An In-depth Analysis of School Bullying Prevention Programs

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Bullying is an issue which is not new to American school systems. This paper provides an in-depth examination through an Adlerian lens of four bullying prevention programs. The examination of each program will include evidence of program effectiveness, the geographic location of implementation, ethnicity, and other factors to take into consideration when examining each program. The four programs of examination are the Olweus bullying prevention program, Steps to Respect program, Second Step program, and the Bully Busters program. All of these programs have been implemented in schools for the last twenty years. The programs are familiar to many educators and are highly regarded.
SCHOOL BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAMS

An In-Depth Analysis of Bullying Prevention Programs

Bullying behavior represents a unique and distinctively defined phenomenon. Bullying is usually described as repeated acts of aggression, intimidation, or coercion against a victim who is weaker than the perpetrator in terms of physical size, psychological/social power, or other factors that result in power differential (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003). There are key features to bullying behavior which include the intent to harm another person, the repeated aspect of the harmful acts and the power imbalance between bully and victims. There are two types of bullying; one is direct bullying and the other is indirect bullying. Direct bullying is verbal and physical aggression (Whitted & Dupper, 2005). Indirect bullying is threats, insults, name-calling, spreading rumors, writing harmful graffiti, or encouraging other students to not play with a certain student. To fully understand the components of anti-bullying curriculums, one must first look at bullying as a single issue.

Bullying is a series issue, and should not be taken lightly by schools. Bullying is the most prevalent form of low-level violence in schools today. Bullying has a profound effect on the learning environment of schools. The fear of being ridiculed, harassed, and threatened at school interferes with a student’s ability to learn at school. If bullying is not addressed, it can escalate to more deadly forms of violence. There have been eight states that have considered or adopted legislation requiring schools to implement bullying prevention programs or policies. The Unsafe School Choice Option of No Child Left Behind requires that each state establish their own definition of what constitutes a “persistently dangerous” school and those students which attend these schools be allowed to transfer to a safe school in the same district if they wish (Whitted & Dupper, 2005).
Bullies have several characteristics. Bullies tend to have poorer academic skills and grades, often are lacking in empathy, have cognitive distortions and social perception biases related to perceived threats in their environment and view aggression as an effective way to solve problems (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003). Bullies are also at greater risk of being criminals, usually come from a home where there is poor parental role modeling, little discipline in the home, and become increasingly unpopular as they get older.

The victims of bullies are usually more anxious, fearful, insecure, depressed, and have poor self-esteem. A high percentage of victims tend to engage in school avoidance behaviors, and many repeated victims of bullying at school end up dropping out of the school system (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003). They view school as unsafe, and an anxiety-provoking environment (Shore, 2009). Oftentimes victims of bullies want to seek revenge by bringing weapons to school or other violent methods to seek justice.

Bullying also affects students who have witnessed the bullying behaviors. This can cause fear and anxiety, distracting students from doing their schoolwork (Shore, 2009). Students, who witness other students being bullied, often wonder “Am I going to be next?” This can cause bystanders to live in fear, and have difficulty focusing on school. Bystanders can also contribute to the problem as well. Live observations showed that bystanders were involved in more than eighty percent of bullying episodes and reinforced bullying behavior (Frey, et al., 2005). The peers of students rarely intervene, but when they do bullying tended to stop quickly.

There are several populations of students which seem to be targeted more than other students. One of these populations is students with special needs. Children with special needs may have cognitive/or physical limitations. They may also have language barriers or social skills deficiencies. Children diagnosed with special needs such as attention-deficit disorder,
oppositional-defiant disorder, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, non-verbal learning disability, Asperger syndrome, and learning disorders may experience more rejection by their peers. The characteristics of students with special needs make them easy targets for bullying behaviors (Heinrichs, 2003).

Other types of bullying are racist bullying and sexual preference bullying. Racist bullying occurs across the globe and it is usually aimed at minority groups. For many minority children, racist intimidation and bullying is something they have to face in the classroom, and the playground, on a daily basis. Racist bullying is an abuse of power involving physical and psychological bullying to cause harm to another person. Other students are bullied because of their sexual orientation. The culture within some mainstream schools is often homophobic. Those students who call themselves lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender can become the victims of bullying in various forms (Sullivan, 2000).

Bullying behavior sets a tense and sometimes violent undertone in a school which contaminates the educational environment and affects every child’s learning, sense of security, and psychological well-being. Many students silently suffer physical, psychological pain, humiliation and stress. The impact of bullying leaves scars for its victims which make it difficult to move on from. Bullying is a big concern for schools and can affect the culture of a school. A single incident of bullying in a school can evoke a climate of fear and intimidation not only in the victim, but for other students as well. Studies from the National Threat Assessment Center and the Department of Education, found that in more than two-thirds of the thirty seven shootings, the attackers’ ongoing threats, attacks, or injuries motivated their desire to seek revenge (Safran, 2007). This is why intervention is so important.
There are also many common myths about bullying. These misconceptions include the hypotheses that bullying is a consequence of large class or school size, competition for grades and failure in school, or poor self-esteem and insecurity. Many people also believe students who are overweight, wear glasses, have a different ethnic origin, or have a speech impediment are more likely to be victims of bullying. All of these hypotheses have thus far failed to receive clear support from empirical data (Olweus, 2003).

