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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

BULLYING PREVENTION AS A FORM OF SOCIAL JUSTICE: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF
THE LITERATURE

A clinical dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Psychology

by

Elyssa G. Cacali

April, 2018

Anat Cohen, PhD – Dissertation Chairperson

This clinical dissertation, written by

Elyssa G. Cacali

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

Doctoral Committee:

Anat Cohen, PhD, Chairperson

Robert deMayo, PhD

Anett Abrahamian Assilian, PsyD

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DEDICATION

For all those who have been bullied. For those who are passionate about social justice issues and who work tirelessly to make this world a more peaceful, bully-free place.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I want to thank my dissertation chairperson, Dr. Anat Cohen, for her dedication to this project. Dr. Cohen, you have been my supervisor, my dissertation chair, and my mentor. I am in awe of your tireless commitment to your work and to your students. Thank you for believing in me, for supporting me, and for guiding me throughout my graduate career. You are an inspiration. My gratitude also extends to my dissertation committee members, Dr. Robert deMayo and Dr. Anett Abrahamian Assilian, for your valued input throughout this project.

I would like to acknowledge my family and friends who have supported me throughout my professional development. To my parents, thank you for helping me find my voice when I was being bullied. Thank you for encouraging me to always “be the change,” and for providing me with the opportunity to pursue my dreams. To my siblings, for providing me with their support, love, and endless amounts of laughter.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband, Neil, for his unwavering support and understanding throughout my undergraduate and graduate careers. Thank you for your continued encouragement and for teaching me that anything is possible. I could not have done this without your love and guidance.

VITA

EDUCATION

Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology (*APA Accredited Program*)

Los Angeles, California

Doctor of Psychology in Clinical Psychology

Expected May 2018

Dissertation Title: Bullying Prevention as a Form of Social Justice: A Critical Review of the Literature

Committee Members: Anat Cohen PhD, Robert deMayo, PhD, Anett Abrahamian Assilian, PsyD

Clinical Competence Examination: Pass

Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Los Angeles, California

Masters of Arts in Psychology

June 2014

University of California, Irvine

Irvine, California

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology

December 2011

Bachelor of Arts in Criminology, Law, and Society

December 2011

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

DOCTORAL INTERN

Western Youth Services

September 2017-Present

Director of Clinical Training: Kathleen Devlin, PhD

- Provide individual, group, and family therapy to children and adolescents in a community mental health setting, who present with a variety of mental and medical diagnoses, including but not limited to anxiety, depression, trauma, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, adjustment-related disorders, personality-related disorders, and substance-related disorders
- Conduct mental health assessments and develop treatment goals with new clients in order to best serve their needs
- Provide crisis intervention to children and adolescents who present with suicidality and self-harm behaviors
- Administer, score, and interpret Psychodiagnostic and Psychoeducational assessment evaluations in order to clarify diagnoses and further assess a client's symptoms and behaviors. Measures include but are not limited to the following: Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence-Second Edition (WASI-II), NEPSY-Second Edition (NEPSY-II), LaFayette Grooved Pegboard Test, Verbal Fluency, Wisconsin Card Sorting Test, Trail Making, Behavior Assessment System for Children-Third Edition (BASC-3), Conners-Third Edition, Roberts-Second Edition, MMPI for Adolescents (MMPI-A), Trauma Symptom Checklist,

Children's Depression Inventory-Second Edition (CDI-2), Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale-Second Edition (RCMAS-2)

- Attend weekly Functional Family Therapy meetings, biweekly Seeking Safety and At-Risk meetings, and monthly Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy meetings, in order to gain additional knowledge and become certified in evidence based practices
- Attend weekly trainings on a variety of topics including but not limited to Adoption and Foster Care, Law and Ethics, Suicide Prevention and Self-Harm, and Testing
- Co-led a DBT group for adolescents
- Utilize Orange County Health Care Agency procedures and online paperwork

