

## REALISTIC STRATEGIES FOR BULLY PREVENTION & PROMOTING POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

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### University of Illinois Anti-Bullying Program

- Indiana University Teen Conflict Survey (Bosworth, Espelage, & Simon, 1999; Espelage et al., 2000, 2001)
- University of Illinois Bullying Research Program
  - INTERVIEW STUDY (Espelage & Asida, 2001)
  - EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE STUDY (Espelage, 1998)
  - SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS STUDY (Espelage, Holt, & Henkel, 2003; Espelage, Green, & Wasserman, 2007; Espelage, Green, & Polanin, in press)
  - SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DATING VIOLENCE, & BULLYING STUDIES (Holt & Espelage, 2003; Holt & Espelage, 2005; Espelage & Holt, 2006)
  - ATTRIBUTION, COPING STYLES, & BULLYING (Kingsbury & Espelage, 2006)
  - THEORY OF MIND, EMPATHY, & BULLYING (Espelage et al., 2004; Mayberry & Espelage, 2006)
  - HOMOPHOBIA, SEXUAL VIOLENCE, & BULLYING (Potat & Espelage, 2006; Espelage et al., 2008)
  - Sexual Orientation, Bullying, & Mental Health Outcomes (Espelage, Aragon, Birkett, & Koenig, 2008; Potat, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009; Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009)
- CDC Federally-funded Grants:
  - Bullying & SV Overlap (2007 - 2010)
  - Randomized Clinical Trial of Middle School Second Step Program (Committee for Children, 2008) in Reducing Bullying & SV (2009-2013)

### With Awareness Comes Misperception

<u>Misperception</u>	<u>Scientific Evidence</u>
<b>Bullying is an epidemic.</b>	<b>Bully Rates Have Not Changed</b>
<b>Bully-suicide linked.</b>	<b>Bully Only One of Many Predictors</b>
<b>Bully are young criminals.</b>	<b>Bullies are diverse in their outcomes</b>
<b>Bullies need to be punished.</b>	<b>Ignores Group Phenomena</b>
<b>Bullies – dysfunctional families</b>	<b>Good kids get involved in bullying</b>

### Definition of Bullying

Bullying is unwanted aggressive behavior(s) among school-age children that has a high likelihood of causing physical or psychological harm or injury and is characterized by:

- 1) an imbalance of real or perceived power that favors the aggressor(s);
- 2) is repeated or has a high likelihood of being repeated;
- 3)The victim(s) of bullying may feel intimidated, demeaned, or humiliated as a result of the aggression.

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### Abandon Word – Bullying?

- **May 1, 2013: Dorothy Espelage cited in USA TODAY: “Stop using the word 'bullying' in school”**
- **Bullying:**
  - **Victimization**
  - **Aggression**
  - **Mean/Cruel Behavior**
  - **Disrespect**
  - **Sexual Harassment**
  - **Racism**
  - **Violence**

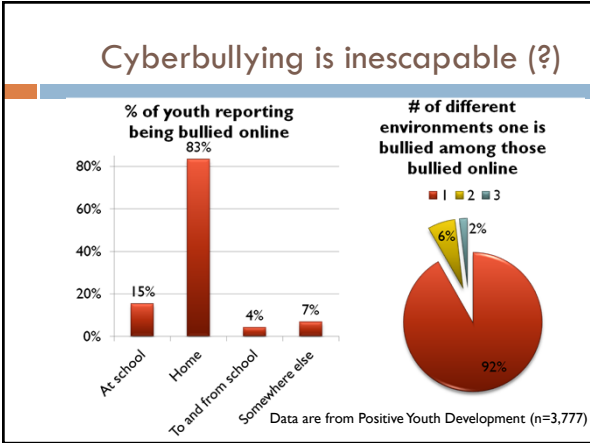
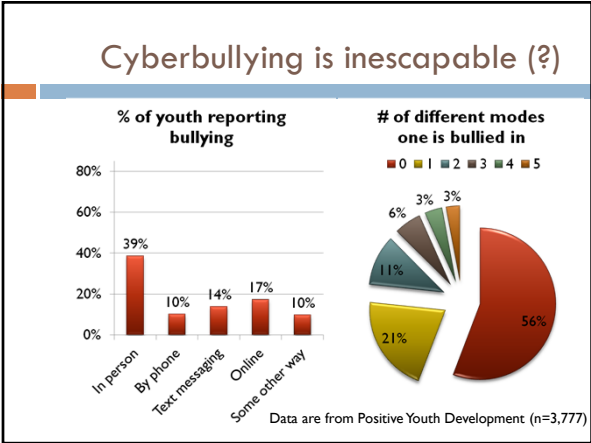
### Bullying Prevalence