There are four other myths about bullying behaviors which are not true. One myth is bullies have low self-esteem and are rejected by their peers. There is little evidence in peer-reviewed research supporting that bullies have low self-esteem. Bullies are often popular and have lots of friends. Their self-esteem can actually be quite inflated. Many people believe that everyone dislikes a bully, but in truth, research shows many bullies have high status in the classroom and several friends. A second myth is that getting bullied is a natural part of growing up. Bullying is not a normal part of childhood. Bullying experiences increase vulnerabilities in children, rather than making them more resilient. A third myth is once a child is a victim, they are always a victim. There are certain personality characteristics, such as shyness, which place children at a higher risk for being bullied, there are also situational factors, such as transitioning to a new school, or delayed development that affect the likelihood of a child continuing to get bullied. These situational factors explain why victims can be bullied temporarily rather than continually. The fourth myth is bullying involves only a perpetrator and a victim. Many people think that the bullying problem is only limited to the bully and the victim. Studies based on playground observations have found in most bullying incidents peers were present (Graham, 2010). There role was either a bystander, assistant to bullies, or a defender of victims.
The strength based school counselor’s role is different than of the old school counseling model. Individual and group counseling are based more on the positive rather than negative. Classroom guidance is delivered by the school counselor, and revolves around evidence based curriculum. Consultation focuses on positive youth development. Coordination of activities for students links them to programs where they will be most successful and bring out their personal strengths in the academic, career, and personal/social areas (Galassi & Akos, 2007). These are the basic foundations of what makes a school counselor effective. Through using these tools, the school counselor is able to be a catalyst at their school. The counselor might then be able to implement effective programs that can have long term effects.

Bullying has been a concern for generations. With a few exceptions, the research and prevention intervention innovation related to bullying has been led by researchers and practitioners from Europe, Canada, and Australia, where the issue has been studied and addressed directly for several decades (Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, & Isava, 2008). American educators and mental health providers have been more recent players at the international table (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003).

Though there are many anti-bullying curriculums, it still remains uncertain what curriculums are most effective. The four curriculums which are most widely used and potentially of greatest interest to school counselors are Olweus, Steps to Respect, Bully Busters, and Second Step. Each of these programs has enough research to back up their program, and they also seem to be the most widely used programs in the United States.

**Olweus Bullying Prevention Program**

The first widely disseminated published research on school bullying interventions stemmed from the pioneering work of Norwegian researcher Dan Olweus in the 1970’s, whose anti bullying prevention/intervention program served as the prototype for most efforts that were
developed during the 1980’s and 1990’s, and still exerts great influence on contemporary intervention models and programs (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003). Olweus made it a prerequisite that there be an awareness and involvement on the part of adults (O’Moore, and Minton, 2005). The program attempts to restructure the school environment to reduce opportunities and rewards for bullying. School staff is responsible for introducing and implementing the program. Their efforts are directed towards improving peer relationships, and making the school a safe and positive place (Violence Prevention, 2005). It is recommended that schools not start other intervention programs in conjunction with the Olweus program due to possible negative interactions (Olweus, 2005).

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program was developed and evaluated over a period of almost twenty years, building on four key principles derived from research on the development and identification of problem behaviors, especially aggressive behavior (Olweus, 2003). These principles involve creating a school or a home environment that is characterized by four key components. The first component is warmth, positive interest, and involvement from adults. The second is firm limits on unacceptable behavior. The third aspect is consistent application of nonphysical sanctions for unacceptable behavior or violations or rules. The last component is having adults who act as authorities and positive role models.

The program identifies four key risk factors for bullying. They are the bully, the bully’s family, peers, and school. The program’s key components include behavior modification, counseling, information sharing, in-school curricula, and parent training. An information packet is given to students and parents. Then a school wide questionnaire about bullying is given to the students, and the results are analyzed by school staff. Implementation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program requires a large ongoing commitment from school administrators, teachers,
The program runs over the course of the whole school year. The optimal approach to the program is selecting an onsite coordinator, which most likely is the school counselor. It is ideal to have the questionnaire out in the spring, staff training in August, and hold a school kick off of the program at the beginning of the school year (Violence Prevention, 2005). This programs implementation relies mainly on the social environment. Teachers, administrators, students, and parents all play major roles in carrying out the program and in restructuring the social environment (Hamarus, and Kaikkonen, 2008).

The first evaluation of the effects of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program involved data from approximately 2,500 students in 42 elementary and junior high schools in Bergen, Norway (Hamarus & Kaikkonen, 2008). It followed students for two and one-half years from 1983 to 1985. The findings of this study were very significant. After eight months and twenty months of intervention, there were reductions in bully/victim problems by fifty percent or more. There were reductions in anti-social behavior, such as vandalism, fighting, drunkenness, and truancy. There also was marked improvement in the social climate of the classes and an increase in student satisfaction with school life. There were highly significant differences between baseline and intervention groups. The research concluded that the registered changes in bully/victim problems and related behavior patterns were likely to be a consequence of the intervention program and not of some other factor (Hamarus & Kaikkonen, 2008).

