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Stand Up Against Bullies: Strategies for Elementary School Children

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### Abstract

The problem under investigation is bullying in schools and how it negatively affects everyone involved in the bullying situation. The Stand Up Against Bullies program was evaluated and implemented. The total number of the sample was 86 students. The total number of males was 46 and the total number of females was 40. The total number of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students was 42 and the total number of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students was 44. A pre-test was administered to measure the student's previous and present experience with being bullied and what information they knew on how to effectively handle a bullying situation. The Stand Up Against Bullies program was implemented thereafter. A post-test was administered to measure again what information they knew on how to effectively handle a bullying situation. The present study showed that boys are bullied more than girls and that 4<sup>th</sup> grade reported being bullied more than 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. The percentages of correct responses in the pre and post-test show the effectiveness of the program. Implications for future research and school counselors were addressed.

## Stand Up Against Bullies: Strategies for Elementary School Children

Bullying among school children is not a new phenomenon. According to classical fiction of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (for example, Tom Brown's Schooldays (Huges, 1857) or Oliver Twist (Dickens, 1938), children have long been subjected to bullying by their peers (Ross, 1996). For countless generations children have been teasing, harassing, and bullying one another, sometimes in fun, sometimes in deadly earnest, to the amusement, horror or indifference of others (Rigby, 1996). Many adults can remember incidents of bullying in which they were the bullies or the intended victim. In fact, the common perception has been that bullying is a relatively normal and harmless experience most children go through. However, now something new is happening. Now it has become increasingly clear that bullying is, in fact a problem needing prevention and intervention (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Rigby, 1996). Rigby (1996) stated, " We are at last beginning to see that bullying among children at school is quite intolerable social evil; that consequences are much greater then we had ever imagined, and most importantly, something can and should be done about it" (p.11). Batsche and Knoff (1994) believed that in order for victims not to resort to avoidance and/or retaliation, it is important that schools promote the idea that adults will be supportive of victims and that school officials can provide a safe haven for all students.

### Review of the Literature

I will address the literature by discussing the definition of bullying, teasing as a form of bullying, history of bullying, and the prevalence rates of bullying. I will also discuss in detail on information about the bully by addressing the topics of different types of bullies, gender differences, family influence, and consequences for the bully. Another

topic that will be discussed is information about the victim, characteristics of the victim, and consequences for the victim. Briefly discussed is information about the bystander and how they are affected by the bully behaviors as well. The last topic that will be addressed is information on three bully prevention programs and their effectiveness. The “Stand Up Against Bullies” program is also introduced and addresses the goals and objectives.

### *Definition of Bullying*

Various researchers have used a variety of definitions of bullying. The most commonly used definition comes from Olweus (1991), considered the pioneer in bullying research. Olweus stated, “A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students” (p.1173). Negative actions may be both verbal (e.g. threatening, degrading, teasing, and name-calling) and non-verbal (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping, damaging property, rude gestures) (Olweus, 1991).

Another distinction that is sometimes made in defining and describing bullying is the difference between direct and indirect bullying (Rigby, 1996). Direct bullying refers to open attacks on the victim. Some examples include taunting, teasing, calling names, verbally criticizing, obscene gestures, and menacing stares, hitting, using a weapon, or stealing/hiding another’s belongings. Indirect bullying consists of social isolation and exclusion from a desired group. Some examples of indirect bullying include persuading others to criticize or insult someone, spreading malicious rumors, ignoring others intentionally, or influencing others to physically hurt someone (Coloroso, 2002; Harris & Petrie, 2003).

Harris and Petrie (2003) provided a similar definition arguing that bullying is “intentionally harmful, aggressive behavior of a more powerful person or group of people directed repeatedly to a less powerful person, usually without provocation” (p.2).

Coloroso (2002) suggested that “bullying is a conscious, willful, and deliberate hostile activity intended to harm, induce fear through the threat of further aggression, and create terror” (p.13). The two definitions are similar because they both point out how the act is intentional and deliberate towards the victim. However, they are different in that Coloroso (2002) not only focuses on the act at that moment, but the intent to induce fear in the victim of possible further aggression. Besag (1989) stated “Most definitions agree that three factors are implicit in any bullying activity: it must occur over a prolonged period of time, it must involve an imbalance of power, and it can be verbal, physical, or psychological in nature” (p.3).

#### *Teasing: A form of Bullying*

At the elementary school level, teasing and name-calling are a typical form of bullying. Teasing refers to those dynamic interactions comprised of a set of verbal and/or nonverbal behaviors occurring among peers that is humorous and playful on one level but may be annoying to the target child on another level (Alberts, 1992; Pawluk, 1989; Shapiro, Baumeister, & Kessler, 1991). Name-calling, which is the “act of teasing or referring to a peer with a label that may create unpleasant or hurtful feelings” (Embry, 1995, p.8), appears to be the most common form of bullying among elementary school children (Sharp & Smith, 1994; Whitney & Smith, 1993). At this stage children are particularly vulnerable to others opinions because they are struggling to feel confident in

the public school situation. They are easily upset by unkind and hurtful comments (Ross, 1996).

Teasing is sometimes considered as just good-natured joking, however other researchers believe that it is a way that children ridicule or exploit one another's presumed weaknesses. When teasing becomes serious or deteriorates to bullying, it is a significant problem for approximately 9-15% of young children and is harmful to their well-being (Durant, Krowchuk, Kreiter, Sinal, & Woods, 1999; Olweus, 1994).

Ross (1996) believed that as children progress through the middle childhood years three qualitative changes occur in their teasing. In the first of these, the teasing becomes sharper, more incisive, and cutting. The second is gender differences that were not apparent in early school years. For example, boys typically challenge each other's masculinity and girls typically spread rumors or use social exclusion. The third change is characterized by an underlying sexual quality to teasing. For example, a boy being teased about "liking" a girl to whom he was seen talking with.

Based on the finding research presented above, teasing is a form of bullying most often used in elementary school children. It shows how important it is to combat this problem before it escalates into more extreme forms of bullying. Galdston (1984) suggested that in today's increasingly violent society, many incidents that begin as simple teasing now escalates into persistent bullying and other overt violence.

### *History of Bullying*

Bullying has only received research attention since the early 1970's when Olweus, a Norwegian researcher, began to study this area. At that time, a strong societal interest in bully/victim problems emerged in Scandinavia, where bullying was known as

“mobbing”. Olweus’s 1978 book, *Aggression in the Schools- Bullies and Whipping Boys*, is considered a landmark as the first systematic study of the phenomenon of bullying.

Research on bully/victim problems had began to be most extensive in Scandinavia, due in large part to a crisis precipitated by the suicides of three Norwegian boys between the ages of 10 and 14 in 1982, because of severe bullying by peers (Olweus, 1993). In response to the death of these three boys, it triggered a nationwide campaign against bully/victim problems and numerous studies and school intervention programs were designed and implemented. Olweus gathered data from 140,000 students in 715 schools and results suggested that 15%, or one out of seven children in Norwegian schools were involved in bullying “now and then” or more frequently. About 9% of the students were classified as victims while 6% were bullies (Olweus, 1987).

#### *Nature of Bullying/Prevalence Rates*

Following Olweus groundbreaking research on bullying in Scandinavia, a number of other researchers have studied the prevalence rates on bullying. Research on the prevalence and location of bullying has occurred in diverse settings, including Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Germany, England, Scotland, Ireland, Australia, Japan, Canada, and the United States (Dake, Price, & Talljohan, 2003). As a universal experience, bullies will victimize 15% to 20% of children during their school years (Batsche & Knoff, 1994).

Studies in the United States have reported that as many as 78% of children said they had been bullied within the previous month; nearly 10% indicated that the bullying was severe (Walls, 2000). Another study in the United States shows the prevalence

estimate of victimization in elementary schools was 19% (Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 2001). The prevalence of victimization in elementary schools (grade 1-5) varies from a low of 11.3% in a sample of 5,813 students in Finland (Kumpulainen, Rasainen, Henttonen, et al., 1998) to a high of 49.8% in a nationwide sample of 7,290 students in Ireland (Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 2001).

In the United States, a study of elementary school boys and girls, ages 9-12, indicated that 10% of the students could be described as “extreme victims” as evaluated by classmates (Perry, Kusel, & Perry, 1988). A more recent study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Nansel et al., 2001) demonstrated the seriousness of bullying in schools. These authors surveyed 15,686 students in Grades 6 through 10 across the U. S. and found that 29.9% of the sample reported frequent involvement in bullying, with 13% as a bully, 10.6% as the victim, and 6% as a bully-victim.

In 1995, Shakeshaft and colleagues (1995) reported that as many as 4.8 million students in the United States were threatened physically, verbally, and indirectly every year by other students. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) reported in 2001 that 17% of students in grades six through ten had been bullied “sometimes” or “weekly”, 19% had bullied others, and 16% had both bullied and been bullied (Ericson, 2001); others have reported that as many as 80% of middle school students engaged in some type of bullying behavior yearly. Even more alarming is evidence suggesting that as early as kindergarten and first grade, children are at risk of being bullied.

Elliot (1986), who interviewed 4,000 children about abuse, found that 38% had been bullied by other children badly enough to describe the experience as terrifying. Of

the sample, 8% of the boys and 2% of the girls had found the experience to have a chronic and severe effect on their daily everyday lives.

Smith (1991) studied students in single-sex schools in UK and found that 20% of them were victims of bullying and 10% were offenders. Among students aged 8 and 9 in UK, 26% were victims and 17% were bullies (Boulton and Underwood, 1992). Slee (1994) reported that 14% of primary and secondary school students were bullied at least “once a week” or “more often” in Australia. Particularly, Slee (1994) showed that 26% of children in grades 3 to 7 were bullied at least “once a week” or “more often”.

