronger relationship between deep and elaborative processing for social aggression than there was for relational aggression among late adolescents. Crothers *et al.* (in press) suggest that social aggression may require a higher level of cognitive-analytical abilities than relational aggression. For example, strategic social aggression often requires that a perpetrator know how to manipulate peers into targeting an individual for social isolation. This process requires the perpetrator to know what will motivate others to socially "cut off " from a target, even if tension or conflict does not currently exist between the peers and the target.

Additionally, perspective-taking is generally seen as an essential capacity for both relational and social aggression. The relational aggressor must understand the psychological worldview of the intended target to know what is likely to negatively impact the victim emotionally. Similarly, the social aggressor must attempt to understand the perspectives of the members of the peer group in order to estimate their likely responses. However, there are forms of relational aggression that do not appear to require an extremely high level of cognitive complexity, including criticizing others, threatening to end a relationship in order to obtain compliance from the target, using the silent treatment, and intentionally excluding others. In contrast, socially aggressive tactics such as gossiping, spreading rumors, backbiting, breaking confidences, criticizing behind another's



back, ignoring, or deliberately excluding others from a group, may require added sophistication in that the perpetrator seeks to predict the responses of multiple members of the social setting.

The social milieu of children in early adolescence can also serve to foster the growth and expansion of relationally and socially aggressive behaviors. Girls at this age often have closer and more structured social relationships than do boys (Mazur, 1989). Adolescent girls are also typically more adept at identifying social groups, as opposed to boys who tend to have larger and looser groups (Cairns *et al.*, 1985). Having more investment in a social relationship will increase the likelihood that relational aggression will be a useful tool to manipulate others for personal gain. If these behaviors are reinforced socially through increased notoriety or status in the social group, then they likely will continue to be utilized.

Another developmental factor that leads to an increase of relationally aggressive behaviors in adolescence is language skills. It has been established that the development of relationally and socially aggressive behavior is related to the growing sophistication of language skills (Bowie, 2007). A child who is going to manipulate a relationship in an aggressive way will need strong verbal skills to be successful. Girls tend to develop verbal skills earlier than boys, so when taken into consideration with the aforementioned differences in social structure, it is not surprising that in adolescence girls tend to utilize relational aggression more than boys (Salmivalli *et al.*, 2000). Eventually males' verbal skills do catch up with females', and not surprisingly there is evidence to suggest that by adulthood males utilize relationally aggressive behaviors as often as females (Archer and Coyne, 2005; Björkqvist *et al.*, 1992).

As children grow from adolescents to adults, the behaviors that they practice grow as well. If those relationally and socially aggressive behaviors that were born on the playground were perceived as being successful in meeting the child's goals, then he or she is likely to continue to use these tactics to meet his or her objectives. Adult



relational and social aggression can take on many forms. Some relationally aggressive behaviors that adults may use include: influencing others by making them feel guilty, pretending to be hurt to make others feel bad, stealing a romantic partner, withdrawing attention from a relationship, threatening to end a relationship if the other person does not comply with the person's wishes, using infidelity as revenge, and flirting with another person to make a partner jealous (Archer and Coyne, 2005; Crothers *et al.*, 2009a). Socially aggressive behaviors used by adults may include questioning a target's competency, undermining a target's alliances by questioning his or her loyalty, inflating one's virtues in comparison to the target's, etc.

For many, the workplace provides the most important social setting in the adult world, and with the high stakes atmosphere of many companies and industries, it is not surprising that relational aggression is manifested in the workplace as office bullying. Although there are cases of violence in the workplace, direct aggression typically is not tolerated in the adult employment setting. However, the naturally competitive and often frustrating nature of the office can create an environment that can easily reinforce relationally and socially aggressive behavior. Harvey *et al.* (2006) explain that there are a number of environmental factors that lead to an increased probability that office bullying will take place. Among other factors, Harvey *et al.* (2006) stress that the growing pressure of the pace of the work day, increased office diversity, decreased office supervision, a sink or swim mentality, and threats of downsizing can all create the type of tense work environment that can foster and reinforce relationally aggressive behavior. Once such an environment is prevalent, it will likely continue to reward those who use aggressive tactics and bullying will become the rule, not the exception.





Consequences of Office Bullying

Workplace bullying is becoming a worldwide problem. Perpetration happens at all levels, and in many different workplace arenas, making it difficult to manage, and absenteeism is the most common outcome of workplace bullying. Harbison (2004) concluded that a company with 1,000 employees could save \$720,000 annually just by reducing its absence rate from 3 percent to 2 percent. To further speak to the reasoning behind the heightened level of absenteeism, Duffy and Sperry (2007: 401) state that employees leave their workplace after being bullied often “feeling dead, wanting to be dead, feeling invisible, and abandoned.” Short-term consequences of workplace bullying can result in heightened levels of anxiety, depression, irritation, physiological symptoms (Dilts-Harryman, 2004; Tracy *et al.*, 2006), decreased self-esteem and self-confidence (Einarsen, 2000; Randle, 2003), and damaged interpersonal and familial relationships (Rayner *et al.*, 2002; Tracy *et al.*, 2006).

While the short-term consequences are often the most apparent, long-term consequences are also a major concern. Research suggests that individuals who suffer pervasive workplace bullying can also experience long-term, sometimes permanent psychological and occupational impairment (Crawford, 2001), depression (Bilgel *et al.*, 2006; Namie, 2003b), prolonged stress (Dilts-Harryman, 2004), alcohol abuse (Richman *et al.*, 2001; Rospenda, 2002), post-traumatic stress disorder (Bilgel *et al.*, 2006; Fox and Stallworth, 2005; Leymann and Gustafsson, 1996), and even suicidal behavior (Leymann, 1990; Leymann and Gustafsson, 1996). Moreover, recent medical research suggests that recurrent episodes of workplace bullying can result in chronic stress, high blood pressure, increased risk of coronary heart disease (Kivimäki *et al.*, 2005), and other chronic diseases such as asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, sciatica, diabetes, or cardiovascular disease (Kivimäki *et al.*, 2003). While there are numerous individual consequences of workplace bullying, the effects on the work environment can be just as profound. Harvey *et al.*



(2006) state that workplace bullying can lead to reduced flexibility, difficulty in implementing organizational change, and a diminishment in organizational commitment. These effects not only create a harmful environment for employees, but contribute to a static, inefficient workplace that can stifle organizational success.