In 1997-1998, the study was tested again, and this time the participants were 3,200 students from 30 Norwegian schools. Again, the study registered clear improvements with regard to bully/victim problems in schools with intervention programs. The effects were weaker than in the first project, with averages varying between 21 and 38 percent. However, unlike the first study the intervention program had been in place for only six months when they made the
second measurement. The intervention schools fared better than the comparison schools. Comparison schools that set up intervention programs according to their own plans showed little or no changes with regard to “being bullied” (Hamarus & Kaikkonen, 2008). In the most recent evaluation which was done in 1999-2000, there were 2,300 students from ten schools, which included some schools with large percentages of immigrant backgrounds; they found an average reduction by forty percent with regard to “being bullied” and about fifty percent for “bullying other students”. In Norway, an officially appointed committee recently conducted a similar evaluation of 56 programs being used in Norway’s schools to counteract and prevent problem behavior and recommended without reservation only one program: The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. It is one of the eleven Blueprint programs and the program selected by the Norwegian committee (Olweus, 2003).

There is an extensive amount of evidence based research that the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program works effectively. There are many components to the program and all of which must be used in order for the whole program to work effectively. This program is devised as a “multilevel, multi component school-based program designed to prevent or reduce bullying in elementary, middle, and junior high schools” (Safran, 2007, p. 60) for children aged six to fifteen. In order for the program to be most effective, the on-site coordinator, administration, and staff must be actively engaged in the training and implementation of the program. It is expected that teachers hold 20-40 minute discussions in their classes on a weekly basis to discuss and practice the core tenants of the program (i.e., understanding and involvement of adults; better supervision during recess, lunch time, and other break times; class meetings that describe rules against bullying; talks with targets, bullies, and their parents; creative solutions by teachers to help those involved in the situation) (Safran, 2007). The Olweus program reaches students on
three levels: school wide, classroom, and individual. Exploration of the application of Olweus’ program in American schools has found that many of the program components are viable. In an effort to ensure the relevance to different schools throughout the United States, however, it became important to individualize the program to meet the specific schools’ needs. There have been several challenges of implementing the program in some United States schools. Some of the challenges include resistance from staff and parents, a desire for shorter and simpler solutions, limited classroom time, competing strategies or methods of employing conflict resolution, group treatment for children who bully and zero-tolerance mandates. The challenge is to then try to translate the program into the cultural norms and behavioral/psychosocial needs of differing communities in the United States. Questions can be raised as to the universal applicability and viability of the program given current research on gender differences in bullying behavior and aggression (Safran, 2007). There are questions regarding whether the program should be universal or should be based on individual needs of students. Other factors also raise questions, such as cultural, racial, and socio-economic variations in communities across the United States.

**Steps to Respect**

The second program being evaluated is the Steps to Respect program. The Steps to Respect program has school-wide and classroom-level components. The school-wide components are intended to incorporate positive norms by creating and reinforcing policies about bullying and respectful behavior. This includes teacher training aimed at training teachers how to effectively intervene in bullying situations. Classroom lessons are based on the belief that all students can benefit from training in social skills and peers play an important role in determining rates of bullying behavior (Low, Frey, & Brockman, 2010). The dual focus of the program is
on bullying and friendship. It is based on research showing friendship protects children from the harmful effects of bullying. The students have the opportunity to learn a variety of relationship skills, including strategies for making and keeping friends and steps for joining a group activity. The Steps to Respect program also teaches children skills for coping with bullying, including recognizing bullying, using assertive behaviors to respond to bullying (in both helpful and harmful ways). The Steps to Respect program emphasizes all members of a school community must take responsibility for decreasing bullying. Student lessons teach empathy for bullied children, positive social norms, and specific socially responsive behaviors for children to use when they witness bullying (Committee for Children, 2005). Children also have the opportunity to practice problem solving and emotion-management skills.

There are specific coping skills which can help children cope with bullying. One of the coping skills is assertiveness. Teaching children coping strategies is a step toward solving the problem. Teaching the children about assertiveness versus aggressive behavior can help them when they are faced with a bully. This can also help with bystanders as well. The program also teaches children relationship skills to buffer them from the harmful effects of bullying (Committee for Children, 2005). Children practice skills which can help them make friends. This program also teaches children how to maintain friendships with others by being trustworthy, agreeable, and forgiving when there is a disagreement with a friend.

A rigorous evaluation study determined that an initial implementation of the Steps to Respect program resulted in approximately 25 percent fewer bullying events than would otherwise be expected. After program implementation, students exposed to the intervention reported less tolerance of bullying and aggression than their counterparts (Committee for
Children, 2005). Students receiving the program perceived adults in their schools as more responsive to bullying problems and also felt a greater responsibility to reduce bullying.

Staff training is the central component of the program. Training for teachers and all school staff in the Steps to Respect curriculum is an integral part of the authors’ recommendations and research theory (Sontag & Sprague, 2005). Implementation research shows appropriate training in school-based programs of this nature is often deficient. The literature component is an integral part of the curriculum and, if all the lessons are not done correctly, it could have a large affect on the effectiveness of the program as a whole. Active adult involvement is necessary which can bring about the school wide changes needed to reduce bullying (Committee for Children, 2005).