Charach, Pepler, and Ziegler (1995) surveyed students age 4 to 14 from 22 classrooms in Toronto, Canada and found that one-third of them were involved in bullying as either the victims or offenders. In another Canadian study, adults remembered their most frequent types of childhood abuse as coming not from parents, as child abuse, but from school peers, in abuse (bullying) at school (Harris & Petrie, 2003). Recent statistics show that while school violence has declined 4% during the past several years, the incidence of behaviors such as bullying, has increased 5% between 1999 and 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

One conclusion, which may be drawn from the sparse and diverse research, is that at least 10% of children in our schools are probably, at the time, involved in bullying to a marked degree, whether as bully or victim (Besag, 1989). Based on the few studies and statistics presented above, describing bullying in schools as a serious problem is not an overstatement. In fact, bullying statistics may well underestimate the problem because many bullying incidents are unreported (Remboldt, 1994).

### *Information about the Bully*

Coloroso (2002) believed that bullies come in all shape and sizes and that someone can't always identify bullies by how they look, but usually by the way they act. Olweus (1991) reported that bullies are often characterized by impulsivity, a strong need to dominate others, and have little empathy with victims. Ross (1996) included more common characteristics of bullies that consist of blaming others, not accepting responsibility, and craving attention. Although many people excuse the behavior of bullies who appear though as just a manifestation of their insecurity, this is usually not the case because there is no indication bullies are anxious, insecure, or lack self-esteem (Harris & Petrie, 2003; Olweus, 1991).

### *Types of Bullies*

It is important to recognize the characteristics of the different types of bullies. Many researchers (Argenbright & Edgell, 1999; Coloroso, 2002; Horne et al., 2004; Olweus, 1978) provide both similar and different information on what they believe to be the differing types of bullies and what behavioral and emotional components characterize bullies.

Olweus (1978) described aggressive bullies as the typical bully and describes them as belligerent, fearless, coercive, confident, tough, impulsive, and having a low tolerance for frustration coupled with stronger inclination toward using violence than that of children in general. Common behaviors of the aggressive bully include pushing or hitting; threatening physical harm; stealing money, lunches, or materials; and trapping the victims in hallways or bathrooms (Horne et al., 2004). The bullies' perception of bullying incidents is significantly less severe than that of their victims. They view their own

behavior from an egocentric stance and have little empathy and no remorse for their victims (Ross, 1996).

According to Ross (1996), the passive bully is less common than the aggressive bully and tends to be dependent on the more aggressive bully. Passive bullies rarely provoke others or take the initiative in a bullying incident, but once the bullying is under way, usually at the instigation of an aggressive bully, they actively participate. The passive bully is referred to as a “follower” (Olweus, 1996; Ross, 1996) because they are so eager to align themselves with the more powerful and popular action-oriented aggressive bully. Commonly, the passive bully supports and copies the actions of the aggressive bully, uses indirect methods to bully others, usually less popular than the aggressive bullies, have few likeable qualities, low self-esteem, and home problems. Passive bullies are also often disruptive and have outbursts contributing to peer problems, and at school have difficulty concentrating (Horne et al. 2004; Ross, 1996).

According to Argenbright and Edgell (1999), there are four types of bullies typically present in most schools: physical bullies, verbal bullies, relational bullies, and reactive bullies. A brief description of each type follows.

- **Physical Bullies** – Physical bullies are action-oriented. This type of bullying includes hitting, kicking the victim, taking, or damaging the victim’s property. This is the least sophisticated type of bullying because it’s so easy to identify and is soon known to the entire school population.
- **Verbal Bullies** – Verbal bullies use words to hurt or humiliate another person. This includes name-calling, insulting, making racist comments, and constant

teasing. This type is the easiest to inflict on other children. Its effect can be more devastating in some ways than physical bullying because there are no scars.

- **Relational Bullies** – Relational bullies try to convince their peers to exclude or reject a certain person or people from their social connection. This occurs when children (usually girls) spread nasty rumors about others or exclude an ex-friend from the peer group. The most devastating effect with this type of bullying is the rejection by the peer group at a time when children most need their social connections.
- **Reactive Bullies** – Reactive bullies straddle the fence of being a bully and /or victim. They are often the most difficult to identify because at first glance they seem to be targets for other bullies. However, reactive victims often taunt bullies and bully other people themselves. These victims are impulsive and react quickly to intentional and unintentional physical encounters.

Ross (1996) believed that bullies are taught to bully and according to her there are seven kinds of bullies: confident bully, social bully, fully armored bully, hyperactive bully, bullied bully, bunch of bullies, and gang of bullies. Some of these descriptions correlate with the previous ideas of the characteristics of different types of bullies. A brief description of each type follows.

- **Confident Bully** – This bully has a big ego, an inflated sense of self, a sense of entitlement, a penchant for violence, and no empathy for their victims. They feel good having a sense of power over others. Peers and teachers often admire this bully because of their powerful personality.

- **Social Bully** – This bully uses rumors, gossip, verbal taunts, and shunning to isolate selected victims and effectively exclude them from social activities. The bully is jealous of others positive qualities and has poor sense of self, but the bully hides their feelings and insecurities in a cloak of exaggerated confidence and charm.
- **Fully armored Bully** – This bully is cool and detached. Shows little emotion and has strong determination to carry out the bullying. They look for an opportunity to bully when no one will see or stop them. They are vicious and vindictive towards the victim but charming and deceptive in front of others, especially adults.
- **Hyperactive Bully** – This bully struggles with academics and has poorly developed social skills. They usually have some kind of learning disability, doesn't process social cues accurately, often reads hostile intent into other kids innocent actions, reacts aggressively to even slight provocation, and justifies the aggressive response by placing blame on others.
- **Bullied Bully** – This person is both target and a bully. Bullied and abused by adults or older kids, they bully others to get some relief from their own feelings of powerlessness.
- **Bunch of Bullies** – This is a group of friends who collectively do something they would never do individually to someone they want to exclude or scapegoat.

- Gang of Bullies – This is kids drawn together not as a group of friends, but as a strategic alliance in pursuit of power, control, domination, subjugation, and turf.

This group of researchers gives descriptive detail of characteristics to expect from different types of bullies. Although each researcher had different names and ways to explain the characteristics, a lot of them overlapped each other in the information to describe each type of bully. Some similarities between the descriptions of the various types of bullies were between the terms aggressive bully and physical bully. They both include the bully using physical means to get what they want. The term social bully had the same characteristics as the terms verbal and relational bully. These three types of bullies all use verbal techniques such as taunting, spreading rumors, and using word to humiliate the victim. They also exclude the victim out of desired social activities. The last similarities were between the terms reactive bully and the bullied bully. These two types of bullies played both roles of the bully and victim.

### *Gender Differences*

In general, bullies tend to be boys, either in groups or as individuals (Hazer, Hoover, & Oliver, 1991; O'Moore & Hillary, 1989). While males are more frequently identified as bullies, girls are both perpetrators and victims. As perpetrators, girls are more likely to engage in verbal and emotional bullying, rather than physical or sexual harassment, but they are not exempt from such behavior (Fried & Fried, 1996).

Crick and Grotpeter (1995) have offered an interesting explanation for the gender differences. They propose that when children inflict harm on peers they choose ways that

frustrate or damage the priorities or goals that are valued by their respective gender peer groups. For boys, physical dominance and power are important, which is in the line with the fact that they tend to bully younger boys and girls. Girls, however, focus on relational issues and strive for close affiliation with others. They are more likely to engage in behaviors such as social exclusion, withdrawal of acceptance, and the spreading of malicious gossip.

### *Family Influence*

The family is a powerful force in determining whether or not a person will develop into a chronic bully because humans are most vulnerable to learning inappropriate behaviors when they are young. The vast majority of what they see and hear at this age is from their family (Hazler, 1996). Verbal, physical, and emotional abuse is common in families of overly aggressive children and adults. We know that four out of five violent children are victims of abuse at home, so it is important to recognize that bullies at school could well be victims at home (Hunt, 1993). The forms of abuse and violence used against children in the home demonstrate to them that these are effective ways to get what they want.

Ross (1996) added that a parenting procedure that is associated with a predisposition to bullying is the use by parents of power-assertive disciplinary methods that are geared toward control and coercion, for example, violent emotional outbursts and routinely administered severe corporal punishment. Children's exposure to parental aggressive behavior and the absence of any attempt to teach behaviors that are more appropriate is likely to further the development of aggressive behaviors.

Families, who show little empathy for each other, spend little time engaged with each other, and who communicate infrequently often is referred to as disengaged families. These disengaged families offer comparatively little support, direction, or feedback to their children on how to get along with people in the world. Many bullies come out of such families probably because they have not been provided with an effective model for how to learn about dealing sensitively with other people (Oliver, Oaks, & Hoover, 1994).

A similar line of thought proposed earlier by Olweus (1980) held that a pervasive negative attitude on the part of the parents, toward parenting. This attitude is characterized by a lack of warmth and caring for the child. This parenting is often associated with a failure on the child's part to bond with the parents or feel loved by them. This failure to bond in turn is likely to be associated with lack of empathy for other children and a tendency to behave in an inappropriate and coercive manner toward them.

Bullies come from homes where parents who prefer physical means of discipline, are sometimes more hostile and rejecting, are hostile and permissive, have poor problem solving skill, and teach their children to strike back at the least provocation (Floyd, 1985; Greenbaum, 1988; Loeber & Dishion, 1984).