Conclusion and Summary

Adults who bully others in the workplace are likely to have engaged in bullying in childhood and adolescence, although there are expected differences in the form and sophistication of aggression used by adults. A developmental perspective may provide managers with insight regarding the level of functioning of the adult perpetrator of bullying. An employee's use of rather unsophisticated forms of aggression is more typically associated with the aggressive behaviors of childhood, namely physical and verbal aggression. Such forms of aggression may be indicative of personality issues which are not likely to be readily addressed by typical managerial interventions such as increased supervision or alterations in incentives, and would instead require intensive psychotherapy. The developmental perspective of bullying provided also implies that managers may seek to focus upon those forms of workplace bullying which predominate among adults, specifically relational and social aggression.

Although possibly idealistic and outside the purview of the workplace environment, it can be argued that management should proactively seek to assist employees to develop more mature forms of interpersonal relations, since, as discussed in the chapter, such aggression impacts workers' productivity and the organizational structure of the business or company. An increased understanding of the more subtle and indirect forms of aggression typically used by adults can also help management decrease the degree of such forms of aggression that are used between employees and are part of either the explicit and implicit patterns and rules of the organization.



A developmental perspective of workplace bullying suggests that companies must use a proactive, comprehensive, and long-term approach to reduce such aggression and provide an environment that helps workers to learn more mature ways of relating to work colleagues. A developmental understanding of bullying proposes that such behaviors are an inherent part of human relations, and only through the combined efforts of the family and school environments do children gradually learn to relinquish overt and physical forms of aggression. However, during adolescence and early adulthood, aggression tends to become more subtle and indirect. The workplace environment may be seen as an extension of the family's and school's efforts to assist people in developing more principled ways for achieving personal status, while simultaneously benefitting the needs of the company and resolving conflicts.

The workplace environment can help employees by adopting policies prohibiting the use of social and relational aggression, providing specific instruction and modeling of expected forms of relating, and by fostering an environment that encourages employees to non-defensively reflect upon their tendencies and motivations for using aggression. The developmental perspective of bullying provided in this chapter implies that aggression is an inherent aspect of human relations, and that aggression is often functional, meaning that it offers advantages to the perpetrator. Given this information, it is likely that bullying behavior can only be modified slowly, with significant environmental support and reinforcement.

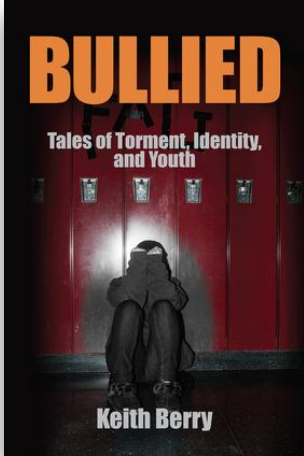




Opened: Bullying Communication, Identities and Stories

From *Bullied:*
Tales of Torment, Identity, and Youth

Chapter 7: Opened: Bullying Communication, Identities and Stories



The following is excerpted from *Bullied: Tales of Torment, Identity, and Youth* by Keith Berry. © 2016 Taylor & Francis Group. All rights reserved.

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"You folks are energized! It's wonderful to see you on our last day of class."

As I wait for students to quiet down so we can begin, I look around the room, much like I did on that hot and humid August day when we began the semester. However, now the smile on my face has grown wider. Many of the students seem different. The lack of familiarity present when we started the class has evolved into bonds that feel more intimate and interconnected; many students who were quiet and reserved in August have become more talkative and comfortable. The fearful looks displayed when I first introduced the bullying story assignment are now gone. Students now seem happy and prideful, and also tired.

"Where do I begin? It has been my pleasure to work with you this semester. The class has exceeded my expectations." My words bring smiles to many of their faces. "Do we look like we've been tested?" asks the same student who, on the first day of class, humorously asked if there would be tests in the course. Several students chuckle, while many nod their heads, confirming they have, in fact, been tested.

"You've got the look of storytellers who just completed a personal journey back in time, re-living difficult experiences to better understand your story, yourselves, and bullying."

"Then we passed the test?" he says sarcastically.

"I don't know, I still have a few more papers to grade," I say with a humorous tone. "Kidding aside, it has been exciting to be with you on this journey. In addition to working with you on your stories, I have also been working on my stories. As I suspected would be the case, going back thirty-five years to my youth has been challenging. Yet, coming to terms with my stories, an experience shaped by the ways you have come to understand and convey yours, has opened me in helpful ways. Writing helped me identify and come to terms in ways with the bullying I experienced and the personal struggles I faced as I



worked to be happy in and out of school.¹ Exploring these memories at times made me sad. I, too, have been tested.” Students’ smiles get bigger.

“There is so much I want us to discuss. Since our time is limited, let’s get to work.”

In this concluding chapter, I convey narrative scenes that show significant aspects of the dialogue with which the students and I ended this class. I accompany these scenes with my reflections on bullying communication, bullying identities, and the power of stories for bullying research. I also share some of the most salient ways in which reflexivity and mindfulness helped me to respond to the “dilemmas” I faced in the research. I end the chapter and book by brainstorming with students about ways of continuing a response to bullying like the one we created together in this class.

Bullying Communication

“One of the most helpful aspects of your stories is the way they allow us to get closer to the inseparable relationship between communication and bullying. From the violent acts of bullying, to the ways victims respond to bullies, to how friends, family members, teachers, and administrators try to intervene in bullying, and to how persons talk about bullying, such as through stories, bullying does not, and cannot, happen without communication and communicators. So, how do you now think about the role and power of communication in bullying?”