A second evaluation on this program involved six elementary schools that were randomly assigned to either the intervention or control group. For 10 weeks in the fall and spring, coders who were blind to school condition conducted micro-analytic playground observations for a random sub-sample of 544 students. After six months of implementation, the group differences in student behaviors changed in some respects. Playground bullying increased in control groups but not in program groups. The group differences represent about a twenty five percent decline in bullying behaviors. The Steps to Respect program is used as a multilevel intervention program that is based on grade level. A longitudinal sample consisting of children in grades 3 and 4 were followed over two school years. They received Level 1 of the classroom curricula in the first year, and Level 2 in grades 4 and 5 (Frey, Van Schoiack Edstrom, & Hirschstein, 2005).

The results of these two studies indicate encouraging results with respect to bullying and destructive bystander behaviors after only a six-month intervention. As schools persisted into a second year of intervention, reductions in bullying and destructive bystander behaviors
strengthened, with the latter virtually disappearing. Analyses showed a substantial 18-month decline in antisocial playground behaviors. There were also significant declines in victimization and reductions in non-bullying aggression. These reductions may indicate that the program has started to change victim’s reactions from a reliance on unregulated, aggressive responses to more effective, assertive responses (Frey, Van Schoiack Edstrom, & Hirschstein, 2005).

The Steps to Respect program combines universal interventions at both school and classroom level, with a selective intervention aimed at students involved in bullying events. Coaching of involved students is a powerful strategy when used as a multilevel intervention technique. A rigorous combination of a random control design, objective observations, and unbiased analytic techniques provides strong evidence of effectiveness for the Steps to Respect program (Frey, Van Schoiack Edstrom, & Hirschstein, 2005).

A third evaluation was done on the Steps to Respect program. The study examined the relationship between teacher implementation of the bullying prevention program and the student outcomes (Hirschstein, et al., 2007). The study included third-through-sixth- grade classrooms. There were 859 students total who received the Steps to Respect curriculum. There were thirty six teachers whom attended the Steps to Respect training program. These teachers were observed teaching lessons, and received compensation for the study (Hirschstein, Van Schoiack Edstrom, Frey, Snell, & MacKenzie, 2007).

Teachers have been identified as the key to change in the bullying prevention programs. Teachers’ efforts have been described as “talking the talk” and “walking the walk”. This study examines the classroom implementation of the Steps to Respect bullying prevention program over the course of one year. The study examines how “talk” (lesson adherence and quality) and “walk” (support for skill generalization and coaching of individuals) related to students
playground behavior, and peer social skills rated by teachers. The data was collected in schools in two suburban districts in the Pacific Northwest in a longitudinal trial of the program. In the larger study, three pairs of schools were matched on demographic and socioeconomic variables (Hirschstein, Van Schoiack Edstrom, Frey, Snell, & MacKenzie, 2007). Data from the three intervention schools were used in this study. All three schools were located in a suburban area where the majority of the population is white and the second largest group is American Indian students. School number three has the highest percentage which is fifty nine percent on free or reduced lunch. All three schools have a school population around five hundred students.

The goal of the Steps to Respect program is to reduce school bullying problems. This can be done by awareness, enhancing support for better social skills, and teaching coping skills to deal with bully behaviors. The Steps to Respect program also addresses relational aggression such as gossip and social exclusion (Low, Frey, & Brockman, 2010). The schools received six hours of on-site training from trainers. The classroom curriculum was taught over a twelve to fourteen week period. The scripts included in the program material cover topics such as types of bullying and responsible bystander behavior (Hirschstein, et al., 2007).

The implementation of the program occurred in phases. The first step was a school-wide initiative to prevent bullying from happening in the school. This was done by the principal sending home newsletters to the parents about the program. The program consultants supported the program within the school, and remained a support for administration. The classroom lessons were implemented by third through sixth grade teachers from December to May. The program consultants rated the teachers based on instructional quality and lesson planning. They used a rating scale of poor, good, and excellent. The playground behaviors were coded by thirteen coders using a micro-coding system (Hirschstein et al., 2007).
The results showed some improvement since implementing the program. Students exposed to essential concepts and skills were rated more skilled by teachers, in comparison to those who received fewer of those components (Hirschstein, et al., 2007). Teachers who presented high-quality instruction had more difficulty with their students compared to those that had low-quality lessons. Teachers reported having less playground aggression when they had the increased level of support from staff.

Older students with teachers indicating higher levels of coaching became less aggressive over the course of the year, whereas the teachers who did little coaching did not. The number of lessons taught to students was high across the board amongst all classrooms, but adherence and quality varied. The high levels of teacher adherence predicted better teacher ratings of peer interaction skills. This finding was consistent with others in school-based prevention research. The results from this study also indicated that students receiving high quality lessons reported more victimization and difficulty responding assertively to bullying behaviors (Hirschstein, et al., 2007). The observations on the playground however showed no rise in victimization.

Across all grades coaching predicted reduced victimization by bullying and destructive bystander behavior among those involved at pretest. Coaching involves prompting, reinforcing positive social skills, and giving appropriate consequences based on students’ behaviors. The study showed reduced bystander encouragement among students over the course of a year as well (Hirschstein, et al., 2007). This indicates that encouraging students to be a part of the solution rather than the problem may reduce their contribution to bullying.

This study implies that providing school staff with research findings about bullying at their school may be a useful step in prevention and intervention planning. Teachers must be able
to identify antisocial leaders in order to intervene properly. Teachers also benefit from ongoing consultation when using intervention strategies rather than a brief presentation and a manual.