### *Consequences of the Bully*

Harris and Petrie (2003) suggested that often bullies perceive their "misplaced" power status as increased prestige and having a sense of control. This feeling overrides any possibility of empathy for the victims or for anyone else and reduces anxiety that they may be experiencing. In fact, bullies feel pleased with what they do to their victims (Batsche & Knoff, 1994). Bullying allows children who are either bored with school or

not doing well to be “good” at something, to prove their courage and dominance to their peers (Ross, 1996). However, this uneven power relationship between the bully and the victim can have damaging effects for the bully.

Olweus (1979) has reported a remarkable persistence into adulthood of the aggressive behavior that manifests itself in childhood as bullying. Follow-up studies of bullies do not display a positive picture. In a longitudinal study, Olweus (1991) found that approximately 60% of boys identified as bullies in Grades 6-9 had at least one conviction at the age 24 and that 35% to 40% had three or more convictions.

Finally, among adults who have admitted that they bullied others in school, there is more often than not, a greater degree of depression than is found among those who didn't bully others in school (Dietz, 1994). We can only speculate if whether this derives from a sense of guilt, or a sense of wasted opportunities to work things out with others.

#### *Information about the Victim*

Researchers have suggested various reasons a student becomes a victim. The most general information on characteristics of the victim consist of children who are gentle, physically weaker than bullies, lacking confidence, intelligent, lacking social skills, disruptive, and who cannot understand why they have been singled out. They appear anxious, cautious, quiet, and often react by crying and withdrawing. They also are often lonely and lack close friendships at school (Bullock, 2002; Miller, Beane, Kraus, 1998; Olweus, 1978).

#### *Types of Victims*

Olweus (1978) identified two types of victims, the passive victim and the provocative victim. Passive victims are described as anxious, insecure, appearing to do

nothing to provoke attacks, and appearing not to defend themselves. Olweus continued to describe the passive victim as lonely and abandoned at school, often without friends. They are not aggressive, do not tease, and are likely (if boys) to be physically weaker than same-age peers. Provocative victims are described as hot-tempered, restless, and anxious, and ones who will attempt to retaliate when attacked.

Perry et al. (1988) suggested that victims constitute a heterogeneous group and can be categorized in the following manner: victimized/rejected, aggressive/rejected, and victimized /aggressive/rejected. The victimized/rejected child would reflect Olweus “passive victim” profile while the victimized/aggressive/rejected would reflect the “provocative victim” profile. As Perry and colleagues (1988) suggest, the victimized/aggressive/rejected student might aggress against weaker children but then be victimized by stronger, aggressive peers. This would explain the fact that some of the extreme victims in their sample also were some of the most aggressive students. The highly aggressive/victimized students are among the most disliked members of their peer groups and are at risk for later adjustment problems.

#### *Characteristics of the Victim*

Researchers have found various reasons children become victims of bullying due to physical or behavior characteristics. Interviews with teachers suggest most characterize habitual victims as sharing “a common characteristic of perceived vulnerability lying largely in their deviation from social norm, whether of appearance, ability or ethnicity” (Siann et al., 1993, p. 320). Racial differences are often a visually obvious characteristic and may be linked to cultural differences in beliefs and behaviors.

The Department of Education (1994) stated “being from a different racial or ethnic group from a majority” is one of the risk factors for the experience of bullying. Charach et al. (1995) found that name-calling based on race is reported by almost half of the students who have been bullied. However, these beliefs conflict with the results of studies conducted (Olweus, 1978) which have shown no significant difference between ethnic groups based on victimization.

Lowenstein (1978) described a UK study that found teachers and psychologists rated bullied children as significantly less physically attractive and more likely to have odd mannerisms or physical handicaps than matched children in their class. Besag (1989) identified clumsy, uncoordinated children as at risk for bullying as well. Children who are targeted most often are those with traits that deviate from the group norms. Victims of excessive teasing are likely to be smaller, weaker, uncoordinated, less attractive, or obese. Odd mannerisms, obviously different physical characteristics, and difficulty keeping pace with peers are other known risk factors (Berstein and Watson, 1997).

Harris and Petrie (2003) suggested that as children reach fourth and fifth grades, “their bullying targets are often specifically those with particular physical traits (such as size) and behavioral characteristics (such as being easily angered). For example, girls are more likely to indicate that kids who are bullied are of different ethnicities or do not dress nicely, while boys are more likely to make fun of other children who wear glasses” (p.14). Although there is much evidence and research on the different physical and behavioral characteristics of why children are victims, however Olweus (1978) believed all these characteristics are unrelated to victimization and that the only external

characteristics found to be associated with victimization were that victims tended to be smaller and weaker than peers.

### *Consequences for the Victim*

To succeed in school, children should perceive their environment as being safe, secure, and comfortable. However, for many children, bullying and teasing begins at school when children form peer groups (Bullock, 2002). Olweus (1993) indicated that children who are victims of bullying tend to be loners, are viewed by their teachers as being sad and under stress, and are nonassertive in the classroom.

Fear becomes so ingrained a response in their everyday life that victims adopt fugitive like routines to avoid areas in and around the school likely to be frequented by the bully. Bullock (2002) believed along the same lines that if children are fearful or feel intimidated, then they couldn't learn effectively. Victims may react by skipping school, avoiding certain areas of the school or in some cases, they may bring weapons to school for self-defense or retaliation (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Noll & Carter, 1997).

Hazler, Hoover, and Oliver (1992) reported that 90% of students who were bullied stated that they experienced a drop in school grades. Turkel and Eth (1990) believed that the damaged feeling of self-worth that result from bullying makes it impossible for the victims to reach their academic and social potential. Some school personnel describe victims as less intelligent and point to their poor grades as evidence, but they fail to consider that children do not perform well in the climate of fear that persistent bullying, terrorizing, and intimidation create in victim's lives.

Anxiety is another issue related to victimization from bullying. The relationship between victimization and anxiety is very clear; students who were bullied were 3.2 to

4.2 times more likely to report anxiety symptoms compared to noninvolved children (Salmon, James, and James, 1998). Physical health issues are also related to victimization of bullying. Williams, Chambers, Logan, and Robinson (1996) conducted a study of 3,000 students from London and found significantly greater reporting of physical health symptoms among bullied students than among students not involved in bullying behavior. Victimized children were more likely to have problems sleeping, bed wetting, experiencing more occasional headaches, and stomachaches. Harris and Petrie (2003) reported that experiences of being bullied appear to have long-term effects on children, including lowered self-esteem, depression, increased absenteeism, and in extreme cases, suicide.

#### *Information about the Bystander*

Bystanders are the third group of the bully situation. These other students are affected as well from the bullying behaviors. Rigby (1996) stated several reactions noticed among bystanders. “Some are amused; some are sad and apprehensive, feeling that it might be their turn next. Some are angry, some feel ashamed or guilty for doing nothing; some simply don’t care” (p.65).

Harris and Petrie (2003) believe that victims and bystanders react similarly physiologically. Both being in contact with violence over a period of time begin to repress feelings of empathy for others, a response that desensitizes them to negative behaviors at school. Ross (1996) reported that when bullying is witnessed and goes unpunished, it could create an uneasy climate, which inhibits learning, distracts minds, and creates fear.

Based on the finding research presented above, clearly an important issue needs to be addressed in all school settings so these effects can be reduced or prevented. Students shouldn't have to go through being teased and tormented because of their physical or behavioral differences.

### *Information on Bully Prevention Programs*

The best way to solve bullying problems is to teach children how to prevent bullying in the first place. Since bullying is a learned behavior, it is critical that these aggressive behaviors be addressed at their earliest stages, when they can be unlearned (Harris & Petrie, 2003). However, when bullying problems already exist, there are a variety of interventions to consider when addressing the needs of young children. Following are brief descriptions of three programs for elementary school children that have been proven effective in schools throughout the country.

### *Olweus Bully Prevention Program*

The Olweus Bully Prevention Program, developed and evaluated over a period of almost 20 years (Olweus, 1999), builds on four key principles derived chiefly from research on the development and identification of problem behaviors, especially aggressive behavior. These principles involve creating a school and ideally, also a home environment characterized by warmth, positive interest and involvement from adults, firm limits on unacceptable behavior, consistent application of nonpunitive, nonphysical sanctions for unacceptable behavior, and adults who act as authorities and positive role models.

The Bully Prevention Program includes school wide intervention comprised of staff training, formation of a bully prevention committee, development of school rules

and policies, a classroom level intervention, parent interventions, and individual-level interventions that includes meeting with bullies, meeting with victims, and meetings with parents of bullies and victims (Olweus, et al. 2003). There is strong empirical support for this program with successful implementation. The initial evaluation of the Olweus Bully Prevention Program in Bergen, Norway, targeting 2,500 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders, found approximately 50% reductions in self-reported bullying and victimization. There were also reductions in teachers and students ratings of the bullying behavior among children in the classroom, reductions in self-reported antisocial behavior (such as vandalism, fighting, theft, and truancy), and increases in students' perception of positive school climate (Olweus, 1993).

#### *Bully Busters Program*

Bully Busters (Newman et al., 2000) is an educational program in which students go through a series of seven training modules, each of which has the objective of controlling and preventing bullying behavior. More specifically, the goal of the program is both to reduce the occurrences of bullying and to induce conditions less conducive to bullying, such as creating a positive classroom climate, where bullying behavior is not tolerated, rules and consequences are consistent, and the teacher has high self-efficiency and positive expectations of the students. The more people involved in the implementation of the program increases the effectiveness, however one individual teacher can implement the program as well.