“Well, I keep thinking about the power of language,” a student says from the back of the room. “On our first day of class, I remember someone taking exception to the adage, *Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me*. This class has me still thinking about that line. It makes sense on one level: others’ words don’t *have* to hurt you since the communication of bullying is relational, right?”



"Yes, keep going," I respond.

"But words are also crazy hurtful and are far more powerful than I think I realized. The scars from the words used against us can last a long time. Telling my story helped me to realize that changing bullying must include changing how we think about words. Words matter. Words harm in particular and powerful ways." I see Lauren smiling and nodding her head in agreement, and remember she is the student from the first day of class who mentioned this adage.

"Well said," I respond.

This conversation makes me think about the ways in which stories in the book differently show the power of words in bullying. For instance, Iman's hearing that she "suffers from severe depression" and that she is "too white" worsened her already existing distress from feeling different in her family and at school. The absence of supportive words from Rose while Cruella and her cronies bullied Jezebel led Jezebel to feel abandoned by her trusted "oasis," and at risk of more bullying. My mother's repeatedly calling me "special" over time allowed me to feel that while I was still trying to figure out what was wrong with me, and feeling bad, at least she saw me in such a loving way. Yet, it also might have kept her from digging into the deeper issues I was facing, and from needing to worry about me. Words are never empty "things"; rather, they are infused with meaning that defines, organizes, and evaluates situations, people, and stories (Wood, 2015).

Ena enters the dialogue and says, "I agree language is destructive in bullying..."

I interrupt, "It can also be significantly empowering in helping persons who are trying to cope, and to helping bullies understand the harms of bullying."

"That makes sense," she says. "But I hope we don't ignore the power of bodies in bullying." I hear Iman say, "Right?" and see her nod her head in agreement, as do many other students. Ena continues, "My story made me better understand the ways bodies are vulnerable in





bullying, and the invasive ways boys *and* girls use bodies, their own and victims', as weapons. It sickens me. The power of bodies is maybe more forceful than with language."

"Remember, communicators experience and understand our worlds through bodies, ours and others. Bodies most certainly aren't "absent" in bullying. They are ecstatically present and serve as ways of knowing." To respect students' privacy, I don't disclose to the class what students have written about bullying and the specific issues they have faced.

"Your stories also illuminate the prominence of bodies in bullying," I continue. As I say this, I think to myself about how the color of Iman's skin, indeed, the largest organ on her impressionable body, served as a bullying target, while at the same time provided her with a way to cope through cutting. Ena's body was a constant target for her bullies, most prominently in the form of vicious sexual assault and the girls' peering through the cracks of the bathroom stalls, inspecting her body parts. The rotations embodied by my spinning as Wonder Woman provided me, if for only those few precious minutes, a liberating space in which to feel freer than I had in some time, and to know myself in different ways than I had been accustomed.

"So, what are some of the things we learn about relational communication from the stories?"

"Our conversation here reminds me of Carey's notion that communication constructs 'reality.' Recall that his definition tells us that bullying interactions are not just a matter of 'transmitting' information between persons through communication; rather, persons use those interactions to symbolically create, and re-create over time, what bullying *means*. In this sense, words and embodiment of bullying are powerful because they affect what and how we understand about bullying or being bullied. In turn, how we understand things affects the good and bad ways persons feel about them. Thus, a communicative approach to studying bullying and identity requires us not only to carefully look at the words and embodiment of bullying, but what



those symbolic messages *mean to the persons involved with, and affected by the bullying.*

"Also, remember communicators are diverse beings who bring different backgrounds to interaction ... and communication is a joint accomplishment, meaning both conversation partners contribute to the process. Therefore, what a given moment or episode of bullying means to one person likely will be different than what it means to others.

"So ... looking at bullying in terms of communication involves exploring how these worlds of meaning come together, and how people work to make sense of them."

Lauren asks, "Instead of telling victims or bullies—or anyone—*how to understand bullying*, it is helpful to listen and stay open to how bullying is *understandable to them.*"

"Yes, that makes the most sense to me as a relational communication teacher and researcher. Listen to persons' stories, which reveal how bullying makes sense to them. This doesn't mean their stories are the only sources of insight we need, nor does it mean they are infallible. It means stories provide the intimate and detailed vantage point we need for responding well to bullying.

"Does anyone have questions or comments?" No one speaks up.

"Okay, then, before moving on, I want to stress one additional idea. It is important to keep in mind one of the axioms of interpersonal communication that we discussed at the beginning of the semester: 'One cannot not communicate.' This assumption tells us there is not a finite starting or stopping point for the making and using of meaning in relational communication. Conversation partners are often making meaning in ways that fall outside of one or both partners' awareness. As a result, people may be harming one another, even if such harm wasn't 'intentional' or 'deliberate,' as much of the bullying research often emphasizes. This axiom, along with the idea that relational communication is always already something conversation partners



enact together, tell us the communication so essential to bullying is often far more involving, and uncertain, than we might originally realize.”

Negotiating Bullied Identities

The stories in this book demonstrate the relationship between communication and bullying, and the creative making and remaking of identity. This process of identity negotiation is a tensional process informed by social constraints, including stigma. As youth co-create “realities” concerning the practices of bullying and what it means to live through them, they also explore ways of understanding themselves and others. In this section, I draw on the students’ stories in this book to examine the *performance of selves* within bullying communication. These four performed selves—*invaded*, *juggling*, *persevering*, and *transformed*—speak to recurring ways in which victims perform or constitute themselves with others over time.

Bullying renders victims *invaded selves*. The “invasion” I have in mind speaks to the “encroachment” or “intrusion” that personifies bullying, or the ways in which being bullied constrains and restricts the lives of victims. Indeed, bullying is “oppressive.” In this way, being bullied disrupts and diminishes victims’ sense of autonomy; indeed, bullies connect themselves to victims in repeated and violent ways, diminishing their personal space and well-being. The aftershock of this invasion affects victims viscerally, in the given moment of bullying and they remember and relive the violence over time. In these ways, bullies forcefully insinuate themselves into victims’ lives, compelling them to think and feel in particular ways, rendering them unsettled, in pain, and searching for comfort.