This shows the school counselors’ role can be vital in providing the on-going consultation to help support teachers to carry out the program goals. The random control trial offers more evidence of program-specific effects, showing that teachers in the intervention school provided more support for bullying prevention skills and reported feeling more prepared in dealing with bullying behaviors than the control group teachers did. The findings from this study after one year suggest, classroom implementation corresponded to positive changes in playground behavior. More specifically teachers efforts to “walk the talk” by coaching and supporting skill generalization, this corresponded to changes in student aggression and bystander behaviors (Hirschstein, et al., 2007).

**Second Step**

The Second Step program attempts to improve children’s social competence by developing student skills in the areas of perspective taking, social problem solving, impulse control, and anger management. The Second Step program is primarily a classroom-based program for preschool through middle school students which teaches children to change the attitudes and behaviors that contribute to violence. The program teaches social skills to reduce impulsive and aggressive behavior in children and increase their level of social competence. The Second Step lessons employ techniques of modeling, rehearsal, role play, and verbal mediation which have been shown to be effective in teaching the skills of perspective taking (empathy), impulse control, and anger management. The content of the lessons vary from each grade level and the skills are developmentally appropriate based on the student’s grade level. At all grade
levels, Second Step provides opportunities for modeling, practice, and reinforcement of the new skills (Taub, 2001).

The Second Step program focuses on four self-regulation skills which students need in order to be successful in school. These are called Skills for Learning and they are listening, focusing attention, self-talk, and being assertive. These skills help prepare children to become successful in school. The benefits of the four skills taught in the Skills for Learning Unit go beyond academics; they also support the rest of the program content by providing a solid foundation for the social/emotional development of students’. The next piece of the curriculum is the empathy training. During the empathy unit students build their emotional intelligence by developing skills for identifying emotions in themselves and other students. This sets the stage for the Emotion Management Unit. During this unit the lessons focus on coping with emotional situations. Children are taught skills, such as identifying feelings and deep breathing, to prevent emotions from escalating into negative behaviors. Having the skills to cope with these feelings can improve relationships with peers and making more positive choices. The last two units are the Friendship Skills and Problem-Solving Units. The sequence of Problem-Solving Steps is based on patterns of thinking in social situations, and research shows that children’s social problem-solving skills can be improved. Through these steps children are able to become aware of social cues, “read” a social situation, and select prosocial goals for social interactions. The last part of the Steps to Respect program is the Brain Builders. Brain Builders are designed to be played one or more times every day, and gradually get harder over the course of the program. This approach has been inspired partly by the research of McClelland. She developed tools for evaluating and improving aspects of children’s self-regulation (Committee for Children, 2011).
McClelland has also shown that games like Brain Builders can be used to improve students’ self-regulation skills.

An evaluation of the Second Step program was done to assess the effect of the curriculum on measures of aggressive and prosocial behaviors. The evaluation design was strong, using a randomized controlled trial design for the selection of students, multiple reliable and valid measures to assess student outcomes, and regression procedures to analyze the data. A total of 790 students in second and third grade from 12 urban and suburban schools in the state of Washington participated in the evaluation study. Each participating school was paired with another school from the same district with similar rates of participation in the free or reduced lunch program and a similar percentage of minority students (Grossman, et al., 2004). Then one school from each pair was randomly selected to be either the experimental or control group. A total of forty nine schools participated in this study.

The curriculum contained thirty lessons, each which lasted thirty five minutes. This was given once or twice per week for sixteen to twenty weeks. Teachers from the intervention schools participated in a two day training before implementing the lessons in their classrooms. The outcome data was collected from multiple sources over the course of the study. The outcome measures incorporated three general sources to assess the effectiveness of the intervention—teacher ratings, parent ratings, and direct observation (Grossman, et al., 2004).

The primary hypothesis was that negative/aggressive behaviors would decrease and neutral and prosocial behaviors would increase more in the intervention group than the control group. In the classroom setting, physical negative and overall negative behaviors decreased from pretest to posttest for the intervention group, but increased for the comparison group. In the playground and cafeteria settings, physical negative behaviors decreased from pretest to posttest
for the intervention group but increased for the comparison group. A summary analysis was conducted on the data to assess the effectiveness of the program. The analyses indicated a significant difference between the intervention group and the comparison group in physical negative behaviors, and an increase in neutral/prosocial behaviors in the playground/cafeteria, and a decrease in physical negative behavior across all settings (Grossman, et al., 2004).

The results of the study indicate the Second Step program does have effects on student behaviors. Students who participated in this study showed more prosocial behaviors and less negative behaviors than students who didn’t participate.

Another evaluation of this program was done in a rural elementary school with a population of mostly poor, white students. A year-long longitudinal evaluation with students in the third through sixth grades was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the intervention. The project investigated whether the Second Step curriculum can improve or prevent declines in social behavior. There were fifty four students in grades three through five whom participated in the study. At the comparison school, one classroom for each of grades three, four, and five were selected randomly for participation. Thirty-three students at the comparison school participated in the study. The intervention school involved in this study was located in a rural community in New England (Taub, 2001). The intervention school had 289 students enrolled in first through sixth grades. The comparison school was a nearby rural school with an enrollment of 331 and the same grade levels.