The seven modules include the following topics: increasing awareness of bullying, recognizing the bully, recognizing the victim, interventions for bullying behavior, interventions and recommendations to assist victims, the role of prevention, and

relaxation and coping skills. Each of these modules includes three or four classroom activities as well as discussion questions to aid in the processing of each idea. A recent study to test the effectiveness of the Bully Busters Program found that it was effective in increasing teachers' knowledge of and use of bullying-intervention skills, as well as reducing the amount of bullying in the classroom (Newman & Horne, 2004).

#### *Expect Respect Program*

The Expect Respect Project, (Meraviglia, Becker, Rosenbluth, Sanchez, & Robertson, 2003) a violence prevention program, was developed to reduce the incidence of bullying and sexual harassment by creating a positive school climate in which inappropriate behaviors are not tolerated and staff members respond consistently to incidents. The project implemented an educational intervention for students, parents, and staff members on expecting respect in student relationships and strategies for responding to inappropriate student behaviors.

The SafePlace: Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Survival Center that developed the Expect Respect school-based program to address sexual and domestic violence state in their handbook "of greatest significance was the impact of the project on increasing students' willingness to intervene to help a target of bullying and to seek help from an adult on campus". Evaluation of the Expect Respect Program found an increase of awareness about bullying, knowledge of sexual harassment, and positive attitudes toward helping peers.

#### *Stand Up Against Bullies Program*

Sartori (2005) developed a program called "Stand Up Against Bullies" that was used in the present study. The program is directed towards the individual and the peer

group, and it aims to enhance understanding that no matter what their role in a bullying act, they will understand how the whole situation evolves and will acquire the tools to handle the problem. This is achieved by teaching participants about bullying and the negative effects all around. A lack of empathy for others is one of the reasons bullies tease and taunt. That's why a major goal of the program aims to help students analyze each incident from different points of view and looking at the scene through the eyes of the bully, victims, and bystander, which might help children, learn to feel empathy for others. This, in turn, may help to reduce the frequency of bullying acts.

Children will be taught to handle bullies non-aggressively. If the victims of bullies bully back, the problem has grown and produced more bullies. Children will be taught to look at every incident as a problem that can be solved. They will be taught to consider different options and solutions. After considering the nature of the bullying incident, children will be taught to choose to: report bullies, avoid bullies, ignore bullies, act confidently and assertively towards bullies, remind themselves that they are special, unique individuals and don't have to believe the bully's message, stay with friends who stick up for them, stick up for their friends, talk with parents about any problems with bullies, and have a sense of humor.

This program consists of nine lessons that include true-to-life bully stories, and a situation will be discussed from three points of view: those of the bully, the victim, and the bystander. They will also have the opportunity to participate or observe a role-play of various bullying situations. In doing this, all children will begin to understand everyone's role in a bullying act. They will be taught the social skills needed to help prevent future bullying incidents.

### Method

The aim of the present study is to investigate the problem of bullying at this particular elementary school located in a suburb of a large city in Western New York. The study will evaluate the impact of the Stand Up Against Bullies program to help students see things from another point of view, and be able to consider different options and solutions to resolve a bullying problem.

#### *Site*

The primary k-5 school is located in a suburb of a large city in Western New York. There are 575 students at the school with a 50/50 percentage of males and females. The student teacher ratio is 1:16 compared to the New York School Average of 1:15. The ethnic breakdown representing this school compared to the New York School Average is as follows.

	<b>This School</b>	<b>NY School average</b>
% American Indian	0%	1%
% Asian	1%	6%
% Hispanic	1%	21%
% Black	2%	21%
% White	96%	52%

Students that are eligible for free lunch is 2% compared to New York School Average of 42%. Students eligible for reduced lunch is 4% compared to New York School average of 7%.

*Community*

The town is a growing suburb located northwest in a large city of Western New York. This town has experienced high population growth over the past several decades as it progressed from a rural farming community to one based more on commerce and industry. Citizens of the town enjoy access to a large number of educational institutions within the large city area. Some of these educational institutions are University of Rochester, Rochester Institute of Technology, St. John Fisher College, and Nazareth College to just name a few. The total population of the town is 14,614 people. The average age is 42.9 years and the average family income is \$ 45, 110 (Census, 2000).

The school district located in the town is the largest suburban school district in their county, and the eighth largest district in New York State. They provide services for nearly 14,000 students in grades k-12, through three high schools, a middle/high school, three middle schools, and thirteen elementary schools. The district operates within a Strategic Framework, a plan for continuous improvement ensuring instructional excellence, student support, staff effectiveness, home and community partnership, and fiscal responsibility.

*Sample*

After reviewing the total number of pre/post test (see Appendix A & B) for each class, I have realized that some students were absent during the pre test, however was present for the post-test, so the numbers were different. For the sample number to be the same, seven post tests were eliminated to represent the pre test sample of boys and girls. The total number of the sample was 86 students. The total number of males was 46 and the total number of females was 40. The total number of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students was 42 and

the total number of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students was 44. The ethnic breakdown of the sample resembles the schools showing 95% of the students being white, followed by 3% Black, 1% Hispanic, and 1% Asian.

The students in the four classes are very energetic and like to see when the school counselor comes into the classroom to do guidance lessons on different topics that address the three domains of counseling, which include academic, career, and personal/social development. Past complaints have been reported on bullying between the students in the classes. Some students in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade will be soon attending middle school and have expressed concern about bully situations occurring.

### *Procedure*

After deciding which bully prevention program to implement, the school counselor and I discussed which students would be considered to participate and could possibly benefit from the program. This program is designed for grades 3-5, we decided because of the limited amount of time to work with, two 4<sup>th</sup> grade and two 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes were considered. The four particular classes were chosen according to accessibility. I discussed the bully prevention program with the teachers and informed them of what the program entailed. The teachers agreed about the amount of time (30 minutes) that would be spent once a week in the classes for a total of six weeks. No permission was necessary from the parents or by the administrators to implement the six-week program about bullying. The on site supervisor/ school counselor looked over the program and approved for it to be introduced to the chosen classrooms.

The program was carried out in the selected four classrooms during the beginning of the second semester of the scholastic year, starting the month of February and ending

in the month of April due to different school breaks. That is, students would have been together for at least 6 months since the beginning of the scholastic year. The original program would have lasted for 9 weeks, however because of the lack of time we decided on which three lessons to be omitted. The program lasted six weeks (30-minute session a week), two weeks after the program ended, a post-test follow up questionnaire was given.

### *Schedule of Sessions*

#### Session 1 – Introduction to Stand Up Against Bullies

##### Materials Needed-

- Copy of Stand Up Against Bullies Rap (see Appendix E)
- Poster board and marker

On the morning of the first day of the program, four students were gathered before hand in each class to inform them of what I will be planning to do for the next six weeks. They were informed that their teacher recommended them to help introduce the lesson by learning the “Stand Up Against Bullies” rap and performing it front of the class before the lesson was started. They agreed and set up a free time for them to practice before the lesson later that day.

On the first day of the intervention, students were approached in their own classes. They were told that the program consisted of six weeks, one day a week in which several issues regarding bullying in schools and how to handle a bully situation were to be discussed. Students were asked on the first day, before the program started, to fill out the pre test questionnaire regarding bullying they have experienced during the past school year or any year in school, and information about what they know about handling a bully situation. They were assured about the confidentiality of the study and the anonymity of

their answers. They were told no one but the researchers would read their answers.

Students were given the opportunity to raise questions. The program started after completion of the questionnaire.

Introduction:

Greet the students by saying:

- We are going to be talking about a very serious issue for the next several weeks. However, before we start there will be a performance from a few of your classmates to help introduce what will be our goal.

The students performed the rap and they were applauded for their participation. After getting the students settled down, the session was started.

- I want to start with a question: How many of you like to be made fun of, pushed around, teased, called names, left out of games, or treated meanly? (No one should raise his or her hand)
- No one likes to be treated in this manner but some of us are.

Tell students:

- I am a firm believer that for every problem, there is a solution. Therefore, for the next few weeks, we will be problem solving and finding solutions to the Bully Problem. The program we will be using is called Stand Up Against Bullies, and that is exactly what we are going to learn to do. Using this program, we are going to work together to solve The Bully Problem at our school.
- Each time we meet, we are going to hear about a typical bullying incident. Then we will analyze it from every point of view so we can figure out what solution will help us Stand Up Against Bullies!

- You may be thinking that you don't have this problem. Maybe you are one of the lucky ones who are not at all affected by the Bully Problem. However, if even one incident is happening in our school each day to someone else, we all have to take some responsibility for solving the problem.

Discussion:

Set the stage for the discussion on bullying by saying:

- Let us talk about a typical bully incident. For bullying to occur, there must be a bully and a victim. There are usually some bystanders. (Write Bully Incident on the board. Underneath the title, draw an equilateral triangle. Label the corners of each point. Write the word Bully on the top point, Victim by the bottom left point, and Bystanders by the bottom right point of the triangle.)

Begin with the word bully. Say:

- Let us start our discussion of the bullying incident by talking about bullies. (Point to the word bully at the top of the triangle on the board.)
- How are bullies portrayed on TV or in the movies?
- Bullies come in all shape and sizes. They can be boys and girls, and they often do a lot more than take lunch money.
- What are some things bullies do to other kids?
- The one thing that is true about every bullying act is that someone is hurt in some way.
- Why do you think some people are bullies?
- There probably are as many reasons bullies "do their thing" as there are bullies. Maybe they don't feel good about themselves. Maybe they are jealous of others

successes. Maybe someone else somewhere else in their lives is bullying them. Alternatively, maybe they feel insecure and bullying makes them feel powerful. Another reason a bully might hurt someone else is because he or she never stopped to think that those actions are hurtful. Whatever the reasons, bullies are people who seem to gain some power from putting others down. They try to take the self-esteem of others by bullying.