NEUROPSYCHOLOGY EXTERN

July 2016-June 2017

Children's Hospital Los Angeles

Supervisor: Sharon O'Neil, PhD, MHA

- Administered, scored, and interpreted neuropsychological assessment measures, including but not limited to the following: Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Fourth Edition (WAIS-IV), Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Fifth Edition (WISC-V), Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI-IV), Wechsler Nonverbal Scale of Ability (WNV), California Verbal Learning Test-Children's Version (CVLT-C), California Verbal Learning Test-Adult Version (CVLT-II), NEPSY-Second Edition (NEPSY-II), NIH-Toolbox, Rey-Osterrieth Complex Figure Test (ROCF), Grooved Pegboard Test, Berry-Buktenica Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration-Sixth Edition (BEERY VMI), Wide Range Assessment of Memory and Learning-Second Edition (WRAML-2), Children's Memory Scale (CMS), Delis-Kaplan Executive Function Scale (D-KEFS), Behavior Rating Inventory Scale of Executive Functioning (BRIEF), Woodcock-Johnson Normative Update Test of Achievement (WJ-III), Wechsler Individual Achievement Test-Third Edition (WIAT-III), Behavior Assessment System for Children-Second Edition (BASC-2), Bayley Infant Neurodevelopment Screener-Third Edition
- Assessments were administered to children, adolescents, and adults from the Hematology-Oncology, Neurology, Cardiology, Radiology, and Neurosurgery departments, for both research and clinical purposes
- Wrote reports for neuropsychological assessments administered
- Attended weekly neurology grand rounds, brain cutting, and adolescent grand rounds
- Participated in case presentations during didactics

VISITING PSYCHOLOGY EXTERN

September 2016-June 2017

Children's Hospital Los Angeles

Supervisor: Alessia Johns, PhD, at the *Division of Plastic and Maxillofacial Surgery*

- Facilitated girls' groups for youth with craniofacial anomalies, in partnership with the supervisor and other psychology externs
- Taught assertiveness skills, provide psychoeducation on their diagnosis, teach effective coping strategies, and facilitate peer support with the goal of increasing overall confidence.

- Facilitated parent group for parents of youth with craniofacial anomalies, and provide psychoeducation on these anomalies and overall development, discuss parenting tips on how to manage the challenges associated with their child's diagnosis, and teach assertiveness skills.

PSY.D. TRAINEE

Pepperdine Community Counseling Center (PCCC) September 2014-June 2017
Supervisor: Anat Cohen, PhD

- Provided outpatient psychotherapy to children, adolescents, adults, and families, who present with a variety of problems including, anxiety, depression, trauma, bereavement, personality related-disorders, marital discord, autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, adjustment related-disorders, and substance related-disorders
- Conducted intake interviews with clients and develop treatment goals to better serve the client's needs
- Administered and interpret various patient measures including the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9), Outcome Questionnaire-45.2, Youth Outcome Questionnaire (YOQ; Parent and Youth Self-Report), and the Working Alliance Inventory-Short Version (WAI-S)
- Served as the on-call therapist as needed

Children of the Night (COTN) in association with the Pepperdine Community Counseling Center

- Provided psychotherapy to individuals (ages 11-17), who are experiencing trauma due to sex trafficking, and have a history of sexual and physical abuse, substance abuse, and self-injurious behavior
- Attended training sessions on the topic of trauma
- Collaborated with staff members at COTN in order to ensure the needs of the client are being met

Lanai Road Elementary in association with Pepperdine Community Counseling Center

- Provided individual psychotherapy to children (ages 4-12) within the school-based setting
- Conducted clinical interviews with children and their families to assess the child's needs
- Provided regular parent and family sessions to coordinate care and to teach skills that they can use outside of therapy
- Discussed the client's coordination of care with teachers and psychiatrists in order to better understand the needs of the client

CHILD AND ADULT CLINIC EXTERN

September 2015-June 2016

Long Beach Child and Adolescent Program

Supervisor: Teri Paulsen, PsyD

- Provided evidence-based treatment to youth (ages 2-17) who were diagnosed with ADHD, depression, anxiety, PTSD, conduct disorder, and intellectual deficits.
- Conducted crisis intervention to youth engaged in self-injurious behavior
- Provided treatment to adults in the CalWORKS program, who were diagnosed with depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, adjustment disorder, and bipolar disorder
- Conducted crisis intervention to adults who experienced self-injurious behavior, including both suicidal and homicidal ideations and attempts.