- Among 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> graders:
  - 15% Chronically Victimized
  - 17% Ringleader Bullies
  - 8% Bully-Victims
  - 60% Bystanders

### Cyber-Bullying

“Cyber-bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others.”

(Bill Belsey: www.cyberbullying.co)



### CyberBullying (Ybarra, 2011)

- Cyberbullying (bullying online) affects between 15-17% of youth each year; harassment affects about 38%

  - More than 80% youth who use the Internet are **\*not\* cyberbullied**
- About 1/3 of bullied and harassed youth are very or extremely upset

  - 75% who are bullied and harassed youth were not upset
- Bullying is most commonly an in-person experience (21% are bullied exclusively this way).

  - For a concerning minority (8%), bullying is ubiquitous (in person, online, via text)
- Internet victimization is **not increasing**

  - Text messaging victimization may be increasing...

### TRANSACTIONAL ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN SCHOOL-BASED AGGRESSION/BULLYING & CYBERBULLYING

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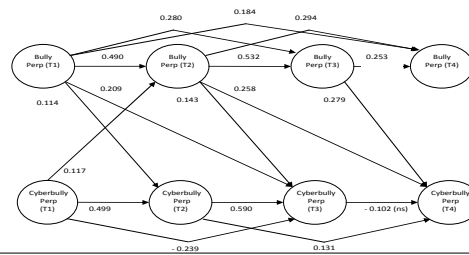
This research was supported by Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (#1U01/CE001677) to Dorothy Espelage (PI)

## Method

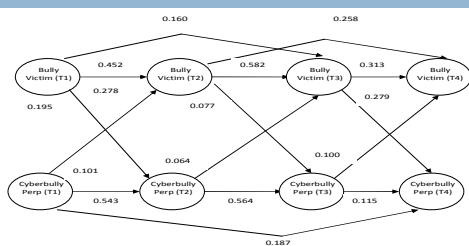
### Participants

- 1,132 students (49.1% female)
- 3 cohorts (5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> graders)
- Assessed across 4 waves including Spring/Fall 2008, Spring/Fall 2009
- Racially diverse (51% Black; 34% White; 3% Hispanic; 3% Asian; 9% Other)

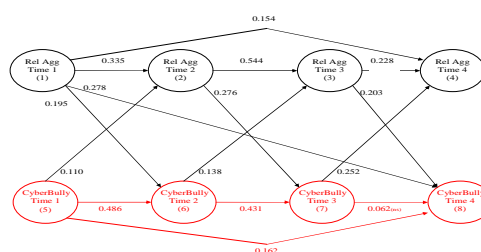
## Bullying Perpetration & Cyberbullying Perpetration



## Bullying Victimization and Cyberbullying Perpetration



## Relational Aggression Perpetration to Cyberbullying Perpetration



## Summary

- Consistent support was found for transactional relations between school-based bullying/aggression perpetration and cyberbullying involvement.
- If schools are promoting respectful behavior – this will likely spill over to “technology” – another mode of communication.

## Bullying Prevention – Meta-analysis (Merrell et al., 2008)

- Evaluated effectiveness of 16 bullying efficacy studies across some six countries (six studies in US).
- Only two of six US studies published.
- All showed small to negligible effects.
- Small positive effects found for enhancing social competence and peer acceptance, and increasing teacher knowledge and efficacy in implementing interventions.
- Reality—No impact on bullying behaviors.
- Farrington & Tfoiti (2009) – programs that are effective in European country include parents, use of multimedia, and target teacher’s competence in responding to bullying.