Continue discussion by examining the meaning of the word victim. Say:

- Now let's talk about the victims of a bullying incident. (Point to the word victim by the triangle on the board.)
- How do you think a victim is chosen?
- The victim might seem weak or insecure to the bully. The bully might think the victim will not be able to stick up for him or herself.
- What happens to the victims during and after the bullying incident?
- What is self-esteem?
- Bullies seem to want to tear the victim's self-esteem apart. That is what will happen if the victim is not careful. We are going to learn how not to let bullies have so much power over us. A bully can have no power over anyone's self-esteem unless he or she is given this power.
- Some kids never seem to be victims. Let us think about that for a minute.
- Without mentioning anyone's name, can you think of someone in the room who is not a bully, but never is bullied?
- Now that you have that person in your mind, what is it that lets him or her escape being bullied?

- Thinking about how these bully-proof people act may help the rest of us learn how to be bully-proof. People like this don't allow bullies to rip up their self-esteem.

Continue the discussion by examining the meaning of the word bystanders. Say:

- Before we end our discussion today, we need to speak for a moment about bystanders and their role in the bullying act. (Point to the word bystanders by the triangle on the board.)
- What do you think a bystander does during the bullying act?
- Why do you think a bystander might do nothing?
- Why do you think a bystander might join in with the bully?
- During the next few weeks, we will be talking more about bullies, victims, and bystanders. You will be learning what we can all do to help end The Bully Problem at our school. We will be making a classroom chart that will help you Stand Up Against Bullies. (Show the poster board chart to the students.) I will leave the chart in the classroom so you can see it at all times.
- No matter what your current role is, you may have been in each of the three positions at one time or another. (Point to the triangle on the board.) We are going to look at the bullying act from all three points of view so we can understand how to stop The Bully Problem. We will definitely need to work together to stand Up Against Bullies!

Conclusion:

Give each student a copy of the Stand Up Against Bullies Rap. Tell the students to keep the rap for future reference. Then say:

- Let us end this session with a rap!

After reciting the rap with the students, tell the class:

- Yes! I hope you are all anxious and ready to start learning how to Stand Up Against Bullies.

Session 2 – Stand Together

Materials Needed –

- Copy of Stand Up Against Bullies Rap
- Copy of the Bully Triangle (see Appendix D)
- Copy of Stand Together story (see Appendix C)
- Classroom Chart

Introduction:

Greet the students by saying:

- Take out a copy of the Stand Up Against Bullies Rap from Lesson 1.

Remember, our purpose is to learn to Stand Up Against Bullies. Let us start by reciting the rap. (After reciting the rap, tell the students what a great job they did.)

Review:

Review what was covered in the last session by saying:

- Last time we met, we talked about the Bully Problem. Let us review a little of what we discussed.
- Who are the participants in most bullying incidents?
- Why do bullies push people around?
- How is a victim chosen?

- What do bystanders do during the bullying incident?
- What happens to the victim's self-esteem?

Discussion:

Set the stage for the discussion by saying:

- This week, we are going to start learning how to Stand Up Against Bullies. One thing that we have to get straight right now is that standing up to a bully does not mean that you have to bully them back. That will not solve anything. Therefore, we are going to learn how to solve a bullying incident peacefully.

Story:

Hand out to each child a copy of the Stand Together story. Then say:

- We're going to analyze the roles of each character plays in each story. We will use the Bully Triangle worksheet to make some notes about what each character did to continue or stop the Bully Problem. Remember that we are going to be looking at the bully incident from each point of view.
- After discussing the story today, we will begin filling out our Stand Up Against Bullies chart. (Point to the chart.) Each week, we will write on the chart some ways that everyone in the class can help put a stop to the Bully Problem.
- Listen carefully to the story I am about to tell you. It happens to be about the type of bully who has often been described in movies and on TV: the big, tough guy who pushes others around. (Read or tell the students the Stand Together story.)

Discussion:

The students were told to work together in their groups. Then the Bully Triangle was distributed to each child. When the Bully Triangle is finished, begin the discussion by saying:

- We are going to use the Bully Triangle activity sheet to discuss the story. We'll start with the bully.
- Who in this story was the bully?
- What did the bully do?
- Why do you think he did these things?

Continue the discussion by saying: Let's move on to the victim part of the Bully Triangle.

- How were the victims chosen?
- What did the victims do to solve the problem?

Continue the discussion by saying: Let us go to the Bystanders corner of the triangle.

- What did the bystanders do?
- Did the bystanders stop the bully or encourage the bully?
- To help the victims stand up for themselves, how did Tom organize the bystanders?

Let us start our classroom chart with some actions from the story that stopped the bully.

What rules can we put on the chart?

1. Be assertive and stand up for yourself.
2. Stay together in groups.
3. Stick up for your friends.

Role-Play:

The next part of the lesson will give them the opportunity to act out the rules on the chart. Three students were selected to come in the front of the classroom. Tell the students you are going to make a bullying statement to one of the actors. All three of the students, after hearing the statement, will demonstrate how to be assertive and stick up for one another. Remind the actors to assume an assertive stance standing up straight and making eye contact.

Conclusion:

Conclude the lesson by saying:

- This is a great start to our Stand Up Against Bullies program! We have learned something very important. If we want to stop the Bully Problem, we can stand up for ourselves, stay with a group, and stick up for each other. At our next session, we will learn some more things we can do. But for now, let's end the lesson with the Stand Up Against Bullies Rap.

Have the students recite the Stand Up Against Bullies Rap. Tell the students:

- We will be saying the Stand Up Against Bullies Rap during future lessons, so save your copy. You may take your copy of the Bully Triangle home. Tell your parents the story you heard in the lesson and share your answers from the Bully Triangle with them.

Lesson 3 – Whom Should You Please?

Materials Needed-

- Copy of the Bully Triangle
- Copy of Whom Should You Please? Story (see Appendix C)
- Classroom Chart

### Introduction:

Greet the students by saying:

- We have been discussing how to Stand Up Against Bullies. Remember that during the last class you heard a story about a bully named Derrick. Who can remember the three ways the kids in Derrick's class stopped his bullying? Today we are going to hear a new story about a different type of bully and we are going to learn some other ways to stop the Bully Problem. Let us begin today's session with our rap. Use your copy if you have not memorized the words. (After reciting the rap, tell the students what a great job they did.)

### Story:

Set the stage for the story by saying:

- As I said before, the last time we met, you heard a story about a bully named Derrick. He was big, tough, and strong. The bullies we meet may not always fit that description. That is the case in our story today. Let me tell you about it. (Read or tell the students the Whom Should You Please? story.)

### Discussion:

The students were told to work together in their groups. Then the Bully Triangle was distributed to each child. When the Bully Triangle is finished, begin the discussion by saying:

- We are going to use the Bully Triangle activity sheet to discuss the story. We'll start with the bully.
- Who was the bully in this story?
- What did the bully do?

- Why do you suppose she acted that way?
- Why do you think Madison and her friends were known as the “popular” crowd?

Continue the discussion by saying: Let us move on to the victim part of the Bully Triangle.

- How was the victim chosen?
- What did the victim do to solve the problem?
- Who remembers when we discussed self-esteem?
- What did we learn that the bully tries to do?
- In the beginning of the story, Grace was allowing Madison to rip her self-esteem apart. Grace actually believed that she had poor taste in clothes and that she looked bad. Every time Madison laughed and said something mean about Grace, another piece of Grace’s self-esteem was ripped off. This did not happen because of what Madison was saying. It happened because of what Grace was thinking. She was letting Madison rip her self-esteem apart.
- How can this stop?

So let us answer the question:

- What did the victim do to solve this problem?
- Some good advice that you have probably been hearing since you were very young is to ignore the teasing. The problem is that it’s hard to ignore it when you believe what the teaser is saying is true. So to ignore it, you have to believe what the bully is saying is not true.

Continue the discussion by saying: Let us go to the bystanders’ corner of the triangle.

- What did the bystanders do?

- Did the bystanders stop the bully or encourage the bully?
- So what did we learn that might help stop bullies in our school?

Remove the paper form the Stand Up Against Bullies chart. Then say: Let us add two ways to react to bullying to our Stand Up Against Bullies chart. (Add numbers 4 and 5 to the chart.)

1. Be assertive and stand up for yourself.
2. Stay together in groups.
3. Stick up for your friends.
4. Refuse to believe the bullies' words.
5. Ignore what the bullies say.

Role-Play:

Start by saying: Now it's time to practice what we learned in today's lesson. I will play the role of the bully. I want you to learn the proper way to react to bullies and see how terrible their actions can be so that you never join in with them or become one.

Ask for volunteers and select one to enact each role-play with you.

Tell the students:

- Those of you who are acting should think aloud. Tell everyone what thoughts are going through your mind. For example, if I say:

“You aren't good at basketball.” You might react by saying, “I do the best I can with basketball. I am not going to listen.”

Begin the role-plays.

Conclusion:

Conclude with the lesson by saying:

- We learned more ways today to Stand Up Against Bullies. I hope you are beginning to use these skills at school and that the Bully Problem is already decreasing. You may take your copy of the Bully Triangle home. Tell your parents the story you learned in the lesson and share your answers from the Bully Triangle with them.

