

PREVENTING BULLYING THROUGH SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING & POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS

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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** (Poteat & Espelage, 2006; Espelage et al., 2008)
 - **Sexual Orientation, Bullying, & Mental Health Outcomes** (Espelage, Aragon, Birkett, & Koenig, 2008; Poteat, 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)**

Definition of Bullying (Swearer, 2001)

- Bullying happens when someone hurts or scares another person on purpose and the person being bullied has a hard time defending himself or herself. Usually, bullying happens over and over.
 - Punching, shoving and other acts that hurt people physically
 - Spreading bad rumors about people
 - Keeping certain people out of a “group”
 - Teasing people in a mean way
 - Getting certain people to “gang up” on others
 - Use of technology

Bully/Victim Continuum

- **Bully** – reports bullying others
- **Victim** – reports being bullied by others
- **Bully-victim** – reports bullying others & being bullied
- **Bystander** – reports observing others being bullied
- **No Status/Not involved** – does not report any involvement with bullying

Bullying Prevalence

- Among 3rd – 8th graders:
 - 15% Chronically Victimized
 - 17% Ringleader Bullies
 - 8% Bully-Victims
 - 60% Bystanders
 - Only 13% intervene to help victim
(Espelage & Swearer, 2003)

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.ca)

Cyber-Bullying Prevalence

- National Statistics (Lifetime):
 - 10% - 33% youth (ages 11 to 19) have been the target of aggression/bullying online
 - 15% perpetrate the aggression/bullying online
 - 15% have been victims of sexual solicitation online (asked to talk about sex, perform a sexual act, or provide personal sexual information)

(Finn, 2004; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004)

Cyber-Bullying Prevalence

- Illinois Middle School Students
 - Online Victimization in Last Year:
 - 14.9% received rude comment
 - 7% had rumor spread about him/her
 - 2% threatened by a student
 - 11% received rude text message
 - 13% girls; 7% boys
 - 6% received sexually related text
 - 1% received sexual picture text
 - 1-3% rarely did someone solicit sex online

Homophobic Language & Bullying

- Approximately 22% of middle school students ($n = 4,302$) report teasing another student because he/she was gay (16.6% girls, 26.1% boys; Koenig & Espelage, 2003)
- 17.7% of high school students ($n = 4,938$) reported teasing another student because he/she was gay (9.2% girls, 26.2% boys; Koenig & Espelage, 2003)
- Bullying and homophobia perpetration strongly related among middle school students ($r = .61$; Poteat & Espelage, 2005)
- Homophobia victimization was reported more by males than females (Poteat & Espelage, 2007)

Poteat & Espelage (2005)

- Bullying and homophobia are strongly interrelated for males and females
- Homophobic content and empathy
 - ▣ Similar to past findings for attitudinal homophobia and empathy (Johnson, Brems, & Alford-Keating, 1997)
- Homophobic content and school belonging
 - ▣ Similar to past findings for LGBT students and isolation, stigmatization (Uribe & Harbeck, 1991)
- Homophobic content and anxiety/depression
 - ▣ Negative consequences to “harmless” banter?

Openness to friends and schools (Poteat, Espelage, Koenig, 2009)

- To what extent are heterosexual youth willing to remain friends with lesbian and gay peers after disclosure?
 - ▣ This would reflect a removal of an already existing support system
 - ▣ This may differ from befriending someone already known to be gay or lesbian
- To what extent are heterosexual youth willing to attend school with lesbian and gay students?
- We expected gender and grade differences

Description of Studies

- Dane County Youth Survey 2005 (Study 1)
 - ▣ Countywide, school-based
 - ▣ Limitations to sexual orientation item
- Dane County Youth Survey 2008 (Study 2)
 - ▣ Same locations and procedures
 - ▣ Improved item for sexual orientation

Study 1

- Study 1
 - ▣ Middle school: $N = 7,376$; High school: $N = 13,133$
 - ▣ Gender: 50.7% girls m.s.; 50.3% girls h.s.
 - ▣ Racial identity: 72.7% White¹ m.s.; 79.7% White² h.s.
 - ▣ Sexual orientation: 75.2% heterosexual m.s.
84.9% heterosexual h.s.