The lessons of the program were delivered by classroom teachers for thirty minutes, twice a day. The school’s guidance counselor and one other teacher attended the two day training prior to the study. After attending the workshop, the guidance counselor and the teacher trained the teachers for six hours. The measures which were used in this study were the School
Social Behavior Scale and behavioral observations. The SSBS is a 65-item questionnaire which assesses social competence and anti-social behavior. The behavioral observations were from fifteen 90-second partial interval recording sessions (Taub, 2001).

The results from the teacher report data in study were encouraging, especially in the area of Social Competence. Students in the intervention school were rated higher in Social Competence after a year of the Second Step program, and were no longer significantly lower than their peers in the comparison school. These findings have basis on the fact that it is easier to gain new skills and habits than it is to get rid of old ones. Over the first year of this program, the students in the intervention school were gaining prosocial skills in the classroom, but were not necessarily showing fewer antisocial behaviors. One of the strengths from this study was that it was conducted over an extensive period of time. This gave the students a full year to grasp the material, and get a hold of what the curriculum is about. Another strength in this study is that the students had different teachers from one year to the next. This helped relieve that evaluation bias that might have come from only one teacher. The students had two different opinions to compare their behavior and growth. The results of this evaluation suggest the Second Step program had a modest positive effect in the school where it was implemented (Taub, 2001). Although this program requires funds to attain the program materials and time to invest into staff training, it is portable, user-friendly, and effective at enhancing students’ social competence and increasing their use of prosocial behavior.

**Bully Busters**

The Bully Busters program for elementary-aged- students gives teachers and other school staff the opportunity to acquire knowledge about bullying and victimization and provides them with the skills and instructional materials they need to prevent and intervene in bullying
situations (Horne, Bartolomucci, and Newman-Carlson, 2003). The program puts emphasis on prevention and control: Control to reduce bullying occurrences and prevention to create conditions in which bullying is less often to occur in the future.

The program is set up in two components. Chapters One and Two focus on concepts helpful in establishing a foundation for the program. Chapter one focuses on “Setting Up for Success”. This provides the framework for a positive atmosphere and a preventive approach to managing aggression and behavior problems. Chapter two focuses on “Emotional Intelligence and Developmental Assets”. This chapter describes the relationship between these two recently developed models and the prevention and reduction of bullying and other aggressive behaviors.

The remainder of the information is set up in learning modules for teachers and students. Each module is set up to a different aspect of the bully-victim experience. The discussions for each module demonstrate a solid foundation of knowledge and support student issues (Horne, Bartolomucci, and Newman-Carlson, 2003). Each module also has hands-on activities which accompany each lesson. The activities are designed to increase awareness of bullying and encourage students to participate in preventing and reducing bullying.

A study was conducted about the Bully Busters program and it focused on the effectiveness of the program. The participants in this study were sixth through eighth grade. The school district was in the southeastern part of the United States. Fifteen teachers participated in the control group and fifteen teachers in the intervention group.

This psycho educational program was designed to facilitate the teachers’ acquisition of skills, techniques, and intervention and prevention strategies specifically related to problems of bullying and victimization, as well to enhance teachers’ self-efficacy for confronting bullying and victimization in the classroom. Each of the teachers was provided a manual containing the
seven workshop modules. Teachers participating in the study attended three separate staff development training sessions, which began two weeks after the start of the school year. After completion of the workshops, the teachers were assigned to two groups. One was Bully Busters Team A and the second was Bully Busters Team B. Each team met with the instructor for one hour, every other week, for eight weeks (Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004).

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the program, four instruments were selected in an effort to address the research study’s questions: Teacher Inventory of Skills and Knowledge (TISK), Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES), Teacher Efficacy and Attribution Measure (TEAM), and Osiris School Administration System Activity Tracker (OAS). TISK was used to assess teachers’ knowledge and use of bullying intervention skills prior to the program. TES is a thirty item survey which measures personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy. TEAM is a vignette-driven survey which describes seven children consistent with descriptions of the seven dimensions of the child behavior clusters of the Behavior Assessment System for Children (Newman-Carlson and Horne, 2004). Lastly, OAS is a database system which lists the students in the school, and their disciplinary referrals. This system keeps track of all the disciplinary offenses the student makes throughout the course of the year.

The findings of this study indicate that the bully prevention program for middle school teachers was an effective intervention for increasing teachers’ knowledge of bullying intervention skills, use of bullying intervention skills, teachers’ personal self-efficacy and teachers’ self-efficacy related to working with specific types of children, as well as reducing the amount of bullying in the classroom. The conclusion confirms that the components of teacher awareness, knowledge, and skills are integral components of a teacher training program, and the findings provide validation of these components as intertwined parts of an effective bully
prevention psycho educational training program for teachers. The teachers whom participated in the study had a greater sense of personal responsibility for their students learning and behavior. The Bully Busters program for middle school teachers appears to be effective method for changing teacher self-efficacy related to working with specific child typologies of Average, Disruptive Behavior Disorder, Learning Disorder, Severe Psychopathology, and Mildly Disruptive students. Finally, exposing teachers to the psycho educational program significantly reduced the amount of bullying behaviors done by their students. The findings from this study contradict the components of a whole school community approach, suggesting that efforts to reduce bullying behavior will be effective only if a whole school community approach is the intervention program of choice. Therefore, implementing a teacher- targeted psycho educational program, as opposed to a school wide bully prevention program, may be more precise, cost-effective, and time efficient (Newman-Carlson and Horne, 2004). This implicates that a psycho-educational program can be used successfully as an intervention to school bullying.