#### Lesson 4 – What’s So Funny?

##### Materials Needed-

- Copy of the Bully Triangle
- Copy of What’s So Funny? Story (see Appendix C)
- Classroom chart

##### Introduction:

Greet the students by saying:

- Today we are going to learn new ways to Stand Up Against Bullies. Let us start the lesson by reciting the rap. (After reciting the rap, tell the students what a great job they did.)
- We have learned several ways to Stand Up Against Bullies. Look at the chart and let us review what we have written on it. (Choose students to read from the classroom chart. As each item is read, have the students review it’s meaning.)

##### Story:

Set the stage for the story by saying:

- Today you will hear a new story about bullies. Listen carefully to discover some new ways to handle the Bully Problem. (Read or tell the students the story What’s So Funny?)

Discussion:

The students were told to work together in their groups. Then the Bully Triangle was distributed to each child. When the Bully Triangle is finished, begin the discussion by saying:

- We are going to use the Bully triangle activity sheet to discuss the story. The kind of teasing done in this story is very common in elementary schools. The teasing starts as a joke and then gets out of hand. If the victim is really bothered by the teasing or can't get it to stop, fights could result and hurt feelings might exist- like between DJ and his best friend Jason.
- Who was the bully?
- What did the bullies do?
- Why do you think this happened?

Continue the discussion by saying: Let us move on to the victim part of the Bully Triangle.

- How was the victim chosen?
- What did the victim do to solve the problem?
- Let us talk about this for a moment. The type of teasing in this story is not vicious, but it can be annoying.
- How many of you have been teased about something embarrassing thing that you did or said?
- If it has ever happened to you, then you might understand how sometimes you feel that the kids will never stop. But they will. If DJ ignored it, the teasing would probably have stopped after a while, just as his mother said. However, because it

did bother him, he decided not to wait until it ended naturally. He asked the kids to stop it. In the story, DJ used an I Message to ask the other kids to stop. An I Message is an assertive statement asking someone to do something.

Then continue the lesson by saying:

- The proper delivery of an I Message is very important. If an I Message is delivered while whining and crying, the bullies might enjoy the power they feel from seeing the sign of weakness. If the victim stands straight and tall, makes eye contact, and seriously asks the bullies to stop, it shows that the victim is not allowing his or her self-esteem to be ripped up. If an I Message is to work, it is necessary to say it in this manner.
- Another thing DJ did in the story was to try to look at the whole situation with a little humor. Sometimes we all just have to lighten up and not take everything so seriously. DJ's mother suggested that he think about how funny some of the names were. Once he did that, he was able to laugh. If others know that you have a good sense of humor and can take a joke, you often joke your way out of a bullying situation.

Continue the discussion by saying: Let us go to the bystanders' corner of the triangle.

- What did the bystanders do?
- Did the bystanders help stop the bully or encourage the bully?
- From this information, what two new rules can we put on our Stand Up Against Bullies chart?

Add the following rules on the chart.

6. Use I Messages to ask the bullies to stop.

7. Look at the situation with a sense of humor.

Role-Play:

Begin the role-play part of the lesson by saying: It's time to practice what we have just learned. I need volunteers. I am going to select some names in the story, and then I will ask the volunteers to respond to me using an I Message. Remember: This is a role-play. I am only using these names to give you practice in using I Messages. I would never call you any of these names that would hurt your feelings, just as I hope you would never call others names that would hurt their feelings.

Using the following examples, select a student and begin the first role-play.

Examples:

Facilitator: "Hi, Sugar Bunny!"

Student: "I feel mad because you are calling me names and I want you to stop."

After a few I Messages, have students practice looking at things humorously.

Facilitator: "You are so clumsy!"

Student: "Got any new news?"

Conclusion:

Conclude the lesson by saying:

- You may take a copy of the Bully triangle home. Tell your parents the story you heard in the lesson and share your answers from the Bully Triangle with them.  
You are all doing such a great job in learning to Stand Up Against Bullies! Keep using these methods here at school and we will not have a Bully Problem at our school ever again.

## Lesson 5 – Teacher’s Pet

## Materials Needed-

- Copy of the Bully Triangle
- Copy of the Teacher’s Pet story (see Appendix C)
- Classroom Chart

## Introduction:

## Greet the students by saying:

- We have learned several ways to Stand Up Against Bullies. I would like to hear some success stories! If you have a story about how some of the methods on the chart have helped you, please share it with the class. Remember: When telling your story, do not use names of any people in the school. (Allow a few minutes for students to share.) Let us start the lesson by reciting the rap. (After reciting the rap, tell the students what a great job they did.)

## Continue the lesson by saying:

- Now, let us look at our Stand Up Against Bullies chart and review what we have written. It’s just about complete. I will call on one of you to read each rule aloud, and then we will discuss it before continuing. (Call on a student to read the first rule. after discussing the rule’s meaning, call on another student to read the second rule. Continue this process until all seven rules have been read aloud and discussed.)
1. Be assertive and stand up for yourself.
  2. Stay together in groups.
  3. Stick up for your friends.

4. Refuse to believe the bullies' words.
5. Ignore what the bullies say.
6. Use I Messages to ask the bullies to stop.
7. Look at the situation with a sense of humor.

Story:

Set the stage for the story by saying:

- We have already learned seven ways to handle bullies. That seems like a lot. I wonder if you think there could possibly be any more ways to stand up against bullies? Well, the answer is YES! As you listen to today's story, you will hear another way to stand up against bullies. Listen carefully. (Read or tell the students the Teacher's Pet story.)

Discussion:

The students were told to work together in their groups. Then the Bully Triangle was distributed to each child. When the Bully Triangle is finished, begin the discussion by saying: We are going to use the Bully triangle activity sheet to discuss the story.

- Who was the bully?
- What did the bully do?
- Why do you think this happened?

Continue the discussion by saying: Let us move on to the victim part of the Bully Triangle.

- How was the victim chosen?
- What did the victim do to solve the problem?

- Keisha wanted to help Dion and her offer came at a good time-while he was succeeding at something. What would have happened if she offered to help him when the whole class saw his “F” papers on the ground?
- The important point here is that bullies can change and you can be friends with someone who was once mean to you. Be willing to forgive the bullies and you will have more friends.

Continue the discussion by saying: Let us go to the bystanders’ corner of the triangle.

- What did the bystanders do?
- Did the bystanders help stop the bully or encourage the bully?
- Now that you have heard and discussed this story, can you think of any new methods that we can add to the Stand Up Against Bullies chart?

Add the following rules to the chart.

8. Talk the problem over with your parents.
9. Befriend the bully if possible.

Then say:

- We will not practice the part about talking to your parents, but remember that they can help you find a solution to any bully problem. Just talking with an adult, you trust helps you figure out the solution, because as you talk, your brain is reviewing the problem. With your parents’ help, you may see the problem in a different way. You can let your parents know that you are not asking them to solve the problem for you, but that you need them to help you think through the answer. Talking with a good listener can help you come up with the right solutions.

Role-play:

Begin the role-play part of the lesson by saying:

- Befriending a bully is not the solution that you will always want to choose. Some bullies are tough and dangerous and you will want to stay away from them. But sometimes a person teasing you can be a friend. Maybe all he or she wanted was your attention.
- When trying to make friends with a bully, timing is important. You wouldn't want to ask someone to play right after he or she has insulted you. Later that day, or even the next day, might be the right time.
- By trying to befriend the bullies, you are also showing them that you are a forgiving person who doesn't hold a grudge. You will be modeling appropriate behavior to those who might need a role model.

Using the following example or some of your own, select two student volunteers for each role-play. Begin by reading the situation aloud, then directing the students as to what they are supposed to do.

Example:

Situation: Juan was mean to you yesterday, but you know that he was feeling bad about not being chosen to be on a sports team.

Role-Play: Ask Juan to play.

Conclusion:

Conclude the lesson by saying:

- I hope the two new ideas for how to Stand Up Against Bullies will work for you. Remember: Every situation is different, and the "trick" to dealing with bullies is

to use the right method for the right situation. You may take your copy of the Bully Triangle home. Tell your parents the story you heard in the lesson and share your answers from the Bully Triangle with them. Next week will be our last lesson. Keep using what we have learned to Stand up Against Bullies.

## Lesson 6 – Differences Among Us

### Materials Needed-

- Copy of the Bully Triangle
- Copy of Differences Among Us story
- Classroom Chart

### Introduction:

Greet the students by saying:

- At our last meeting, some of you shared your Stand Up Against Bullies success stories. They were a great help to our class. Would anyone like to share some success stories from this past week? Remember: When telling a story, do not use names of any people in the school. (Allow a few minutes for students to share.)

Let us start the lesson by reciting the rap. (After reciting the rap, tell the students what a great job they did.)

### Story:

Set the stage for the story by saying:

- Today is the last story that you're going to hear. This story addresses a very important topic that we will need to discuss in detail. Listen carefully to find out how the character in the story handled the problem. (Read or tell the students the Differences Among Us story.)

Discussion:

The students were told to work together in their groups. Then the Bully Triangle was distributed to each child. When the Bully Triangle is finished, begin the discussion by saying: We are going to use the Bully triangle activity sheet to discuss the story.

- Who were the bullies?
- What did the bullies do?
- Why do you think this happened?

Continue the discussion by saying: Let us move on to the victim part of the Bully Triangle.

- How was the victim chosen?
- What did the victim do to solve the problem?
- Let us stop for a moment and discuss this.
- Why is this form of bullying wrong?
- What do you think “hate-motivated acts” mean?
- What are some other examples of “hate-motivated acts” that may go on in school or anywhere else?

Continue the discussion by saying: Let us go to the bystanders’ corner of the Bully Triangle.

- What did the bystanders do?
- Did the bystanders help stop the bully or encourage the bully?
- What could the bystanders have done to help end the bullying incident?
- In this story, the bullying acts were stopped when Suzy finally reported the incidents. The teacher helped students realize that we all have similarities and

differences. From what we learned in this story, what final rule could we add to the Stand Up Against Bullies chart?

