



BULLYING VICTIMIZATION

RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDED INTERVENTIONS

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DE Positive Behavior Support Project – School Climate & Student Success

MODULE STRUCTURE

- Module series goal:
 - Provide information to schools that can lead to improvements in **school climate** and **behavioral outcomes**.
- Module narratives provide additional information to accompany PowerPoint Presentation.
 - Endnotes throughout slides correspond to the references in the module narrative.
- Gold star = Resource on Delaware PBS website

WHAT IS BULLYING VICTIMIZATION?

- Bullying = type of aggression that aims to:
 - Harm the victim
 - Is repetitive over time
 - Involves an imbalance of power
 - The bully is more powerful than the victim¹



BULLYING IN DELAWARE

- Delaware law defines bullying as:
 - Intentional actions that occur in physical, verbal, written, or electronic form towards a student, school employee, or school volunteer that:
 - cause reasonable fear or substantial harm to the victim's physical or emotional well-being, or damage to property
 - are pervasive/persistent or characterized by a power differential that creates a hostile educational environment
 - interfere with a safe environment
 - include coercing others to cause the above harmful actions



DELAWARE SCHOOL SURVEYS

- Assesses four types of bullying victimization (verbal, physical, social/relational, and cyber)
 - *Delaware Bullying Victimization Scale*
 - Assesses students' reports of the extent to which they have personally experienced each of the four types of bullying during the current school year
 - Bullying school-wide subscale on the *Delaware School Climate Scale*
 - Assesses bullying in general throughout the school
 - Items that ask if students bully one another, threaten and bully others, and worry about others bullying them



NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF BULLYING VICTIMIZATION

- Greater internalizing problems
 - E.g. depression, anxiety, and loneliness¹⁻¹²
- Increased risk of suicide ideation, suicide attempts, and self-injury¹³⁻¹⁶
- Increased risk of participation in delinquent and problem behaviors
 - E.g. substance use, stealing, physical fighting, and vandalism¹⁷⁻¹⁸
- Greater difficulty making friends and greater risk for social rejection and isolation^{1,15,19-20}
- Lower social competence²¹
- Lower self-esteem^{11,15,19} and increased levels of self-criticism¹²

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF BULLYING VICTIMIZATION

Less

- Attachment or connectedness to school^{2,22}
- E.g. greater fear, anxiety, and avoidance towards school^{8, 23-25}

Lower

- Academic engagement, achievement, and classroom concentration^{8,11,20,26-28}

At risk

- For psychosomatic problems
- E.g. headaches, stomach pain, sleeping problems⁴

NEGATIVE OUTCOMES FOR BULLIES

Important Note

- *Not only are victims of bullying at increased risk for a number of negative outcomes, but so too are students who bully others. Those risks include:*

- Involvement in crime, violence, drugs, alcohol, and delinquency^{8,17,29-34}
- Greater internalizing problems⁷
- Psychosomatic symptoms such as feeling tired or tense³
- Suicide attempts and ideation¹⁴
- Less school bonding, or connectedness²²
- Lower academic achievement^{8,17}

- Students who witness bullying and those who are **both victims and perpetrators of bullying** also are at risk for negative outcomes.¹⁰⁹⁻¹¹⁰



Bullying
Victimization
**Contributing
Factors**

Student and
Home
Characteristics

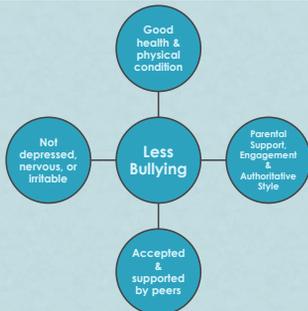
Classroom,
School, and
Teacher
Characteristics

STUDENT & HOME CHARACTERISTICS CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- The following characteristics have been shown to be associated with students who experience **the least bullying**:
- General social and emotional competence. This includes:
 - Few, if any, behavior problems^{22,35,36}
 - Good social skills³⁷
 - Ability to regulate one's emotions^{37,38}
 - Experiencing and expressing empathy³⁹
 - Viewing oneself favorably^{15,21,36,38,40-42}
 - Positive self-perceptions
 - High self-esteem
 - Absence of internalizing problems
 - Overall life satisfaction



STUDENT & HOME CHARACTERISTICS CONTRIBUTING FACTORS



STUDENT & HOME CHARACTERISTICS CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