### Bullying Prevention – Pushing The Field Forward

- Need to recognize that bullying co-occurs with other types of aggression and other risky behavior (delinquency, AOD).
- Overlapping risk and protective factors need to be targeted in school-based programs in order to address spectrum of problem behavior (Cataliano et al., 2002).
- Need to consider interventions that address these risk and protective factors.
- Programs should address the peer or social norms in schools.

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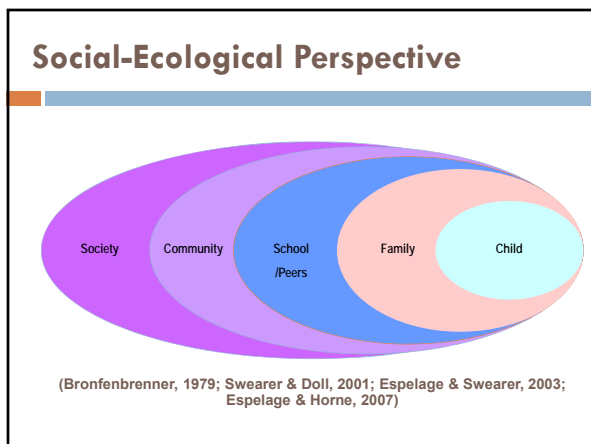
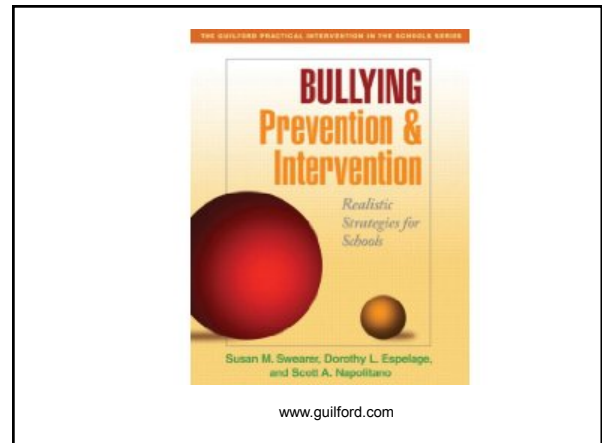
### Bullying Prevention – Pushing the Field Forward

- Need to address the extent to which demographic variables (such as gender and race) impact efficacy.
  - FOR EXAMPLE, IN ONE STUDY OF THE OBPP Program; reductions in victimization were found only for white students, not for the large sample of Asian or Black students (Bauer, Lozano, & Rivara, 2007)
- Need to consider how classroom management skills and implementation levels impact a program's effectiveness.
- Need to seriously consider how to motivate schools to engage in a serious conversation about bully prevention.
- REALITY– Research evidence MUST inform the next generation of prevention efforts; by contributing to modifications, enhancements, implementation issues, and must infuse INNOVATION into basic and applied scholarship.

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### Considering Bias-based Language

- Large percentage of bullying among students involves the use of homophobic teasing and slurs, called homophobic teasing or victimization (Poteat & Espelage, 2005; Poteat & Rivers, 2010).
- Bullying and homophobic victimization occur more frequently among LGBT youth in American schools than among students who identify as heterosexual (Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009; Kosciw, Greytak, & Diaz, 2009).
- Adverse outcomes are still present for LGBT youth, even after controlling for school-based victimization (Robinson & Espelage, 2012)



### Meta-Analytic Study

- Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek (2010)
  - Reviewed 153 studies since 1970
  - Youth who bully other students: have significant externalizing behavior, social competence and academic challenges, negative attitudes toward others, family characterized by conflict
  - Peer Status & Bully varied by age: Adolescents who bully have higher peer status than children who bully others

## Bullying & Adult Outcomes

- Special Issue in *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*.
- Studies examined longitudinal associations between bullying/aggression during childhood/adolescence and then associations with adult outcomes (substance use, offending, job status)
- Studies controlled for a number of risky individual (hyperactivity) and contextual (family) variables
- Association between bullying and later adult outcomes reduced when these variables were considered
- Conclusion: Bullying **MIGHT** increase the likelihood of these later outcomes.