For Iman, being repeatedly and meanly told that she was “too white” encroached on her ability to perform herself as an African-American girl in the ways she desired. Ena’s account demonstrates this





performance in grave ways. Her bullies, often men, invaded her young body and being mentally and physically. Persons' lives are always in some way interdependent lives (Gergen, 2009; Schrag, 2003; Shotter, 1993). But these stories show how bullying intensifies such relationality in unwelcomed and violating ways.

Being bullied also requires victims to negotiate myriad social conditions while under duress, thus immersing them in the performance of *juggling selves*. Victims must handle a range of interactional activities or obstacles. They try to identify "right" ways of responding to bullies and the situation; to manage how they think and feel in that moment, if they can think or feel clearly at all; to identify who is around them physically who will notice or be able to help with the attacks, if they are even able to see past their bullies and concentrate on things other than their terror; and to consider issues of identity, such as who will emerge from bullying with the upper hand. They must also concern themselves with issues of identity. In these ways, the demand to juggle identities across contexts involves managing multiple, complex facets of identity in the face of violence, pain, and worry, and trying to remain hyper-vigilant to the emergent components of a bullying encounter. Moreover, the stakes are high in those moments: how one juggles often shapes future encounters with bullying, and how, or if, one will be subject to serious violence.

Jezebel's account shows a fitting example in which to situate the concept of juggling selves. Bullying required her to try to manage numerous factors, such as being a strong Naruto warrior in one moment, and a progressively weakened bully victim over time. She also needed to concern herself with the presence of Cruella, balancing the desire not to budge in her seat as she was being bullied with her desire to not be physically harmed. Jezebel also needed to figure out why Rose did not step in to defend her, and to identify a suitable way to respond as the bullying got worse (e.g., playing it cool or hurling the tomato). Ultimately, not even the powers of being a young and centered Naruto warrior could help Jezebel manage it all, leading her



to fall to her knees in anguish. Third, bullying also immerses victims in the performance of *persevering selves*. The repetitive nature to bullying, and the deliberate doing of harm, requires victims to find ways to carry on, and to stay well, or at least well enough to survive. They must do so, even though the constraints victims face while being bullied are often frenetic and, at times, feel insurmountable. This performance speaks to victims as resilient beings who did not give up, even though doing so might have been easier. Even when bullying takes victims to the lowest levels of their self-acceptance, and even if these individuals may not identify as such, they are tenacious beings.

All of the stories point to these women emerging from bullying as persevering beings. For instance, Iman spoke to how bullying led her to be suicidal. Yet, while her resorting to cutting was on one level counterproductive coping, it also helped to alleviate her pain without dying. Jessi persevered at the front lines of her cyberbullying, though much of her survival was conditioned negatively by her decision to be a bully-victim, to bully Amber and Maria in response being bullied. Finally, bullying enables victims to perform *transformed selves*. Since identity is made and remade within communication over time, all communication is potentially transformative. However, the sense of “transformed” I use here speaks to significant changes in one’s being as a result of bullying. These transformations can be positive. Victims may emerge as people who communicate using different styles of relating or word choices; orienting to and counting on relationships differently than in the past; and developing ways of coping they might not have considered prior to being bullied. Whatever the change, for good and bad, bullying over time creates the conditions through which victims emerge performing themselves in novel ways.

The students’ accounts show a diverse number of ways in which being bullied transformed them. Take, for instance, Jessi going from being a girl who largely stayed out of trouble, to someone who needed to defend herself against Amber and Maria, and then to a girl who bullied Amber and Maria in response to their bullying her. Or take the ways in



which becoming friends with Renee allowed Lauren to emerge from bullying in helpful ways. Finally, it is by finding “self-love,” a change accomplished most notably through relating with the open and affirming women at her all-black university that Iman is able to self-identify as a survivor, someone who no longer hates, but now loves herself.

There are additional performances shown in the students’ stories worthy of considering. For instance, being bullied rendered these storytellers *isolated selves*, in that the aggression led them to be people who felt distant, and as a result, isolated from the people and activities that normally filled up their lives; *neglected selves*, insofar as the pain and suffering they endured, and the lack of faith they had in adults to properly end the bullying, often rendered them overlooked or ignored and thus harmed and in need of healing; and *self-doubting*, *self-hating*, and/or *self-shaming selves*, as not only did bullies turn on victims, but being bullied often led many girls to turn on themselves, calling into question and critiquing their actions and personhood.

Where do we go with these insights? I am mindful of how victims’ performances of selves within bullying are situated within a larger cultural emphasis in the United States that compels youth to “know themselves,” and to have a positive understanding of “who they are.” Indeed, self-understanding and understanding who others are are processes I too advocate through my teaching, research, and in everyday life. The stories in the book illustrate how bullying shapes this process in largely negative ways. Rather than coming to understand themselves as persons who deserve and experience acceptance, joy, and love, these victims self-identify in unsettled and disconfirmed ways as a result of bullying. These stigmatized beings face repeated and hurtful attacks, and also, understandably, feel bad about being victims. To be sure, there are likely many youth who are able to reconcile being bullied in less distressful ways. Also, time and distance has allowed the young women included in the book to understand themselves in more affirming ways, even though they still may feel frustration and/or anger about what happened to them.





Nevertheless, their stories, and mine, show youth being made to feel miserable.