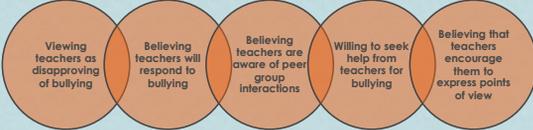
Important Note

- Although **not malleable**, other characteristics of students place them at increased risk of being bullied:
 - Students with disabilities, especially those with observable behavior problems⁵⁶⁻⁵⁹
 - Students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning^{61,60-61}
 - Mixed results for race^{7,53,62-66}
 - Males tend to experience more bullying (and bully others) more than females (verbal and physical bullying)^{1,11,19,21,38,40,44,53,63,67}
 - Females bully and are bullied with more verbal, relational and social forms of bullying^{9,11,19,53}
 - Mixed results for age and grade level^{1,9,23,62,68-69,106}
 - Within the same grade, younger children are bullied more³⁴
 - Mixed results for religion
 - Muslim & Jewish students more likely to be victims¹⁴⁻¹¹⁶

CLASSROOMS, SCHOOLS, AND TEACHERS

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- **Less bullying** occurs in schools and classrooms characterized by the following:
 - Positive teacher-student relationships and teacher support^{27,44,47,65,70-73}
 - This includes students:



CLASSROOMS, SCHOOLS, AND TEACHERS

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- Positive student-student relationships, especially peer support^{71,77-78}
 - Student self-determination in the classroom⁸⁰
- Greater student respect for diversity and other differences⁷¹
- Students perceive behavioral expectations & rules to be clear, fair, and against bullying⁸¹⁻⁸³
- Authoritative approach to classroom management and school discipline^{38,70,75,85-86}
- Norms that do not support bullying^{23,50,77}

BULLYING PREVENTION CURRICULA & PROGRAMS

- Program features associated with more **positive** outcomes:⁹⁰⁻⁹²
 - Whole-school, multidisciplinary anti-bullying approach with high intensity
 - Programs inspired by Dan Olweus
 - Authoritative approach to classroom management and school discipline
 - Information/meetings for parents
 - Use of videos in lessons
 - Improved playground supervision in elementary school
 - Teacher training
 - Counseling for students who bully
 - Conflict resolution training



- When effectiveness of existing programs is found, it is more likely to be in elementary than middle and high school.¹⁰⁶



COLLECT & EXAMINE DATA RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: TIER 1

- Examine data, such as from *Delaware School Climate Survey*
 - Are school-wide bullying and individual bullying victimization perceived as occurring infrequently across students, teachers/staff, and parents?
 - Unfavorable responses would indicate the need for interventions and related staff development.
- In addition to examining scale and subscale scores, look at student responses to specific survey items
- Responses on the School-wide Bullying subscale (general and school-wide bullying) and Bullying Victimization Scale (individual bullying)
- If an area of need:
 - Gather and examine more data to determine why these relationships are not viewed positively
 - Office Disciplinary Referrals
 - Other subscales
 - Share results of the additional data with focus groups

CONDUCTING FOCUS GROUPS

Focus group guide

- Information on:
 - Designing questions
 - Recruiting participants
 - Conducting the group
 - Analyzing data
- Provides examples

Guidelines for Conducting a Focus Group

Focus groups are most useful if conducted in a structured and planned manner. They are most useful if they are conducted in a structured and planned manner. They are most useful if they are conducted in a structured and planned manner.

Key Guidelines you will find available here:

- Designing the group
- Recruiting and preparing for participants
- Conducting the focus group
- Analyzing the data

You will also find examples of the following items:

- Focus group questions
- Recruitment flyer
- Interviewer manual
- Sample consent form
- Data analysis form
- Participant report form

from Duke University
https://assessment.trinity.duke.edu/document/s/How_to_Conduct_a_Focus_Group.pdf

ESTABLISH COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF BULLYING & ANTI-BULLYING EXPECTATIONS

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: TIER 1

To do this, schools should...

- Have a clear definition & understanding of bullying
- Include cyberbullying & the responsibility of the school in such cases
- Have teachers & staff reflect upon their own attitudes towards bullying
 - Teachers, staff, students, and parents should recognize what acts do and do not constitute bullying
- Emphasize the consequences of bullying for those who bully **and** for the victim and school climate





BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION ACTION PLAN

- Provides prompts to get staff, administrators, teachers, and other school personnel thinking about the aspects of bullying prevention and intervention that are in place at their school
- Includes suggestions about factors/steps to consider when completing the prompts

Courtesy of the DE-PBS Project

Initial Steps for Bullying Prevention and Intervention Action Plan

SCHOOL NAME: _____

Directions: The following are initial steps that could help your school create or bolster robust and meaningful bullying prevention and response systems. Respond to and think about/reflect on each of the prompts below.