## Individual Correlates of Bullying Involvement

- Depression/Anxiety
- Empathy
- Delinquency
- Impulsivity
- Other forms of Aggression
- Alcohol/Drug Use
- Positive Attitudes toward Violence/Bullying
- Low Value for Prosocial Behaviors
  - For review (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Espelage & Horne, 2007)

## Family & School Risk Factors

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>FAMILY</b></li> <li>– Lack of supervision</li> <li>– Lack of attachment</li> <li>– Negative, critical relationships</li> <li>– Lack of discipline/ consequences</li> <li>– Support for violence</li> <li>– Modeling of violence</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>SCHOOL</b></li> <li>– Lack of supervision</li> <li>– Lack of attachment</li> <li>– Negative, critical relationships</li> <li>– Lack of discipline/ consequences</li> <li>– Support for violence</li> <li>– Modeling of violence</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

For review (Espelage, 2012; Espelage & Horne, 2007)

## Relation Between Bullying & Other Victimization Forms

- Child maltreatment has been associated with difficulties in peer relations (Jacobsen & Straker, 1992; Shields & Cicchetti, 2001)
- Exposure to domestic violence has been linked to bullying perpetration (Baldry, 2003)
- Sibling bullying is tied to school-based bullying for victimization and perpetration (Espelage, Low, & De La Rue, 2012)

## BULLYING PERPETRATION & SUBSEQUENT SEXUAL VIOLENCE PERPETRATION AMONG MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

(*JOURNAL OF ADOLESCENT HEALTH* (2012))

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This research was supported by Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (#1U01CE001677) to Dorothy Espelage (PI)

## Bully-Sexual Violence Pathway

- Emerging theory – bullying perpetration & homophobic teasing are thought to be predictive of sexual violence over time.
- Bullying is associated with increasing homophobic teasing perpetration during early adolescence.
- When students engage in homophobic teasing, sexual perpetration may develop as students are developing opposite-sex attractions and sexual harassment becomes more prevalent.

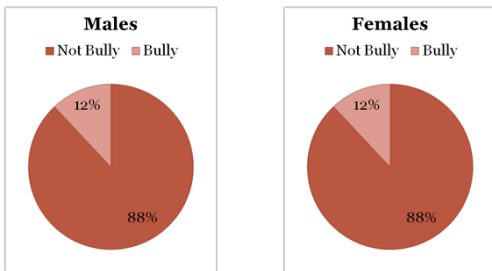
### Definitions

- **Bullying:** An act of intentionally inflicting injury or discomfort upon another person (through physical contact, through words or in other ways) repeatedly and over time for the purpose of intimidation and/or control.
- **Homophobic Teasing:** Negative attitudes and behaviors directed toward individuals who identify as or are *perceived* to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Includes comments, sexual rumor spreading, or groping.

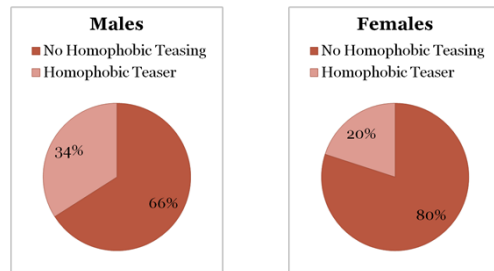
### Participants of Current Study

- 1,391 middle school students
- 5 middle schools (grades 5 – 8)
- 49.8% Females
- 59% African-American, 41% Caucasian
- 67% Low-Income

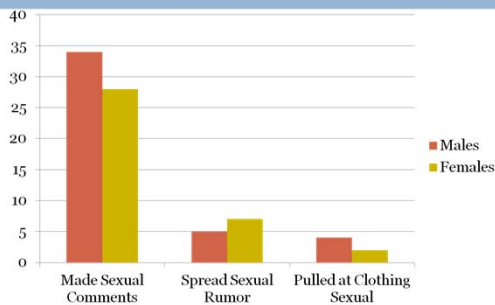
### Percentages of Youth Who Bully



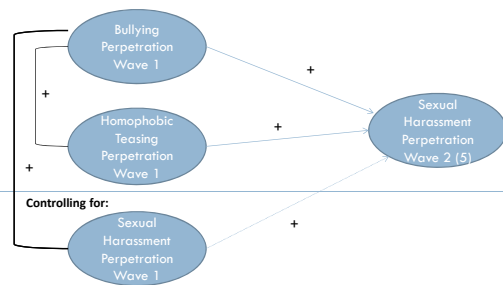
### Percentages of Youth Who Homophobic Name-Call