Add the following rule to the chart.

10. Hate-motivated acts must not be tolerated. Report them immediately.

Then say:

- We will not role-play anyone committing a hate-motivated act, but what would you do if you saw someone discriminating against someone because of his or her skin-color, religion, cultural differences, or disabilities.

Continue with the discussion by saying: Let us review the completed Stand Up Against Bullies classroom chart.

1. Be assertive and stand up for yourself.
2. Stay together in groups.
3. Stick up for your friends.
4. Refuse to believe the bullies' words.
5. Ignore what the bullies say.
6. Use I Messages to ask the bullies to stop.
7. Look at the situation with a sense of humor.
8. Talk the problem over with your parents/adult you trust.
9. Befriend the bully if possible.
10. Hate-motivated acts must not be tolerated. Report them immediately.
  - One rule that I would like to add to the chart to end the Stand Up Against Bullies program is for everyone to: Value yourself and never let anyone rip your self-esteem apart.

Then say:

- If you have ever been a victim, you just have to look at our classroom chart to know that you have power to stop the Bully Problem. You need to let bullies know that by the way you stand and carry yourselves. Each of you is a unique, worthwhile individual. You deserve peace, happiness, and respect.
- If there are any bullies left in the classroom, be warned! We won't put up with that kind of cruel, disrespectful behavior. You don't have the right to bully, and we won't let you do it anymore!

Conclusion:

Conclude by saying:

- Let us end our session by saying the Stand Up Against Bullies Rap.

Then say:

- You may take your copy of the Bully Triangle home. Tell your parents the story you heard in the lesson and share your answers from the Bully triangle with them. I hope you have enjoyed the stories. I hope that our discussions have given you all ideas about how to Stand Up Against Bullies!

### *Evaluation*

Sartori (2005) believed that when implementing a program, it is important to measure the growth students have made. A pre/post test evaluation is included in the Stand Up Against Bullies program. The questionnaire measures what skills have been learned and mastered and which, if any, need to be reinforced for an individual or the entire class.

The original pre/post test questionnaire includes seven detailed questions about what information students should know about a bullying situation. For the purpose of the present study, two questions were omitted since there were a few lessons that were not presented. Another modification made is that six questions were added to the beginning of the pre-test, the first question was about the sex, age, and grade of the participant. The next five questions were pertaining to their experience, if any with being bullied, and how well school officials handled bullying at their school. The five questions we chose to keep to the original Stand Up Against Bullies were asked thereafter.

The post-test asked the first question about the sex, age, and grade of the participants. The next five questions we chose to keep in the original Stand Up Against Bullies program in the pre test were asked thereafter to determine the growth students made in their answers compared to the previous pre test given six weeks ago. The last question added was to rate how helpful the Stand Up Against Bullies program was for each student.

## Results

### *Demographic Variables*

Of the 86 students making up the final sample, 46 were male (53%) and 40 were female (47%). Seven questionnaires were randomly discarded, four females and two males so that the sample can be the same number for the pre test and the post-test. This happened due to students being absent for the pre test but answering the post-test questions. Approximately equal numbers of each grade were represented. The sample included 42 fourth grade students (49%) and 44 fifth grade students (51%).

### *Analysis of Pre-test Questionnaire*

The first step in the analysis was to compare the sample group before the intervention to check their experience with ever being bullied and what information they knew on how to handle a bullying situation.

Subsequently, we analyzed the effects of the intervention program by comparing pre and post-test results on what information they knew on how to handle a bullying situation, overall and separately for males versus females and fourth grade students versus fifth grade students.

Have you ever been bullied by other students (during this school year)?

Of the 86 respondents, comparing gender, results indicated that only 35% of females reported to ever being bullied compared to 52% of males reporting to be bullied before. Results also revealed that 61% of the fourth graders reported to ever being bullied compared to 36% of the fifth grade students.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Percentage (%) bullied</b>
Females	35
Males	52

**Table 1.** *Percentage of bullied students by gender*

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percentage (%) bullied</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	61
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	36

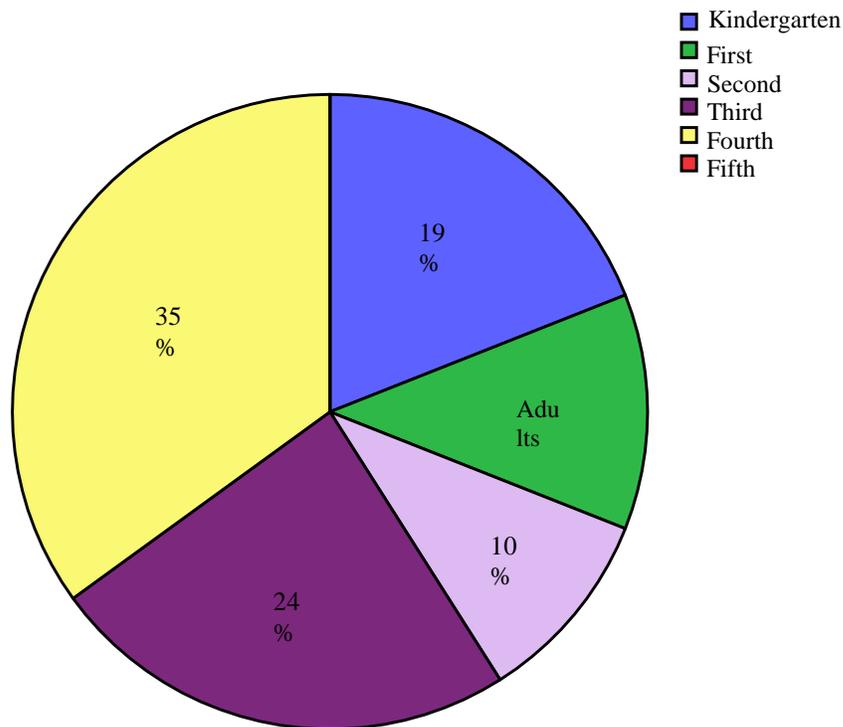
**Table 2.** *Percentage of bullied students by grade*

During which school year were you most troubled by bullying?

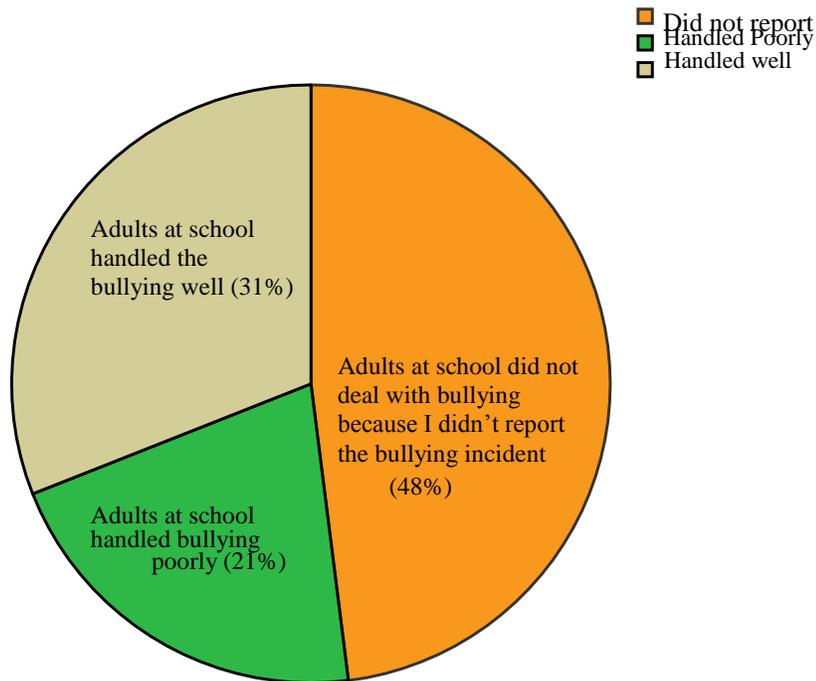
Table 3 below shows that students' perception of what school year they were most troubled by bullying varies. Of the whole sample, it is clear that with 35% reporting that the fourth grade was the worst grade for being bullied. The second worst grade reported was third grade with 24% of the sample reporting this information.

Grade	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
Kindergarten	8	19%
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	5	12%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	4	10%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	10	24%
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	15	35%
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	0	0%
Total	42	100%

Graph 5 (below): Pie Chart showing percentage of worst grade for bullied students



If you were bullied, how well did the school officials handle it?



**Graph 6.** Pie chart showing the percentage of how school officials handled bullying situations

Looking at Graph 6, it seems that students didn't feel comfortable for some reason or they didn't have confidence in their teachers to report a bullying incident to them. A majority of the sample (48%) reported that adults at school didn't deal with the bullying incident because the student didn't report it. However, those who were bullied and did report the incident (31%) believed that adults at school handled the bullying situation well. On the other hand, those who were bullied and did report it (21%) believed that adults handled the bullying situation poorly.

*Percentages of correct responses*

As stated before, the original “Stand Up Against Bullies” pre-test and post-test were also incorporated into the present study, however two items were eliminated due to not covering certain lessons in the original program. Five sets of questions were asked before and after implementation of the program. These five questions pertained to information on bullying from each perspective, the bully, victim, and bystander. The table shows the percentage of correct responses for both the pre and post-test. The two tables compare 4<sup>th</sup> versus 5<sup>th</sup> grade students and males versus females. This shows the effectiveness of the program, showing that now students know more on how to not only look at each point of view but also on how to help others or themselves in a bullying incident.