Study 1 Question

- Study 1
 - ▣ Question: “I could never stay friends with someone who told me he or she was gay or lesbian”
 - ▣ Response options:
 - 0 = strongly agree
 - 1 = agree
 - 2 = disagree
 - 3 = strongly disagree
- Higher scores = more willing remain friends**

Study 2

- Study 2
 - ▣ Middle school: $N = 5,470$; High school: $N = 11,447$
 - ▣ Gender: 50.2% girls m.s.; 49.8% girls h.s.
 - ▣ Racial identity: 71.5% White¹ m.s.; 75.5% White² h.s.
 - ▣ Sexual orientation: 85.3% heterosexual m.s.
87.9% heterosexual h.s.

Study 2 Question

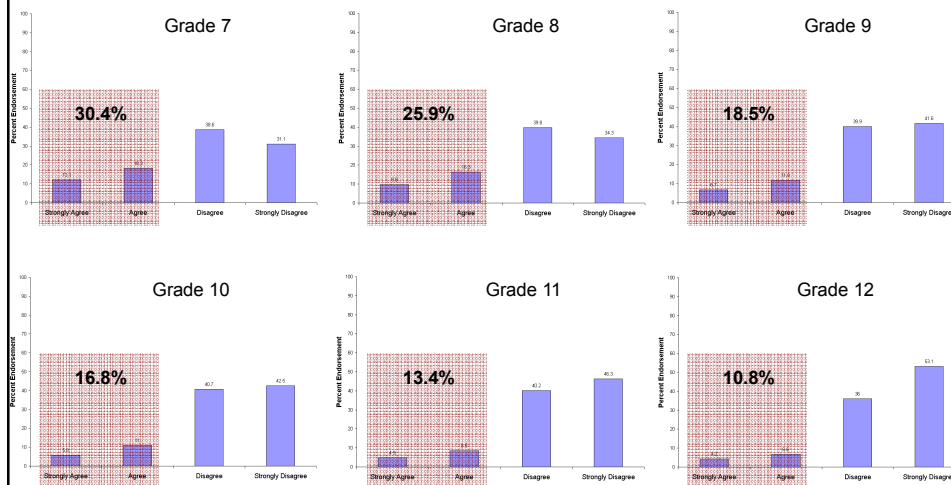
- Study 2
 - ▣ Question: “I would rather attend a school where there are no gay or lesbian students”
 - ▣ Response options:
 - 0 = strongly agree
 - 1 = agree
 - 2 = disagree
 - 3 = strongly disagree

Higher scores = more willing to attend school with gay/lesbian students

Study 1 Results

- Boys reported less willingness to remain friends
 - ▣ $F(1, 16243) = 1229.36, p < .001, \eta^2 = .07$
 - Boys: $M = 1.91$ ($SD = 0.94$)
 - Girls: $M = 2.37$ ($SD = 0.78$)
- Students in lower grades reported less willingness to remain friends
 - ▣ $F(5, 16243) = 124.77, p < .001, \eta^2 = .04$
 - All grade differences significant except 9/10

Distribution of Responses by Grade



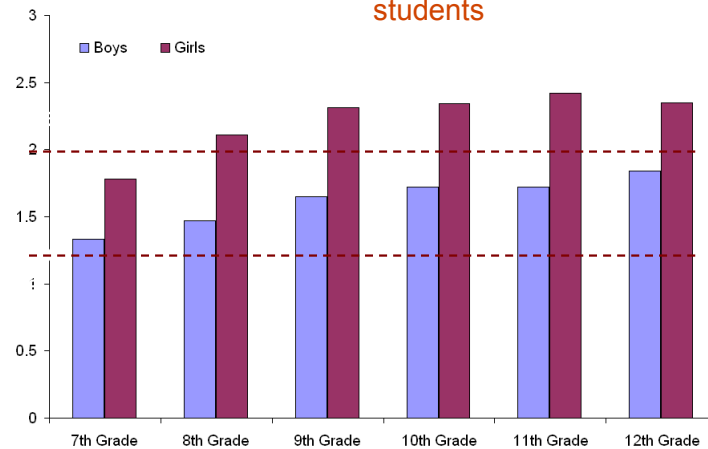
Study 2 Results

- Boys reported less desire to attend school with lesbian and gay students
 - $F(1, 13363) = 1330.81, p < .001, \eta^2 = .09$
 - Boys: $M = 1.63$ ($SD = 1.04$)
 - Girls: $M = 2.22$ ($SD = 0.88$)