1. Write the definition of "bullying" for your school (see district/state policies).

Consider these 4 components of bullying in developing the definition:

- Intentionality of physical or emotional power
- Repeated across time or individuals/actors
- Occurs in close physical or emotional space
- Unequal levels of power

2. Outline your school's plan for teaching the definition & establish clear reporting protocol for staff, students, & families.

Consider these 4 steps in establishing protocol:

- Create
- Teach
- Practice
- Monitor

3. Outline your school's protocol for responding to bullying reports. Think about your school's crisis plan for unexpected emergencies.

Consider these 2 issues when establishing protocol:

TEACH STUDENTS HOW TO RESPOND TO BULLYING

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: TIER 1

- Teach students how they might best respond to bullying
- Develop an anonymous process by which students can report all forms of bullying, including cyberbullying
- Develop school-wide expectations that promote prosocial behavior and prevent bullying, aggression, and peer rejection
- Develop clear and consistent consequences for students who bully others
- Make families aware of procedures and policies
- Identify non-classroom areas where bullying is most likely to occur
- Encourage school staff to seek out victims of bullying so they receive help



IMPLEMENT A UNIVERSAL BULLYING PREVENTION OR SEL CURRICULUM RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: TIER 1

Packaged programs available for purchase/training that are supported by research showing they reduce bullying victimization in elementary schools:

- KiVa Bullying Prevention Program
- Olweus Bullying Prevention Program
- Steps to Respect
 - Focuses on social-emotional skills



Important Note

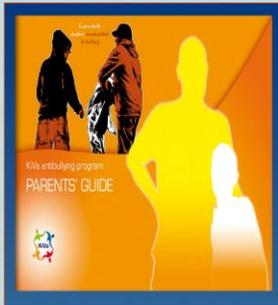
- Other popular programs (e.g. SWPBIS, Restorative Justice, Bully Proofing Your School, and Second Step: A Violence Prevention Program) have been shown to lead to positive outcomes but not reduced bullying victimization





KIVA BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM

- For students ages 6-12
- Includes training materials and lessons, videos, online games, and parents' guide
- Greater focus on supports for the victims and bullies
- Supported by studies showing reduced bullying and victimization⁹³⁻⁹⁶
 - Now being implemented throughout the U.S., including in DE



From KiVa International:
(<http://www.kivaprogram.net/program>)

Recommended Strategies
Students at Tier 2 & 3

APPLY UNIVERSAL INTERVENTIONS

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: TIERS 2 & 3

Interventions should be:

- Of greater frequency and intensity
- More comprehensive, including multiple components
- More individualized and guided by students' needs and factors that might explain/contribute to bullying and victimization
 - Social skills deficits
 - Individual strengths
 - Social networks in classrooms and school
 - Classroom management practices
 - Systems of social support and resources in the school, home, and community



PROVIDE SOCIAL SKILLS/SEL TRAINING

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: TIERS 2 & 3

- Target specific prosocial skills and antisocial behaviors related to social acceptance, friendships, and bullying victimization
- Use lessons from a Tier 1 bullying prevention or SEL curriculum
 - E.g. Steps to Respect or Second Step
- Use evidence-based curriculum lessons designed for use at Tiers 2 and 3
 - E.g. Incredible Years, Coping Power, and PEERS
 - Include training for targeted students **and** their parents

Important Notice

- Use caution in grouping students together (i.e. in Tier 2 interventions) who share similar antisocial behaviors. This may result in "deviancy training," with peers modeling and reinforcing antisocial behavior¹⁰⁴⁻¹⁰⁵



ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES: TIERS 2 & 3

- Ensure that targeted students have a close, supportive relationship with at least one other student in the school
- Individual counseling may be appropriate for bullying victims
- Work closely with students' parents to target social-emotional skills at home



Making a plan
Who is going to do
what actions by
when?



THANK YOU

- Based on areas of need identified by data, check out other resources provided through the **School Climate and Student Success Module Series**.
- www.delawarepbs.org
- Questions can be directed to Sarah Hearn
- skhearn@udel.edu



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