The second study of the Bully Busters program was done at a rural elementary school in East Tennessee. This study was done to determine if a Bully Busters teacher in-service training program will increase a counselor and/or teacher’s awareness of bullying in the classroom. There were thirty six participants whom participated in the study. Half of this group was assigned to a treatment group, and the other half was assigned to a control group.

The teacher in-service training was presented to the treatment group, and was delivered in three sessions which spanned three weeks (Browning, Cooker, and Sullivan, 2005). Session one was an overview of Bully Busters, and discussion on implementation. The second session covered instruction covered half the learning modules, and the other session covered the rest of the modules.
The results were that the treatment group participants demonstrated significantly higher acquisition of knowledge for the awareness of bullying. The treatment group participants also demonstrated significant retention of knowledge acquired during in-service training for recognizing behaviors and characteristics of bullies and victims (Browning, Cooker, and Sullivan, 2005). The teachers and support staff maintained their self-efficacy for bullying and victimization. They also maintained their awareness of bully/peer abuse problem in the classroom and throughout the school.

The last study examined was done in a school in the Southeastern United States conducted over the course of a year. The middle school is located in a suburban/rural area adjacent to a small city. The population of the school during the time of the study was 89 percent of the student population was on free or reduced meals, and 10 percent were considered to have limited English proficiency. The ethnicity of the school was also taken into account: 64 percent were African American, 12 percent were White, 24 percent were Multiracial, and 22 percent of the students were Hispanic. There were fifty two teachers and 488 students whom participated in the study. The study had an abbreviated version because the full version had several evaluations and teachers and administrators wanted a less intrusive, more focused implementation which would provide teachers with the background and understanding of the program, but also provide less activities and events (Bell, Raczynski, and Horne, 2010). This implementation was developed to determine whether an abbreviated version would be successful in less time and with fewer activities.

The intervention included in-service training for the teachers, and following the training, the teachers’ met six times with researchers to engage in teacher support groups. All students and teachers participated in the Bully Busters program. The study was done in four parts: an
initial two hour meeting, seven teacher support groups, seven classroom activities, and a
concluding meeting. There were pre-and post-test surveys which were collected from the
students and teachers. Teachers were assessed at pre-and posttest on self-efficacy for addressing
bullying problems and perceptions of school climate/safety. Teacher self-efficacy was measured
with two scales. The first scale was Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), and the second
scale was Teacher Expectation and Efficacy Measure (TEEM). The TSES scale measures how
much teachers believe they are able to maintain a positive classroom environment. The TEEM
scale measures teacher’s expectations for adaptive behavior in their students and self-efficacy for
working with students who exhibit bullying or victimization behaviors (Bell, Raczynski, and
Horne, 2010).

Teacher perceptions of school climate and safety problems were measured with two
scales. The first scale was The School Safety Problems-Teacher (SSP-T) and the second scale
was Teacher Classroom Climate (TCC). The SSP-T scale measures teacher reports of problem
behaviors in the school. The TCC scale measures teacher’s perceptions of classroom climate
with regard to student-student relationships, student-teacher relationships, and student’s
awareness and reporting of aggressive behavior (Bell, Raczynski, and Horne, 2010).

The students also had a survey to complete. The first survey was the Student Classroom
Climate survey which measured student’s perceptions of their classroom climate with regard to
student-student relationships, student-teacher relationships, and awareness and reporting of
aggressive behavior. The next survey is the Problem Behavior Frequency Scales. This survey
measures the frequency of problem behaviors experienced by students. The last survey is the
School Safety Problems-Student survey. This survey measures student reports of problem
behaviors in the school (Bell, Raczynski, and Horne, 2010).
Teacher efficacy was measured before and upon completion of the intervention. All scales indicated increases in reported teacher-efficacy, though only two of the three indicated positive change (Bell, Raczynski, and Horne, 2010). Although the full version of the “Bully Busters” program was not used in this study, it was still proven to be effective on teachers’ self-efficacy. The abbreviated intervention did have some effect on the school and it was cost effective. The school’s bullying reduction campaign was successful.

Although the study was successful, there were some limitations to the study as well. First there was no control group, to use as a comparison school. Secondly, the teacher-participants did this as a credit requirement and as a part of an initiated school-wide bullying reduction campaign initiated by their administrators. Thus, whether the teachers were compensated or not and if they were voluntary still remains in question. The last limitation to the study is that there was no way to measure the extent of implementation of the activities by teachers. These factors should be taken into consideration when analyzing and using this study as a source of reference.

**Adlerian Perspective**

Bullying intervention programs have similarities with Adlerian psychology. Adlerians believe that acceptance of self and acceptance of others are interrelated. Adlerians encourage growth in people and society through educational programs, and techniques, counseling, psychotherapy, and social advocacy (Mosak & Maniaci, 1999). The two components of Adler’s childrearing methods which apply to children are encouragement and the four goals of misbehavior. These two components go hand in hand when working with children in the school system.