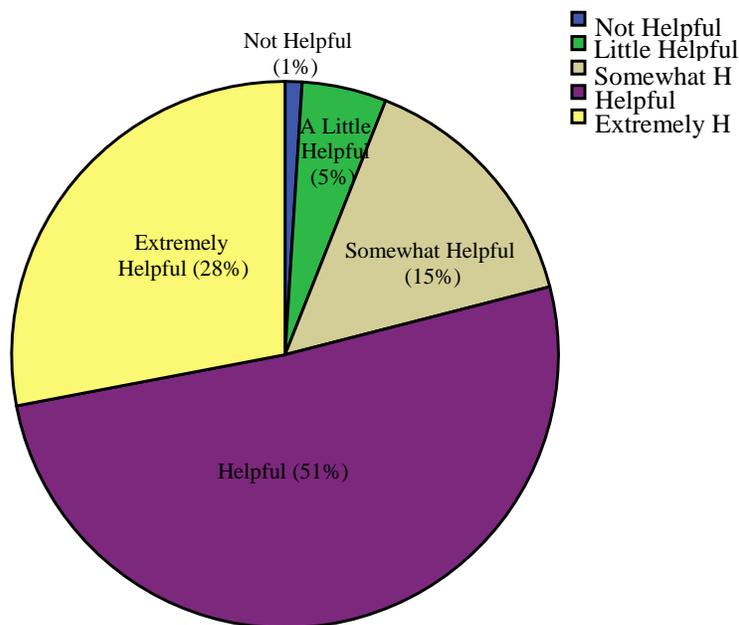
	Pre-test		Post-test	
	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Questions	Percentage (%) of correct responses			
<i>1). What are the three roles someone might play in a bullying incident?</i>	12%	14%	100%	100%
<i>2). Give at least two reasons a bully might commit a bullying act.</i>	5%	30%	67%	86%
<i>3). Give two reasons that a person might be chosen to get picked on.</i>	14%	43%	83%	82%
<i>4). What are two things another student can do to stop a bullying incident?</i>	38%	70%	74%	84%
<i>5). Name at least three things you can do when a bully calls you names.</i>	29%	82%	90%	93%

**Pre-test**

**Post-test**

	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Percentage (%) of correct responses</b>			
1). <i>What are the three roles someone might play in a bullying incident?</i>	13%	1%	98%	100%
2). <i>Give at least two reasons a bully might commit a bullying act.</i>	13%	8%	59%	75%
3). <i>Give two reasons that a person might be chosen to get picked on.</i>	22%	15%	67%	85%
4). <i>What are two things another student can do to stop a bullying incident?</i>	54%	60%	80%	70%
5). <i>Name at least three things you can do when a bully calls you names.</i>	57%	45%	87%	85%

The question asked: How would you rate the “Stand Up Against Bullies” program?



**Graph 7.** Pie Chart showing the rating responses from students on the “Stand Up Against Bullies” program.

A little over half of the sample (51%) reported the program as being helpful. The results also showed 28% of the sample believed the program to be “extremely helpful”. The following results as 15% reporting “somewhat helpful”, 5% reporting “a little helpful”, and 1% is reporting “not helpful”.

### Discussion

The present study surveyed students on their experience with bullying and evaluated the effect of an intervention program intended to inform elementary school students about bullying and hopefully reduce bullying incidents in the future due to understanding how to effectively deal with a bullying incident. The program was based on a six-week intervention and addressed information about each role in a bullying situation, and how to effectively handle the situation. The program therefore was not designed only to tackle future bullying incidents but more widely how to show empathy and look at a bullying situation from each perspective. The implementation of the program made use of active and interactive methods such as role-playing, story-telling, and discussion groups.

Results from the present study suggest that boys in the sample study are bullied more than girls. This is consistent with the research by Olweus (1993) and Rigby (1996) that the number of female victims decline more rapidly than that of male victims. Another finding in the present study found that younger students in the fourth grade reported being bullied more than the older students in the fifth grade. Along with that information, the majority of the sample (35%) also reported that fourth grade was the worst school year they were most troubled by bullying. The second worst grade reported

was third grade with 24% of the sample reporting this information. Following is 19% reporting kindergarten, 12% reporting first grade, 10% reporting second grade, and no one in the sample reporting fifth grade as a bad school year to get bullied in an elementary school.

There are a number of reasons researchers give that there might be a decrease with age in reports of be bullied, or harassed, by peers. Previous research shows that the number of victims seriously bullied decreases, as students get older. It is also found that younger victims are more likely to report that they are being bullied than older victims (Borg, 1999; Berthold & Hoover, 2000). Research along those lines report that it is a well established finding, from self-report survey data, that older children who are victims are less likely to tell a teacher or an adult about such experiences (Rigby, 1996; Whitney & Smith, 1993).

Another idea on why younger students report more bullying is because they encounter older children than them in school, which are in a position to bully them. Smith, Shu, and, Madsen (2001) reported that in an aged-graded system younger children may be more at risk of being harassed because of the greater number of older children who will be able to bully them without exception.

Crick & Dodge (1994) believe that as children get older, their social and cognitive skills are increasing. Mitchell (1997) agrees with the previous researchers because he states that role-taking abilities and the ability to understand another's thoughts or feelings increase with age. However, this seems to not go along with the finding in the present study of what the students believed to be the worst grade for experiencing bullying.

When the sample group was asked how well did school officials handle their bullying situation, results from the present study showed that a majority of the sample (48%) reported that adults at school didn't deal with the bullying because they chose not to report it. Harris & Petrie (2003) report that there is a perception among some students that telling adults will not help, because their intervention is too little, not effective, and may even cause the bullying to become worse. Generally, bullied children, as well as bystanders, do not report incidents of bullying, because they fear retaliation or are not sure if teachers and administrators on their school are even interested in trying to stop bullying.

Hazler (1996) believed that students perceive the bully problem in ways that adults do not and they seem to recognize that adults are not acting on the problem to the degree they could. Increasing research and new programs may bring the adult world more in line with what students need and want in this subject area to make the school a safe and more productive place to learn.

Overall, results of the present study offer a profile of victimization that seems like it could fit in with the other research in this area. Indeed, bullying appears to be a phenomenon that is happening more frequently around the world, which in turn seems indicative of the similarity of elementary school-aged students globally.

#### *Implications for Future Research*

The original "Stand Up Against Bullies" questionnaire only asked questions pertaining to information they should know to effectively handle a bullying situation. However, it fails to address what students are experiencing with bullying before the

program goes under way. A set of questions were made and added to assess the previous and present experience with being bullied.

In the self-report questionnaire, there was a set of different questions measuring victimization. Victimization was measured with a single general question asking students to indicate have they ever been bullied. One example that was given was being hit, kicked, or pushed. However, a variety of different types of bullying were not provided as an option to choose from. It is believed that if the students were asked separately about individual types of actions that have happened to them at school that constitute bullying (threatened, called names, isolated, physically attacked, etc.), then the percentage would have been higher for students reporting ever being bullied. Hence, it may be desirable in future research to use for victimization a dimension derived from the sum of individual types of victimization rather than only the typical type.

In the pre-test questionnaire the issue of being an actual bully was not addressed. The research reporting how many students were victimized clearly shows that there are bullies in the school as well. It is recommended that in future research that questions are set to measure how many students have acted out bullying behaviors on other students and maybe measure what were their reasons for doing so.

While the present study included student's perception on bullying, it might be valuable to learn more about the parents' and teachers' perspectives on bullying. Future research could study parents alone, or compare their experiences with those of students or teachers to provide a greater understanding of how parents view their children's experiences with bullying and how they believe they could help reduce or put an end to it.

Six weeks of intervention in four classes may be too limited of a sample and time period to produce any change in behavior for a whole school. Time limitations and limited staff prevented this program from being implemented to the entire school. Future research can study how this program can be implemented to a school and its effectiveness. Nevertheless, this evaluation suggests that the program seems promising at least in providing more strategies on how to effectively handle a bullying situation whether the student is the victim or bystander.

#### *Implications for School Counselors*

In order for bullying to be successfully intervened with in schools, there are measures that can be taken both before and after the fact. In order to prevent bullying, an obvious starting point will be for the school counselor and other school personnel to make the decision that bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Students should be made aware of their consequences for compromising other student's well-being and safety at school (Olweus, 1993).

Students themselves may be able to play a role in establishing these consequences for bullying. At the start of the school year, school counselors could hold an assembly with all students to discuss exactly what bullying is. A number of activities can be used like what is in the "Stand Up Against Bullies" program. Activities such as stories, films, role-plays, and class discussions including the establishment of consequences for bullying, could follow the presentation of these materials. These activities can be used to enhance student's empathy and understanding of what it feels like to be bullied, which would make them think twice before treating another student that way.

Another prevention strategy that may be helpful is for school counselors to educate other school personnel about the typical victim profile. These students can be pinpointed, watched closely, and helped in ways that would benefit and improve their situation. One intervention strategy that would help teachers is for school counselors to provide a step-by-step description of the procedures to follow when they become aware of a bullying incident (Olweus, 1993). Teachers may not know how to best handle the situation and what steps to take. If this is put together then there is an assurance that everyone knows what to do and is following the same agreed upon procedures.

It is important for school counselors to reach as many students who believe that bullying is a way to get what they want. Making a difference in one student is a success worth being proud of. For every bully who is dealt with early on and learns a more empathic and respectful way of interacting with fellow students, there will likely be one or more victims who will be less afraid and unhappy in school as a result.

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## Appendix A

## Appendix B

## Appendix C

## Appendix D

Appendix E