- Utilized the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health procedures and online paperwork

CLINICAL SUPERVISORY & TEACHING EXPERIENCE

DOCTORAL PEER SUPERVISOR

November 2017-Present

Western Youth Services

Supervisor: Maurie Edelman, PhD

- Provide individual peer supervision to doctoral-level practicum student who conducts therapy at Western Youth Services

DOCTORAL PEER CONSULTANT

September 2016-June 2017

Pepperdine Community Counseling Center-Encino, CA

Supervisor: Anat Cohen, PhD

- Selected to provide individual peer supervision to both first year and second year doctoral-level psychology trainees who conduct therapy at the Pepperdine Community Counseling Center
- Create mutual training goals with supervisees and regularly discuss intervention, diagnosis, conceptualization, ethical/legal issues, and crisis intervention as it pertains to their clients
- Provide one hour of consultation to each trainee on a weekly-basis
- Attend weekly supervision-of-supervision in order to enhance consultation skills
- Regularly review and audit trainees' charts, case notes, and intakes

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCHER

April 2016-Present

Pepperdine University

Dissertation Chair: Anat Cohen, PhD

- Developed a doctoral dissertation using a critical literature review in order to discover the interaction between anti-bullying programs and social justice issues
- Provide the therapist community with suggestions on how to effectively incorporate social justice into anti-bullying programs

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

October 2011-May 2012

University of California, Irvine

Dr. Jodi Quas Research Lab

- Investigated the impact of direct and cross-examinations on child sexual abuse trials
- Coded study transcripts related to child eyewitness testimony
- Analyzed child responses to both direct and cross-examinations

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

GRADUATE ASSISTANT

July 2015-June 2017

Pepperdine Community Counseling Center-Encino, CA

- Conduct phone intakes with potential new clients
- Implement orientations to new trainees and provide continual assistance as they become oriented to the clinic
- Conduct chart audits to ensure that the clinic is upholding all ethical and legal standards
- Consult with the clinic director in order to properly assign clients to clinic therapists

LIAISON OF SCHOOL-BASED SERVICES

July 2015-June 2016

Pepperdine Community Counseling Center-Encino, CA

Lanai Road Elementary School

- Coordinated school-based psychotherapy services with students on campus
- Developed school-based programs for students and teachers
- Mentored first-year students when they received clients within the school-based setting

RELEVANT WORK AND VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

STAFF ASSISTANT

August 2013-October 2014

Bridges to Recovery-Pacific Palisades, CA

- Interacted with clients in between therapy sessions as well as during outings
- Provided clients with necessary medication
- Supervised clients' well-being during their treatment

BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONIST

October 2012-June 2014

Center for Behavioral, Educational, and Social Therapies-Los Angeles, CA

- Executed Applied Behavioral Analysis with a child with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity and Social Pragmatic Speech Communication Disorder
- Taught executive functioning skills in order to improve social skills
- Demonstrated appropriate behaviors in the classroom setting

CLINICIAN

January 2012-June 2012

Doors Education Center-Irvine, CA

- Provided academic instruction to children with special needs in math, reading, writing, and homework
- Taught executive functioning skills to children with Autism, Dyslexia, and those suffering with Reactive Attachment Disorder in order to improve social skills

TEACHER'S ASSISTANT

January 2011-June 2011

Verano Preschool-Irvine, CA

- Assisted with the education of preschoolers between the ages of three and five
- Facilitated snack time and story time, and created games, and arts & crafts
- Enhanced each child's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development
- Communicated directly with both administration and parents