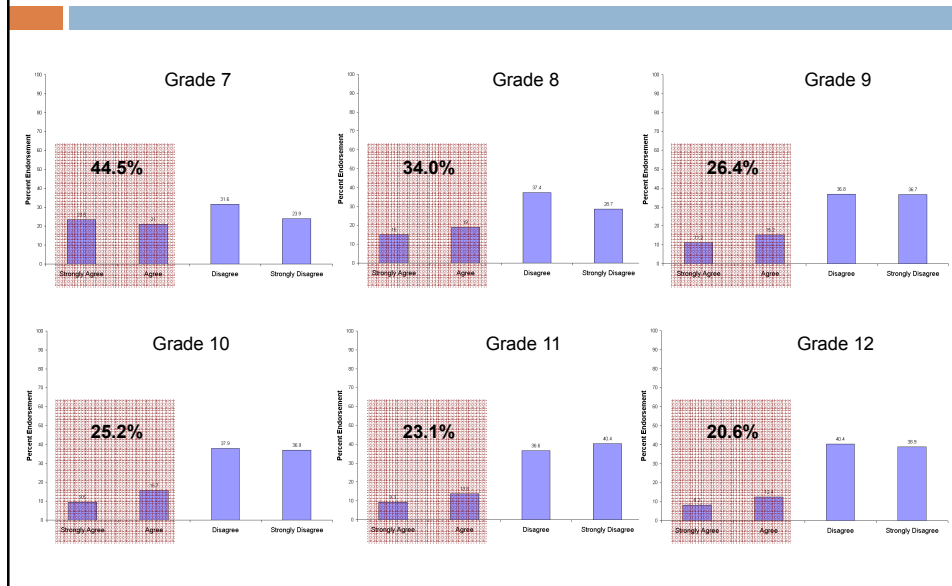
- Students in lower grades reported less desire to attend school with lesbian and gay students
 - $F(5, 13363) = 104.72, p < .001, \eta^2 = .04$
 - No difference between 9/10, 10/11, or 11/12

Study 2 Results

I would rather attend a school where there are no gay or lesbian students



Distribution of Responses by Grade



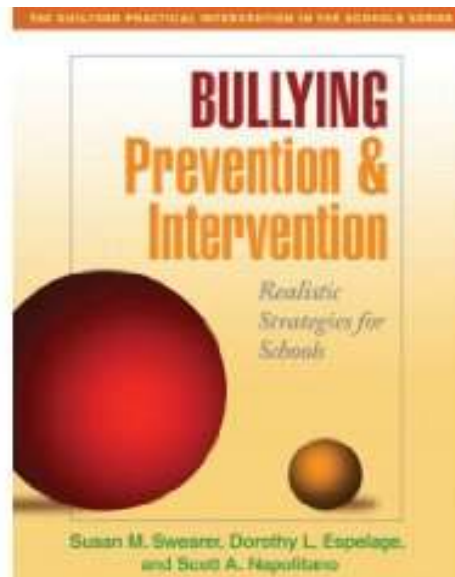
Bullying Prevention – Meta-analysis (Merrell et al., 2008)

- 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 & Tfofi (2009) – programs that are effective in European country include parents, use of multimedia, and target teacher's competence in responding to bullying.*

Bullying Prevention –Why little success?