I recently saw on Facebook a list of “4 Essential Elements of School Transformation”: culture, climate, consistency, and community (The Bully Project, 2015). Naturally, I want to stress the essential nature of another “c”— communication—to these essentials. Laing (1967) writes:

[W]hat we think is less than what we know; what we know is less than what we love; what we love is so much less than what there is. And to that precise extent we are so much less than what we are. (p. 30)

As human beings there is much that we don’t realize about how we communicate, perform ourselves, and force others to have to perform themselves. Communication is the process of making known realities we might be overlooking or avoiding, and those that the limits of our thinking and feeling keep outside of our everyday awareness. I am not suggesting that communication is a panacea, or a “magic pill” that “fixes” bullying and the ways in which victims come to understand themselves. But it does provide a way to understand how bullying happens, and what happens to identities as a result of being bullied. The potential for communication to create positive change in how we relate to others and ourselves is one of the most significant reasons why I have studied communication for nearly two decades. Communication is the greatest resource I know for educating ourselves on how choices for interacting can and do impact others, and how we can come to relate with one another in times of duress and blatant violence. Indeed, drawing and keeping attention on communication and identity will not end bullying. However, it does create the conditions in which we can *more compassionately* understand the communicative practices and consequences of bullying, and seek to do



something about them.

The Power of Bullying Stories

"Let's hear from folks who want to share something from your stories. I'd like as many people to volunteer as possible."

"I'll go," Lauren says. "Go ahead."

"My story focuses on my being bullied by a (former) best friend and friend of hers. Their bullying focused on my appearance, especially the blonde hair I had at that age. They bullied me face-to-face and online, and it was terrible. Life improved when I met a new friend who helped me understand I was a confident and strong girl who doesn't have to let bullies bother me."

"You wrote a terrific story," I say. She smiles and whispers, "Thank you."

Jessi speaks next: "In my story I convey being bullied by a friend and her friend. They targeted my physical appearance, so strongly it led me to be self-conscious about my body for the first time in my life. After they bullied and cyberbullied me, I did the same thing to them. It's something I'm not proud of today. However, I now understand how it can happen."

"Bullying as a result of being bullied is not uncommon, Jess. Thanks for sharing." "My story talks about bullying in the family and at school," Iman says. "I was bullied due to my race. I focus on how being different encouraged me to feel depressed, and how bullying didn't allow me to be myself. I learned a lot about myself from this process."

"Beautiful." As I wait for others to offer to go next, I notice how pleased these three look after participating. They have had a rewarding experience in writing their stories.



Students grow silent after Iman's contribution. After waiting for someone else to share, I decide to talk about some of the papers generally.

"The stories you've written explore so many important issues. Most focused on bullying that took place at school; however, several stories in the class conveyed bullying in other private and public places. As Iman's story shows, bullying takes place in families in real and impactful ways. Coming into contact with these different bullying stories allows us to expand our thinking regarding setting, and to remember that bullying takes places and changes lives and identities in a diverse range of contexts."

As the students and I spend much of our remaining time discussing stories, the climate in the room is invigorating. Classmates are listening to each other's contributions, leaning in and offering affirming comments of support and identification: *Wow it must have been hard to write that scene. I don't know how you lived through bullying like that—what a strong person! What you had to endure reminds me in some ways of how I was bullied. It's good to know I'm not alone.* Rather than listening passively or defensively, they perform "compassionate critical listening" (McRae, 2015a; see also McRae, 2015b), embodying care and concern for others' lived experience. Missing from today's class is students playing on their cell phones, or watching the clock; present is more relational care that comes from shared time, energy, and investment on a mutual goal.

When it appears as though all students who wish to participate have had their chance, I move us on to the next topic.

"I'd like to say a few more things about the stories we've conveyed. These next ideas relate to the power of stories for studying bullying, specifically in terms of what gets made in terms of the stories themselves, and us as storytellers."

I read out loud a quotation from the course syllabus:

[I]n our society, art has become something that is related only to





objects and not to individuals or to life. That art is something which is specialized or done by experts who are artists. But couldn't everyone's life become a work of art? Why should the lamp or the house be an art object but not our life? From the idea that the self is not given to us, I think there is only one practical consequence: we have to create ourselves as a work of art.

"This quotation from Michel Foucault is a continuation of our semester-long discussions about how people form and negotiate our identities within the lived experience of communication. But I love his emphasis on the ways this process renders people 'works of art.'" Several students smile, raising their eyebrows.

"I love what/who you've created in this class. Through your stories you've taken risks and vulnerably opened and exposed yourselves for others, and in ways that might not have seemed possible or safe before." A few students fumble to grab their pens, so they can write down the quotation.

"Don't worry ... it's on the syllabus," I say smiling.

"I included the quotation there, hoping it would encourage you with your stories. To think, how many of you felt nervous at the beginning of the semester. Many didn't know what your story was, how you would write it, and more importantly, if you could feel open to writing about the terrible bullying experiences through which you lived."

"Well, I was a mess at the beginning of the semester," a student shouts from the back of the room, "nervous as hell about what I had lived through and if I wanted to relive it."

"I understand and can relate."

"It's good to know I'm not the only one," he says smiling.

"Let me just say, the time and effort you folks have invested in this creating process, experimenting with creative and reflexive writing forms, is not lost on me. So many projects have resulted in stories that



have left me ... in awe. I want you to know the *risk* involved in telling your story is real, as you wrote about revealing and edgy issues. You boldly gave witness to the tenuous and harmful identity negotiation that pervades bullying. I'm thrilled to see the 'art' you've rendered, the art you've become by writing your stories."

"Clever tie-in," my "tested" student chimes at me.

"I thought you'd like that," I reply.

"To continue, though, I want to mention something else: one of the powers of your stories shows in the attention you gave to writing with evocative detail and emotion. When I read your stories, I felt like I was with you in your experiences. As you wrote about all kinds of feelings, such as shame, humiliation, embarrassment, hope, and so forth, I felt many of them with you. Also, your emotional writing at times challenged me to reflect on and explore feelings that I didn't know I had, and maybe some that I didn't want to feel. In other words, your open hearts have opened mine."