PEER EDUCATOR

September 2010-June 2011

Counseling Center-Irvine, CA

- Developed and presented psycho educational programs and outreach services to students attending UC Irvine
- Demonstrated strong organizational skills by creating educational packets and meeting tight deadlines
- Provided guidance to individuals dealing with a variety of personal concerns including time management, anxiety, eating disorders, suicide and depression, and communication skills

TEACHING ASSISTANT

September 2007-April 2008

West Valley School of Special Education-Los Angeles, CA

- Worked with children between the ages of five and eight, who were diagnosed with severe Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, and Autism
- Assisted with speech therapy, physical education, and sign language

CAMP COUNSELOR

June 2006-July 2006

YMCA-Kailua-Kona, HI

- Worked with, and counseled underprivileged children ages five through eight
- Designed games and activities for children

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Janicic, A., **Cacali, E.**, & Cohen, A. (2017, May). *From Invisibility to Empowerment: A Multifactorial Approach to Clinical Work with Commercially Sexually Exploited Minors (CSEM)*. Poster presented at the International Trauma Conference, Jerusalem, Israel.

GUEST LECTURES

- *Bullying*. (March, 2015; February, 2016; February 2017). Presented a bullying prevention presentation to adolescents at Portola Middle School.
- *Bullying and Learning to be a Good Friend* (February, 2015; March, 2016). Presented an anti-bullying presentation to children at the Kindergarten level at Lanai Elementary School. Special emphasis was on what it means to be a good friend, how to share with classmates, and how to care for others

HONORS AND AWARDS

Psi Chi, Pepperdine University	2012-Present
Cum Laude, <i>University of California, Irvine</i>	2011
Phi Beta Kappa Honors Society, <i>University of California, Irvine</i>	2011
Sigma Alpha Pi Honors Fraternity, <i>University of California, Irvine</i>	2011

LECTURES AND SEMINARS

- Brain Cutting** July 2016-June 2017
Children's Hospital Los Angeles
Floyd Gilles, MD. Neuropathologist, Professor of Pediatrics, USC Keck School of Medicine
- Attended weekly brain cutting seminars on a variety of medical diagnoses
- Adolescent Grand Rounds** July 2016-June 2017
Children's Hospital Los Angeles
Various Lecturers
- Attended weekly grand rounds on a variety of medical and mental health topics pertaining to adolescents
- Child Neurology Grand Rounds** July 2016-June 2017
Children's Hospital Los Angeles
Various Lecturers
- Attended weekly grand rounds pertaining to patients with a variety of neurological disorders and diagnoses

ADDITIONAL TRAININGS AND CERTIFICATIONS

- Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TF-CBT) Training** September 2017-Present
Western Youth Services
- Completed two-day training requirement on how to conduct TF-CBT with clients with symptoms of PTSD
 - Completing monthly phone based consultations in order to meet certification requirements
- Medical University of South Carolina Website*
- Completed a web-based introductory training on TF-CBT for children and their families
- Functional Family Therapy (FFT)** September 2017-Present
Western Youth Services
- Completing training requirement on how to conduct FFT with clients and their families in order to reduce family discord and distress
 - Attend weekly supervisory meetings on FFT
- Seeking Safety** September 2017-Present
Western Youth Services
- Attend weekly supervisory meetings on how to implement seeking services with clients
- Suicide and Self-Harm Training** November 2017
Western Youth Services
- Attended a three-hour training on how to assess for suicide and self-harm behaviors

Issues in Adoption and Foster Care Training

November 2017

Western Youth Services

- Attended a three-hour training how to provide treatment to children and their families who are in foster care, kinship care, and who have been adopted

Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS-2) Training October 2017-November 2017

Western Youth Services

- Attended two day, three-hour long trainings on how to implements and score the ADOS-2

Roberts-2 Training

October 2017

Western Youth Services

- Attended three-hour training on how to implement and score the Roberts-2

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Training- year-long class September 2015-June 2016

Harbor UCLA, Torrance, CA

- Completed a yearlong comprehensive training on CBT
- Learned specific training techniques such as how to introduce CBT, how to implement the CBT model with clients, cognitive processing, and behavioral management

Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) Training

November 2012

Center for Behavioral, Educational, and Social Therapies, Los Angeles, CA

- Completed ABA training in order to effectively work with children with Autism, Social Pragmatic Speech Communication Disorder, and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT

Psi Chi – The International Honors Society in Psychology

Member

ABSTRACT

Though school bullying has been occurring for centuries, it only recently gained global attention through scholarly studies and social media. As previous literature showed bullying can lead to long-term mental health problems for children and adolescents, a number of bullying prevention programs were created throughout Europe and have since been implemented in the United States. However, these prevention programs are not as effective in the United States, partially as a result of the heterogeneity within school systems and a lack of funding. Further, they fail to address a key component of bullying—the perceived imbalance of power between the bully and the victim. This dissertation, through a clinical review of the literature, supports that certain minority populations may be more at risk for bullying victimization than other populations, indicating bullying is a human rights concern. It also supports that bullying is a social justice issue, as children who are bullied are no longer safe at their schools and are therefore unable to reach their full potential because their academic, cognitive, and emotional functioning are compromised by their bullying experience. Though the concept of bullying has been researched for decades, research into the relationship between bullying prevention and social justice is limited. This dissertation involved an in-depth look at bullying definitions, current bullying prevention programs, social justice, and the role of prevention in extinguishing bullying. In considering bullying as a social justice issue, the researcher looked at the role of psychologists as agents of social change within their communities. Ultimately, though there is some literature to support that psychologists are agents of social change within their communities, additional research as to how psychologists can implement this role within the school system, and specifically related to bullying prevention, is needed. Overall, the aim of this critical literature review was to promote

an understanding of bullying as a social justice issue and to encourage future research into bullying prevention to conceptualize bullying in this context.

Chapter I: The Problem

Bullying is a nationwide issue that requires close examination and increased awareness to move toward prevention. Until recently, bullying was considered to be a typical experience for school-aged children (Arseneault, Bowes, & Shakoor, 2010). However, in the last 5 decades, researchers have placed greater emphasis on understanding peer-to-peer aggression, and, as a result, have expanded the definition of bullying beyond aggression, victimization, and teasing (Besag, 1989; Koo, 2007; Lagerspetz, Bjoerkqvist, & Peltonen, 1988; Olweus, 1978; Remboldt, 1994a, 1994b; P. K. Smith & Brian, 2000). Broadly, *bullying* is defined as “any unwanted aggressive behavior by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance” (Gladden, Vivolo-Kantor, Hamburger, & Lumpkin, 2014, p. 7). Bullying can involve physical, verbal, and relational components (Olweus, 2001). In addition, a behavior is only defined as bullying if it occurs repeatedly and is unprovoked (M. B. Greene, 2006). Bullying is a stressful experience that can have lifelong mental health repercussions, including depression, poor self-esteem, increased suicidal behaviors, and conduct problems (Arseneault et al., 2010; Brunstein, Marrocco, Kleinman, Schonfeld, & Gould, 2007; Lemstra, Nielsen, Rogers, Thompson, & Moraros, 2012; Rosen, Underwood, Gentsch, Rahdar, & Wharton, 2012), both for those who bully and those who are victims of bullying (Arseneault et al., 2010).

Current national data related to the prevalence of bullying indicate 28% of students in Grades 6 through 12 experienced bullying (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2014). When “frequently” was defined as “two or more times a month,” 40.6% of students in Grades 4 through 12 reported being involved in bullying, with 23.2% of the youth being victimized, 8% acting as the perpetrator, and 9.4% being involved in both roles (U.S.

Department of Health & Human Services, 2014). Bullying most often takes place in the school setting, including: the classroom (29.3%), hallway or locker areas (29.0%), cafeteria (23.4%), bathroom (12.2%), gym or PE class (19.5%), and on the playground or during recess time (6.2%; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2014). The types of bullying reported included name calling (44.2%); teasing (43.3%); spreading rumors or lies (36.3%); pushing or shoving (32.4%); hitting, slapping, or kicking (29.2%); leaving out (28.5%); threatening (27.4%); stealing belongings (27.3%); making sexual comments or gestures (23.7%); and cyberbullying via e-mail or blogging (9.9%; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2014).