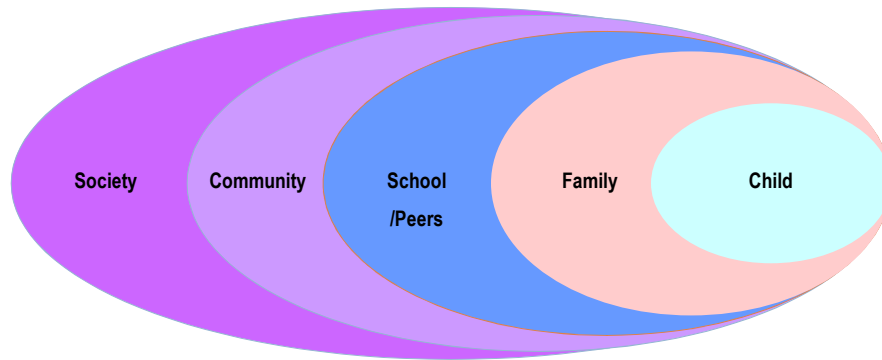
- Majority of the programs fail to recognize that bullying co-occurs with other types of aggression, including sexual violence, dating aggression, and homophobic banter.
- Programs often fail to address basic life and social skills that kids may need to effectively respond to bullying.
- Only one program directs prevention efforts at the key context that promotes and sustains bullying perpetration – the peer group.
- No programs consider the impact of family and community violence on bullying prevalence .
- All programs fail to address the extent to which demographic variables (such as gender and race) and implementation levels impact a program's effectiveness.

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Social-Ecological Perspective



(Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Swearer & Doll, 2001; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Espelage & Horne, 2007)

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

■ FAMILY

- Lack of supervision
- Lack of attachment
- Negative, critical relationships
- Lack of discipline/ consequences
- Support for violence
- Modeling of violence

■ SCHOOL

- Lack of supervision
- Lack of attachment
- Negative, critical relationships
- Lack of discipline/ consequences
- Support for violence
- Modeling of violence

For review (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Espelage & Horne, 2007)

Sibling Bullying

- Sibling bullying is tied to school-based bullying in many countries (Espelage & Swearer, 2003 for review)
- Study of 779 middle school students, association between bullying perpetration and sibling aggression perpetration was strongly associated (girls $r = .52$, boys $r = .42$; Espelage & Stein, in prep)

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)
- Study of 779 middle school students, association between bullying perpetration and family violence victimization was moderately associated for females ($r = .31$) and bullying perpetration was also related to neighborhood violence victimization ($r = .40$; Espelage & Stein, in prep)

Bullying Perpetration: Peers Matter

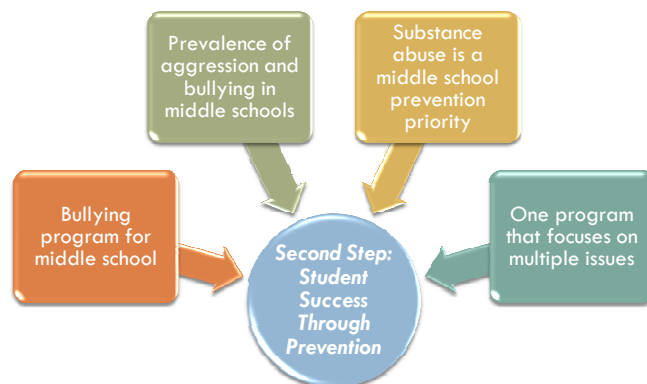
- Unconditional Null Models:
 - ICC indicated homophily; peer group homogeneity
 - 22% variance in bullying perpetration between peer groups
 - indicated multilevel modeling appropriate
- Level-1 Models :
 - Wave 1 and Wave 2 self-reported bullying positively related
 - Deviances indicated better model over the null model
- Level-2 Models : Peer-level bullying significantly predicted individual level perpetration at Wave 2 when controlling for Wave 1 Bullying. 91% of variance explained.
 - (Espelage, Holt, & Henkel, 2003; Espelage, Green, & Wasserman, 2008)