As I write up this moment in the dialogue, I think about Iman, as she writes about tip-toeing through her house late at night, searching for the "right" blade for cutting herself. I cringe as her words allow me to visualize her cutting into the skin on her stomach. In addition, my face muscles tighten, like they do when I hear about unimaginable suffering, when I read about Lauren changing her appearance in response to being bullied. I, again, feel the burning of her scalp with her, even though I wasn't there in the salon, and have never felt the burn of hair dye. The students' attention to writing evocatively also takes me back to my youth when I would say certain words (e.g., "dude"), and avoid others (e.g., "cute"), or I would hold my chest up high, or avoid speaking in high pitched tones, all so that I might appear to others as "more masculine" and "not gay."

"Writing evocatively allowed me to return to the scenes of my bullying, to relive what I experienced, to remember what happened to me, and how I bullied other people," another student says, reading



from jottings in her notebook.

"What was that like?" I say.

"It was fun ... and helpful in some ways. It helped me to clarify experiences that had grown foggy in my memory."

"Writing in this way wasn't so fun for me," a student says. "Why not?"

"I'm a pretty strong guy normally. But this type of writing made the memories of being bullying feel all too real. Writing brought back the pain for me, and, though you warned us, I wasn't really prepared to go to the places where I felt my pain was taking me."

"That's understandable. May I ask, what did you do when this happened?" "I just stopped myself from going deeper. I figured that's as far as I could go." "Sounds like a mindful response. I'm glad you stayed within your limits. Also, for what it's worth, you might also look at that 'point' as being something you want to keep exploring. Sometimes these moments have helpful insights to teach us."

"Maybe..."

"I want to say something different," another student says, saving her classmate from this moment. "I struggled with the number of things going on in my story, stuff that doesn't fit neatly together."

"You mean, the different types of experiences or meanings comprising bullying?" I ask.

"Yes."

I pause for a second, while looking for a related point in my notes.

"That's another aspect these stories capture well: the complex layers of experience that comprise bullying. In many accounts, we see personas that are public and private; aggression that is physical and relational; ways of coping that are positive and harmful; characters feeling okay in one moment and then terrorized in others; victims being violated by bullies and yet not staying away from them; and family, friends, and teachers and administrators who care for and assist





victims at one minute and then turn their backs on them in another minute. Your stories put on display complex and contradictory factors of bullying.”

“I’m okay with layers; it’s the contradictions I don’t like,” the same student says. “Contradictions represent tensions, and can make communicating with others challenging and uncertain. Yet, they are a regular part of relational communication, and several of the stories in the class show them to be a routine part of bullying. This is a way autoethnography and personal narrative shine brightly, by allowing writers to show different, and often competing influences, and how communicators respond to these tensions. The bigger point is they show us that bullying is not a simplistic problem, but a complex one that requires a complex response. Good stories give us that complexity.”

In this moment the students and I are coming to terms with the inherent “messiness” of bullying in terms of communication and identity: moving parts, flux of thoughts and emotions, vacillating influences, and changing people, at the very least. Bullying stories capture this messiness in vivid detail and allow readers to make sense of it. Yet, this process also requires readers to slow down and move through the stories moment by moment, layer by layer, considering what they mean, or could mean for youth’s lives. In my lived experience, it is slowing down the decision to be mindful anti-bullying storytellers and advocates that is often difficult. As I suggested in Chapter 1, the emotional and unjust nature of bullying, and persons’ desire to end the problem, often lead people to discuss bullying in abstract and generalizable ways, and to make claims about bullying that may not ring true as it is lived “on the ground.” Indeed, we need more informed perspectives and strategies for intervening in bullying. Stories create the conditions to slow us down and allow us to learn and respond well. They help us to experience and explore “with” storytellers bullying in the situated contexts of lived experience in which it occurs.



"Okay, before break, I have one more impression of your stories I'd like to share. Let me start with a favorite quotation of mine: 'Behind the story I tell is the one I don't. Behind the story you hear is the one I wish I could make you hear.' I love this passage because I believe it beautifully expresses why it can be so difficult and risky to share stories. We may reveal some stories, while also keeping others hidden. Sometimes the pain and risk involved with storytelling makes it easier to keep them to ourselves. Also, we may muster up the courage to tell our stories, but that doesn't mean others will listen or like what we're telling. Yet, we need others to hear our stories; they can learn from them, and we can learn from their feedback. My point is that telling stories about bullying is complicated and rarely easy. Knowing of all these possibilities leads me to marvel at the stories you told." Many students beam with pride. They are also fidgety, and, I sense, ready for class to end. "One *last* related point, I promise. Many stories of bullying remain untold.

Maybe it's too hard for persons to think and feel through their memories of being bullied, or of bullying others. Or they may fear being seen in a negative light, revealing to others—or to themselves—how terribly they suffered as victims, or made people suffer as bullies. Or maybe some people don't think their stories will be taken seriously. Yet, you put in the effort, took the risks, and told your stories. For that, you have my admiration and respect.

"Let's break for ten minutes. When we return, we'll discuss where we go from here."

Dilemmas Revisited

I next return to the methodological dilemmas that ended each of my reflexive interludes, to describe how I dealt with each quandary in terms of reflexivity and mindfulness. While each response could fill an entire chapter, I describe them only briefly. I offer them in the spirit of a conversation with readers. I hope they provoke further discussion



and debate regarding the challenges and opportunities of using of autoethnography in bullying research.

Reframing Obsession

Although I never sent the drafted email to Renee, the central issues of this first dilemma point to a significant struggle I encountered in working with students' stories. I've conducted the research informing the book in ways to closely identify with relational ethics (Ellis, 2007). Ensuring the welfare of the students who participated in my study, as well as those who opted not to participate, has always been my utmost concern. In turn, caring for the relationships I maintain with the students has been an essential factor in the study. In many ways, the students are research "friends" (Tillman-Healy, 2003), and their welfare is far more important than the book, or any research. As a result, the desires I experienced in wanting and needing Renee's story were new to me, and troubling. They contradicted how I normally engage with research participants, and who I understood myself to be as a researcher.