### Percentages of Sexual Harassment Perpetration



### Longitudinal Results



### CAUSAL LINK: Bullying – Homophobic Teasing

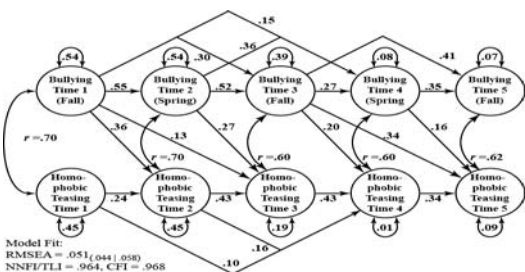


Figure 1. Standardized parameter estimates from the panel model of the relations among bullying and homophobic teasing.

### Research Findings

- Bullying perpetration causally linked to homophobic teasing perpetration.
- Relation between bullying perpetration and sexual harassment perpetration explained by homophobic teasing perpetration.
- Association between bullying perpetration and homophobic perpetration explained by higher levels of traditional masculinity.
- Bullying perpetration, homophobic bullying perpetration, and sexual harassment perpetration develops from peer influence, modeling, and socialization.

### Suggestions

Addressing homophobic teasing explicitly within a bullying prevention curriculum may be a way to delay development of sexual harassment. At a minimum, homophobic teasing should be addressed by adults:

That's so gay

•What does that mean?  
 •You think it means "stupid," but it actually refers to a person's sexual orientation.  
 •You might be surprised to know that what you said may hurt someone's feelings.  
 •How can something have a sexual orientation?

You throw like a girl

•Are you saying that I am a girl?  
 •Are implying that girl's can't throw?  
 •People do have different abilities, but that does not mean you need to be so mean.

You're such a fag/dyke

•That type of language is not acceptable.  
 •We don't use these words here.

### Why little success in preventing school bullying?

- Most frequently used bullying prevention programs DO NOT incorporate content related to use of homophobic language & bullying directed at LGBT youth.
  - 23 bullying prevention programs in US, only three mentioned LGBT bullying; and NONE did this indepth (Birkett & Espelage, 2010)
  - These include Flirting or Hurting (Stein & Sjorstrom, 1996), Step Up (Madsen et al., 2006), Second Step (CFC, 2008)
- Meta-analyses do not include evaluation of Groundspark videos: Let's Get Real (2003), Straightlaced (2009).
- SOLUTION: Bully State Laws should require bully prevention plan to include LGBT related material (GSA, lessons, academic content)

### WILLINGNESS TO INTERVENE IN BULLYING EPISODES AMONG MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS: INDIVIDUAL AND PEER-GROUP INFLUENCES

JOURNAL OF EARLY ADOLESCENCE (2012)

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This research was supported by Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (#1U01CE001677) to Dorothy Espelage (PI)

### Results & Conclusions

- In this study (at least for boys) efforts to influence an individual's willingness to intervene will be more successful with careful consideration of the bullying perpetration level among friendship groups.
- Findings suggest importance to explore predictors of attitudes and behaviors across multiple levels, including individual and peer groups.
- Lack of attention to peer group influences on bullying attitudes and behaviors is an unfortunate phenomenon because bystander intervention is emphasized within some of the most commonly utilized bullying prevention programs (Newman et al., 2000; Olweus, 1993).

## Bystander Interventions (Polanin, Espelage, & Pigott, 2011)

- Meta-analysis synthesized the effectiveness of bullying prevention programs in altering bystander behavior to intervene in bullying situations.
- Evidence from twelve school-based interventions, involving 12,874 students, revealed that overall the programs were successful (ES = .21, C.I.: .12, .30), with larger effects for high school samples compared to K-8 student samples (HS ES = .44, K-8 ES = .13;  $p = .001$ ).
- Analysis of empathy for the victim revealed treatment effectiveness that was positive but not significantly different from zero (ES = .05, C.I.: -.07, .17).
- Nevertheless, this meta-analysis indicated that programs were effective at changing bystander behavior both on a practical and statistically significant level.