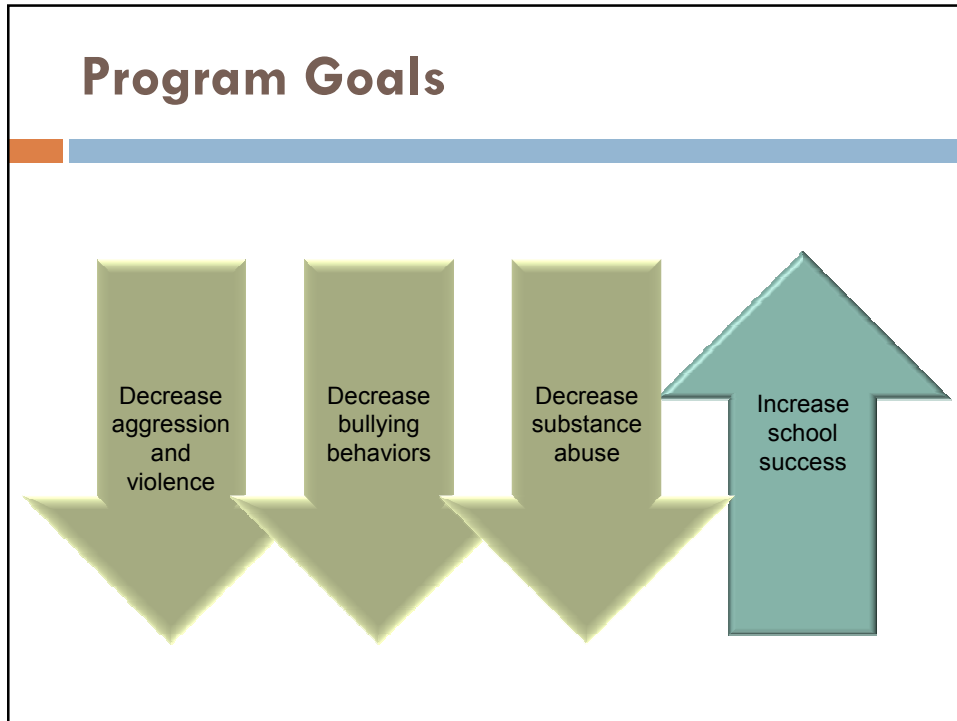
Second Step



Committee for Children, 2008

Second Step: Addresses Multiple Issues





- ## Program Goals
- **Research Foundations**
 - Risk and Protective Factors
 - Bullying
 - Brain Research
 - Positive Approaches to Problem Behavior
 - Developmental Needs of Young Adolescents

Prevention Research Supports One Program Targeting Multiple Issues

- Risk and protective factors are at the heart of *Second Step: Student Success Through Prevention*
 - ▣ Many of the same factors predict substance abuse, violence, delinquency and school failure.

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Risk and Protective Factors Addressed in the Second Step Program

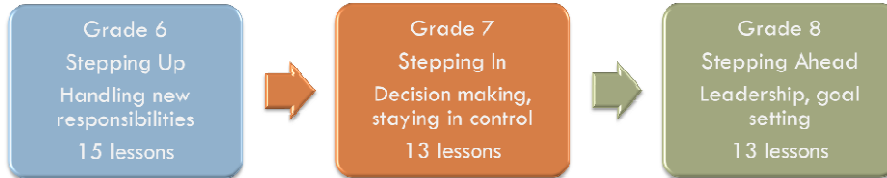
Risk Factors

- Inappropriate classroom behavior
- Favorable attitudes towards violence or substance use
- Friends who engage in violence or substance use
- Early initiation of violence or substance use
- Peer rewards for antisocial behavior
- Peer rejection
- Impulsiveness

Protective Factors

- Social skills
- School connectedness
- Adoption of conventional norms about substance use

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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Teaching strategies



- Use of DVD with rich multi-media content to accompany each lesson
- Carefully constructed approach to partner and group work
 - Class discussion and activities
 - Partner or group exchanges
 - Individual, partner, or group activities
 - Partner or group skill practices
- Individual reflection
- Frequent review of core skills and concepts

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Increasing Student Exposure to Lesson Content

- Additional practice activity
- Reflective writing assessment
- Homework
- Integration activities
- Journal page

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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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Substance Abuse Prevention

Tobacco, Marijuana, Alcohol and Inhalants

- Health, personal and social consequences of using alcohol and other drugs
- Preferred future
- Making good decisions about friends
- Normative education
- Resistance skills
- Making a commitment

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Implications for Prevention Programming

- Need to give kids life and social skills, not just knowledge about bullying
- Need to develop secondary and tertiary programs, not just primary prevention programs
- 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.