I addressed this dilemma by taking some time to reflect on how these struggles should not be surprising, given that I am using autoethnography, bullying is my topic, and I hope the book will contribute well to anti-bullying efforts. It shouldn't be surprising to have needs and wants that are deeply personal—autoethnography calls on researchers to vulnerably immerse ourselves in our examination of lived experience. In addition, "wanting" or "needing" stories feels appropriate, because including certain stories will likely speak to the bullying problem in ideal ways. This is all to say, I mindfully responded to the urges I felt by understanding my feelings more fully and gently. I worked to understand that my "obsession" to have Renee's story, or ones like hers, were indicative of my commitment and passion for studying bullying, and to being a thinking and feeling person who allows myself to feel and talk about difficult





issues, and that may put me “on the spot” and open me to others’ questions and negative critique. I do not mean for this response to suggest my dealing with the dilemma was easy. The struggles were/are real, and my approach didn’t necessarily “fix” the issue. My response helped me to feel more at peace and to resist judgment.

That said, today I sometimes still wish I “had” Renee’s story.

Unsettling “Control”

In the conventional sense of the word, “control” in my classes and in research is not something I typically pursue. This does not mean I do not manage well on both fronts, nor should it suggest I do not hold significant power as a teacher and researcher (see Fassett & Warren, 2007). However, I do usually look at “control” as an illusionary pursuit in life. Trying to “be in control” can keep persons from staying open to the flux of lived experience that fills our lives, and the ways in which life comprises ongoing change, rendering these attempts futile. Still, how did I manage the tensions related to this dilemma?

Throughout the semester, I encouraged students to take risks, yet, only in ways about which they felt safe. We discussed how seeking to remain safe is ideal, since trying to remain comfortable sometimes (often?) prevents people from stretching our personal limits, testing comfort zones, learning from pain, and ultimately growing as persons. More generally, my encouragement took the form of nudging the students to go a little farther or deeper, or being more specific in key parts of their stories, keeping in mind that each nudge, each potential movement, farther and deeper into their pasts could mean the students might suffer from that work. Ultimately, I approached this aspect of the process by remembering that, indeed, I am their professor, and with this powerful identity I embody responsibility. Yet, I also practiced letting go, and tried to remind myself that my ability to “protect” students can only go so far. They are adults who will make



and need to own their own choices and stories. I do not yet know how possible it is to let go, so I treated this practice as an ongoing work in progress.

You might wonder how I managed my identity as a researcher while teaching the class. My answer is carefully (see Appendix for a description of this issue).

Dilemma Re-worked

The concern about Ena's asking me whether or not her stories "worked" is rooted in the guiding principle of my book: communicators constitute identities within communication. Thus, as the students write (communicate), they are forming an understanding not only of the bullying actions that happened in the stories, but also of themselves as storytellers and persons generally. While the previous dilemma speaks more to students' reluctance to write deeply about their bullying experience, the current one relates to my concern that some students might expose themselves too much and get hurt in some way. While, again, I believe ultimately students are responsible for living by the choices they make, I also come to the classroom with more experience with autoethnography and personal narrative. I know more about the risks, and I take it as one of my primary roles to look out for them in these ways. In some ways, "students are responsible adults" is too easy a way to respond to the dilemma. I am still concerned about the amount of disclosure in their stories. For instance, even though her story tells readers she is well today, I fear some readers will judge Iman because of the suicidal ideation and cutting she experienced. Also, I am concerned about the "work" stories might do to/on each of the storytellers down the road. Will they remain happy and proud of their stories? If they reveal their stories to others, will others replicate the kinds of behaviors that incited these feelings in the storyteller? Will the stories do any unforeseen "work" on the characters portrayed in the stories? Believing students are responsible adults doesn't preclude my need to remain infinitely concerned.



I encouraged students who I felt were going “too far” to let go of scenes of stories that I felt were too risky, or language that might cast them in potentially negative lights. I also continued to remind myself that the ownership of the stories is ultimately theirs, and that perhaps they are aware and strong enough to be able to defend their choices, and their stories, if need be.

I offered all research participants the opportunity to revise their stories, and all writings included in the study, before I began exploring them for this book. None sent any revisions.

Enduring the Promises of Hardship

How do we stay mindful when working so closely with pain and suffering? I must confess I am still trying to figure this out. Often I just continued to work, reminding myself that autoethnography at times will make distance and emotional stamina difficult. Stress and fatigue are associated with the work, especially projects that are sad and infuriating, like bullying, and with long-term projects, such as book writing. There were other ways I worked at responding to the issue. Especially when working to convey and analyze the students’ stories, and conveying my stories, I needed to remind myself from time to time that this research had me in the “throws of perpetual *doom and gloom*.” This basic (and humorous) acknowledgment helped to keep me aware that there were reasons for my struggling. In addition, I also took frequent breaks. I also reminded myself that, although I was working on these painful stories in the “here and now,” the violent events of the stories are a matter of the past. While the students may still struggle with their bullying experiences, and others are likely suffering today from similar problems, I am well and the students seem well. Indeed, I was in a relationship with this hardship and the amazing people who suffered. I reflected on the reality that in doing this research, I witnessed the pain and suffering of people about whom I care, including me. Thus, the sadness I felt was appropriate.





Admittedly, the more I became immersed in working with/on these stories, the easier it became to lose sight of these perspectives. These “pull backs” helped considerably.

Why continue with this research, amid such struggles? Because the story is too important to let the pain and suffering that pervade bullying hamper my process. The stories are special and can help make lives better.

Conventional Happiness

I addressed the last dilemma, which focused on the issue of most students choosing “happy endings” for their stories, by keeping in mind that autoethnography usually is interested in, and relies on, “narrative truth” (Bochner, 2001). These truths are rooted in the ways that make sense to the storytellers who convey them. To question whether or not the students’ story endings “truthfully” ended in the happy ways they conveyed is ultimately a less important question. I’m far more interested in the fact that most of the students ended in this way, and the point they wished to make by using such endings. After all, these are the endings they chose.