The educational system can be discouraging to some students. Adlerians would say that when a child is misbehaving, the child is discouraged. Therefore, a bully is a discouraged child,
and one who thinks that the only way to feel big is through power. Encouragement is the most important aspect of child-raising. Every child needs encouragement in order to feel they belong. In a child’s attempt to find their place, they are met with constant discouragement. It is important for teachers, and school staff to separate the deed from the doer. The failure of the deed should not affect the value of the child. The child should feel they can show their imperfections and feel safe to do so. They should not feel judged by others and should know that one failure does not mean they are deemed a failure for life. It is very important that a child has some direction in finding their place through achievement (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1990). Encouragement has to be continuous in order to make an impact on a discouraged child.

As noted above, children want to find a sense of belonging. Whether they achieve this through peers, family, school, or community, it is an important for children to feel like they belong. If a child does not find belonging, the child will seek it whether it is good or bad behavior; the child needs to find a place. There are four mistaken goals which a child can pursue. It is important to understand these goals in order to help redirect a child’s behavior. The four goals are attention seeking, power seeking, revenge taking, and displaying inadequacy (Mosak & Maniacci, 1999). The first mistaken goal for attention seeking is used by a discouraged child as a way to feel like they belong. The child believes he or she only has significance when they are the center of attention. Their goal is to win attention rather than participate (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1990). This can make it difficult for teachers and staff to keep the child on task.

The second mistaken goal is the struggle for power. This occurs when the school staff has tried for some time to forcefully stop the child’s demands for attention. This can lead to a power struggle between staff and student. The student feels a sense of satisfaction when he or
she refuses to do what staff is telling them to do. The child feels if he or she were to comply with staff, then they would lose a sense of personal value. The third mistaken goal is the seeking revenge. A child will seek revenge as their only means to feel significant and important. This child does not feel he or she has any power and that their only means of satisfaction is to make others feel hurt as they do. The fourth goal is the child who displays inadequacy. This child feels completely discouraged and has given up entirely; he or she feels they have no chance to succeed in any way (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1990). When a child feels inadequate they would rather not attempt any task where they might fail, this would only lead to further embarrassment.

Once a teacher or staff member is aware of a child’s mistaken goal, they are able to know the purpose of the child’s behavior. School staff is now in a position to act. If school staff members remove the results that the child wants, the behavior becomes useless (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1990). Then the child might change their course of action, or change their direction all together. When a teacher knows they are becoming involved in a power struggle, they can remove themselves from the situation. In order to become better equipped to handle misbehaviors, school staff can educate themselves on the goals of misbehavior. This is a large part of preventing bullying behaviors in the classroom and playground. If school staff knows what is directing a child to misbehave, then they can do what they can in order to change the behavior.

The essence of all the bullying programs is to prevent bullying behaviors from happening and, in order for success, all school staff members need to be included in the prevention of bullying. Thus, it is important as Adlerians to encourage the developmental growth of students through counseling. Educators can catch a student when they are doing something right and
make sure to separate the deed from the doer. Each student has their own individual characteristics that make them unique and they should be treated as such.

**Conclusion**

The most effective way to prevent bullying from happening in schools is to implement a program early on that involves caring adults (Garrity, Jens, Porter, Sager, & Short-Camilli, 2004). Bullying in schools is such a public concern that federal initiatives such as No Child Left Behind have focused on school safety and acts of aggressive behavior as data collection and reporting targets. Bullying is not only a United States problem, but a global concern. The research on bullying prevention programs has increased over the past two decades. A study was conducted to examine the effectiveness of a large majority of the school bullying prevention programs. The researchers focused on meta-analytic review of school bullying intervention programs and used an international sample of studies from a twenty five year period. A total of 15,386 students were used in the sixteen studies which they used in their meta-analysis. There was one program that was examined, and included in this examination, the Olweus program. The Olweus program showed that students receiving intervention showed significant decreases in victimization and bullying behaviors. The results from the studies suggest that there is some evidence supporting the effectiveness of school bullying intervention programs. Anti-bullying interventions are useful in creating awareness, knowledge, and competency in dealing with bullying behaviors, it should not be expected that these interventions will dramatically influence the incidences of bullying behaviors (Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, & Isava, 2008). A school has to look at their own culture, population size, ethnicity, and commitment level before investing into a bullying prevention program. There is a large amount of commitment from all school staff which is needed in order to launch an effective program. While all of these programs are
researched based programs, proving they are effective, it is the school’s choice to find out what program would work best for them.

The school counselor is an integral part of bullying prevention programs. The school counselor is well suited to be the facilitator and director of bullying prevention programs. School counselors are vital in insuring bullying prevention programs are being executed and carefully implemented. The role of the strength based school counselor is to promote and advocate (Galassi & Akos, 2007). Great importance is put on making sure that the function or service of the counselor is producing the desired outcomes for all students. Whether the school counselor is counseling, collaborating, advising, or leading, their role has great importance on school culture.

Bullying is a widespread issue that is only going to continue in years to come. If a counselor is able to evaluate multiple bullying prevention programs and have the ability to choose a program that is a right fit for their school based on the key principles of each program, they will achieve success. This research gives school counselors a perspective about four widely used bullying prevention programs and also provides evidence based research on each program as well. This provides school counselors with a tool that can help make it easier when choosing a bullying prevention program to implement.
References


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