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## Bystander Interventions (Polanin, Espelage, & Pigott, 2011)

Study (DoP)	Publication Type	Location	N (% male)	Grade range	Intervention Program	Intervention Type & Duration (in months)	Research Design	Intervention E.S.	Empathy E.S.
Andron, Didaskalou, & Vlachou (2008)	Journal	Greece	418 (60)	4 <sup>th</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup>	Curriculum-Based Anti-Bullying	Group; 1	Quasi-experimental; one treatment and one control	-.01	-.19
Evers, Prochaska, Van Marter, Johnson, & Prochaska (2007)	Journal	Multiple US states	710 (41)	9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>	Build Respect	Indiv.; 2	Quasi-experimental matched; two treatment only one control	-.46	NA
Fonagy et al. (2009)	Journal	Kansas	578 (46)	3 <sup>rd</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup>	CAPSLE	Group; 24	Experimental; matched school; two treatment and one control	.05	-.23
Frey et al. (2005)	Journal	Washington	913 (51)	3 <sup>rd</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup>	Steps to Respect	Group; 12	Experimental; matched schools; one treatment and one control	.11	.18
Karna, Voeten, & Little (2010)	Article	Finland	8166 (50)	4 <sup>th</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup>	KiVa	Group; 9	Experimental; one treatment and one control	.14	.15

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## Rethinking Bystander Interventions

- Need to consider the following when considering a bystander intervention:
  - Age of target population
  - Gender of target population
  - **Peer/adult norms around intervention: Including in-group and out-group norms, justification for bullying**
  - Level of bullying and peer victimization experiences in the school
  - Length of intervention & who to deliver
  - Components of intervention (behavioral modification, modeling with media, awareness raising, parent training)

## Social-Emotional Learning

- **Goal 1: Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success.**
  - Identify and manage one's emotions and behavior.
  - Recognize personal qualities and external supports.
  - Demonstrate skills related to achieving personal and academic goals.

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## Social-Emotional Learning

- **Goal 2: Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.**
  - Recognize the feelings and perspectives of others.
  - Recognize individual and group similarities and differences.
  - Use communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.
  - Demonstrate an ability to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.

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## Social-Emotional Learning

- **Goal 3: Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.**
  - Consider ethical, safety, and societal factors in making decisions.
  - Apply decision-making skills to deal responsibly with daily academic and social situations.
  - Contribute to the well-being of one's school and community.

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## SEL Framework

- **Research Foundations**
  - Risk and Protective Factors
  - Bullying
  - Brain Research
  - Positive Approaches to Problem Behavior
  - Developmental Needs of Young Adolescents
    - (Espelage & Low, 2012)

## Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

- SEL focuses on the systematic development of a core set of social and emotional skills that help youth more effectively handle life challenges, make better decisions, and thrive in both their learning and their social environments through a climate that supports the practicing of skills.
- A meta-analysis of 213 programs found that if a school implements a quality SEL curriculum, they can expect better student behavior and an 11 percentile increase in test scores (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2010).

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### MULTI-SITE EVALUATION OF SECOND STEP: STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH PREVENTION (SECOND STEP – SSTP) IN PREVENTING AGGRESSION & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

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Research supported by Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (#1U01/CE001677)

### TEACHER/STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL CULTURE: LINKS TO STUDENT REPORTS OF BULLYING, VICTIMIZATION, AGGRESSION, & WILLINGNESS TO INTERVENE

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## School Culture Matters

“school policies, attitudes and behaviors of teachers, administrators and the student body, and the overall atmosphere or school ethos, determine the internal life or social, emotional, and motivation climate of the school.” (Kasen et al., 2004).