I have not followed up with any of the students to ask about their choices to end their stories as they did. Therefore, I can only speculate. There is a way in which these endings point to the cultural assumption that stories must have a definitive ending, meaning a “happy ending,” or at least one that provides readers with a certain and acceptable sense of “closure.” Their endings may also show efforts by the students to manage impressions (Goffman, 1959, 1963), particularly with me as the one who will evaluate and assign grades. In this way, these endings show bullying victims in largely positive lights, effectively saving face. This assumes that the socially desirable face to save is one that comes out of bullying with “lessons learned” and in stronger shape than they were within the throws of their bullying.



Looking Forward, with Stories

"Okay, the last issue I want to discuss with you about bullying, relational communication, and identity is..."

Jezebel dramatically says, "Say it is so ... it's not over!"

"Endings can be tricky. This ending of our class is a conclusion of sorts, given that the class will soon be finished and we'll all move on in our different ways. Maybe (hopefully) I'll see some of you in other courses. Yet, I believe endings are also 'new beginnings'; they provide us with a chance to take what we've learned from each other, and the questions that remain, and try our best to put it all to good use."

"So, what's next?!" asks a student from the back of the room.

"How do we apply what we've learned and our stories?" He nods. "That's an important question. What are some ways we can continue to apply this work to our everyday lives? I'll start. One of the things I think we can do is talk about the stories with others. I've been talking to friends and colleagues about how well this class has gone, and how good your stories are."

"I've already shared my story with my parents," Iman says. "Wonderful, what did they think?"

"They liked it and thought it felt true to them, even though it was kinda difficult for them to read about me suffering. But they're proud of me and have already told family members about my story."

"I love that—a relational ripple effect possible through stories..."

I continue, "We can also re-write our stories, this time from the perspective of the bully/ies, or the parent, bystanders, or even the teacher or administrator." Students' faces cringe, probably from the idea of more work.

"While it might not sound desirable at this point to tell *another* story, doing so might expand what we understand about your bullying from a relational perspective. "On a similar note, we can also advocate more



autoethnographic stories be written, shared, and discussed about bullying as it is lived from additional standpoints, not just victims’.” Students nod and smile, suggesting they like this idea more. “So, fill in the blank: I believe we need to hear more bullying stories written from...” “bullies.”

“a parent or parents.”

“friends or family members of bullying victims who committed suicide.” “teachers.”

“administrators.”

“kids who *haven’t* been bullied, to see how they escaped it all.” Responses fill the room.

“Wonderful, yes, more stories from these voices are needed and would be helpful. What we learn from them can open us to better understand and respond to their experiences with bullying, including how bullying has affected them.”

Someone in the back says, “Good luck getting bullies, or former bullies, to write vulnerably and to fess up to their crimes!” Several students laugh and nod their heads. “It might be difficult, but you never know. Let’s not assume. After all, a lot of folks in our class wrote about bullying others, and they seemed to be okay with the vulnerability.”

“Personally, I’d like to see groups of adults, like parents, teachers, and administrators for a workshop on bullying—one that introduces them to autoethnography and personal narrative as worthwhile paths for learning about and responding to bullying. I hear so many people criticize adults for what they are or aren’t doing to intervene in bullying. I catch myself doing it sometimes too. But we need stories from them that allow us to step into their worlds and learn what dealing with bullying is like for them. Maybe even have a series of writing workshops where they write up their experiences. The politics related to the bureaucracy of teaching and schools might make this idea complicated, but it can happen and is definitely worth the try.” I start to see a few blank stares on the students’ faces. They seem ready





to end the semester, and so am I, so I move us forward.

"Okay, we have just a few minutes left, so who has some final thoughts or feelings you'd like to share? Something you've wanted to say but haven't yet had the chance?" Lauren says, "I want this class to know that my story has helped me to gain the confidence I was missing in the past. I will be talking about my story in other classes. That feels a little weird to say, but I've embraced and feel close to it, so I'm good with feeling that way."

"Great. With more time, I'd want to discuss why it feels weird." She nods and smiles. "Anyone else?"

Jezebel seizes the moment and says, "This conversation today is helping me realize that telling my story doesn't take power away from me, say, by making me vulnerable to those who may try to use the information against me. I'll admit I thought it might as I was writing the story. However, writing that story has actually put power back into my hands. I finally opened up about the bullying I endured. It's a victory that I went through something so ... non-fabulous like bullying, but became a more FABULOUS person as a result!"

"That's beautiful. You all have been great. It doesn't always happen that professors miss their classes once the semester ends. But I'll definitely miss you folks.

"Maybe this is a perfect place to end. Thank you for being students whom I'll miss." "Thank *you* for letting us write our stories," Jezebel says.

"You're very welcome. It's been my pleasure. 'Letting you', though? Thank you for *writing them*.

"Have a restful winter break. Thank you for a *fabulous*, story-filled semester that I don't believe I'll ever forget." Warm smiles abound.

"Let me end by saying this. As we start our new beginnings, please keep this in mind: I am certain more bullying stories are being lived as we speak. I cannot imagine the numbers of stories that have already



been lived. With that bullying comes an awful lot of hurt. Yet, that hurt does not need to be felt in vain. We need to hear these stories, so we can get to know who the storytellers are, what they have lived or are still living, and to come to a deeper and more personal understanding of how bullying has shaped who they are. Let's keep telling our stories, and let the world learn about bullying in these ways."

Some readers might be wondering about how much significance to put on stories as an anti-bullying response. The book should show that I feel it would be a significant mistake to not try to use stories as a tool for accessing the often overlooked lived experience of youth who experience bullying. It would also be a terrible lapse in judgment to think that many (most?) youth, and for that matter the other constituencies the students and I discussed, don't have stories. At the same time, stories won't solve bullying. Stories can serve as invaluable step, perhaps one of the first couple steps, where adults are unable to understand how to respond. They serve as the invaluable building block to try to get thinking, feeling, and discussion started, and to establish the conditions for empathy, in particular, and understanding, in general, in response to youth ensnared in the webs of bullying, especially victims. So, I ask readers: What's your story?