**THESE AUTHORS FIND + SCHOOL CULTURE/CLIMATE IS ASSOC. WITH HIGHER ACAD. PERFORMANCE & LESS BULLYING**

### School Environment Survey

- Modified School Environment Survey (Low & Brown, 2008)
- 47 scale items plus demographics
- Developed through survey monkey
- All teachers, staff, administrators, and paraprofessionals invited to complete the survey through email from Principal.

### School Environment Survey

- 35 of 36 schools returned surveys; 1 school only submitted 2; thus, data on 34 were included in school-level baseline data.
  - 1428 responses were complete; School  $M = 21.57$  ( $SD = 10.31$ )
  - 66% teachers, 10% support staff, 9% paraprofessionals, 3% counselors, 4% administrators, 2% custodial staff, 1 bus driver, 1 cafeteria worker, 6 student teachers
  - 74% females
  - 75% white, 8% hispanic, 10% black, 4% other
  - Age range from 20-29 years (16%) through over 55 years (15%);  $M = 40$  to 44 years of age
  - Teaching at current school 1<sup>st</sup> year (13%) through 10+ years (18%);  $M = 3$  to 5 years

### School Environment Scale

- Six scales emerged from factor analyses, measuring teacher/staff PERCEPTIONS OF:
  - Student intervention (5 items;  $\alpha = .83$ )
  - Staff intervention (5 items;  $\alpha = .89$ )
  - Aggression being a problem (5 items;  $\alpha = .80$ )
  - School is doing professional development /administrator support (8 items;  $\alpha = .90$ )
  - Positive school climate overall (7 items;  $\alpha = .85$ )

### Bottomline – All teacher/staff variables

$r = -.23^{***}$   
 $r = -.39^{***}$   
 $r = -.17^{***}$   
 \*\*\* $p = .001$

### Levels and Lessons

- 50 minutes to teach a complete lesson
- Each lesson is divided into two parts that can be taught separately

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### Five Program Themes

- Each level includes the following five themes:
  - Empathy and communication
  - Bullying prevention
  - Emotion management
    - Coping with stress (grades 7 and 8)
  - Problem-solving
    - Decision-making (grade 7)
    - Goal-setting (grade 8)
  - Substance abuse prevention

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## Year 1: Pre-Post Results

•The HGLM analysis indicated that students from the Second Step intervention schools had a significantly decreased probability of self-report fighting ( $\gamma_{01} = -.36$ ,  $p < .05$ , O.R. = .70) in comparison to students in the control schools.

•The adjusted odds ratio indicated that the treatment effect was substantial; **individuals in intervention schools were 42% less likely to self-report fighting other students.** No intervention effects were found for the other outcome variables.

## Implications for Prevention Programming

- Need to give kids life and social skills, not just knowledge about bullying
- Need to assess whether effective secondary and tertiary programs address bullying and school climate
- Bullying programs need to consider incorporating discussion of sexual harassment and (homophobic language; Birkett & Espelage, 2010).
  - 67 bullying prevention programs in US, only five discuss sexual harassment or sexual orientation issues.
- Peers influence has to be considered in developing and evaluating prevention/intervention programs
  - 67 bullying prevention programs, only one attempts to target and shift peer norms.

## Implications for Prevention Programming

- Recognize that students are witnessing and involved in violence in their homes. We need to give them alternatives to violence for solving problems and conflicts.
- Consider how the use of technology is influencing relationships and talk to kids about responsible use of technology.

## Realistic Strategies

- Simple strategies can help to decrease bullying
  - Use data to make decisions (i.e., Increase hallway monitors; reduce time between classes)
  - Involve PE teachers and coaches in stopping bullying behaviors
- With your support, students can play an important role in decreasing bullying
  - Implement a procedure to allow students to confidentially report bullying incidents
    - Create a confidential reporting system ([www.bullytracker.com](http://www.bullytracker.com))
  - Have an open door policy with counselors to address the needs of students involved in bullying

## Realistic Strategies

- Make sure your school has an anti-bullying policy that is consistent with state and federal policies
- Make sure the adult workplace models healthy social relationships
- Work respectfully and collaboratively with families
- Use videos and classroom discussion guides to talk about the detrimental effects of bullying
- Use social-emotional learning activities to create a positive school climate
- Use a positive behavioral interventions and supports to respond effectively to student behaviors