With the recognition that bullying is a more severe and pervasive problem than previously acknowledged, researchers in the last several decades have studied a multitude of bullying prevention programs throughout the United States, Europe, and Australia (Evans, Fraser, & Cotter, 2014; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). Several more recent meta-analyses have been conducted in an attempt to identify which components are effective at reducing bullying behavior in schools. For instance, Ttofi and Farrington (2011) studied effective anti-bullying programs and found elements such as the presence of parent and teacher training, the use of classroom disciplinary methods (i.e., strict rules for handling bullying), the implementation of a whole-school anti-bullying policy, and the use of instructional videos were positively correlated with a reduction in bullying and victimization. In addition, the researchers found that program duration and intensity were related to decreased bullying and victimization, and interventions inspired by the work of Dan Olweus, the creator of the widely accepted and used Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP), appeared to be more successful (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). A noteworthy conclusion of another meta-analysis looking at bullying prevention (Evans et al., 2014) was that the success of various bullying intervention programs appeared to be

related to where the study took place. Evans et al. (2014) noted their findings showed that programs outside of the United States were more effective, and posited that this was the result of there being more homogenous school populations (Evans et al., 2014).

Various components of bullying prevention programs implemented outside of the United States have been proven to be effective at decreasing bullying in schools. The OBPP, for instance, was created after three adolescent boys in Norway committed suicide in 1983 after being bullied (Olweus & Limber, 2010). The program maintains that by restructuring the school environment, primarily in Norway, bullying decreased significantly (Olweus & Limber, 2010). The Empathy Training Program, an initiative implemented in Turkey, is a 10-session program used to teach students about empathy through psychoeducation and small group activities. This program was found to significantly reduce bullying behavior (Evans et al., 2014). Finally, the KiVa program from Finland uses classroom discussions, group work, role-playing, parent information nights, and short films as bullying prevention components (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). As most of these studies were conducted outside of the United States, their relevance to the study of bullying prevention in the United States is questionable based in part on the differences in the cultural makeups of the populations being studied. To date, research on these prevention programs in the United States is limited and prior researchers have reported mixed results when it comes to the effectiveness of bullying prevention programs throughout the country.

One reason why more focus is placed on bullying prevention programs, both in and out of the United States, is because researchers have begun to conceptualize bullying as a social justice issue. Specifically, bullying involves an imbalance of power between the bully and victim, and proves to be an example of oppression in society (M. Polanin & Vera, 2013). According to the

academic literature, children are indirectly taught messages of intolerance, including “homophobic attitudes and racist beliefs,” and they learn “by both participating in and witnessing bullying, that certain groups in society possess power based on inherent characteristics” (M. Polanin & Vera, 2013, p. 305). Though bullying may have always been in existence, it is no longer viewed as a “rite of passage” for children and adolescents, and human rights advocates from around the world have denounced bullying behaviors (Brewer & Harlin, 2008, p. 385). According to the Charter of the United Nations, article 26:2:

Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms . . . Provisions ought to be made to ensure that schools promote and enforce human rights for all students. (as cited in M. B. Greene, 2006, p. 70)

From a human rights perspective, bullying is a direct violation of a student’s civil liberties, and it is therefore the responsibility of school leaders to address all types of bullying (M. B. Greene, 2006). Though there seems to be a multitude of inquiry into bullying prevention programs and their effectiveness, research into the relationship between bullying prevention and the promotion of social justice is quite limited.

In considering bullying as a social justice issue, psychologists who work toward bullying prevention have an inherent responsibility to act as agents of social change. Specifically, psychologists are called upon, based on their ethical obligations, to be proactive in addressing critical social problems through research and prevention. According to the *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct*, “Psychologists seek to safeguard the welfare and rights of those with whom they interact professionally and other affected persons” (American Psychological Association [APA], 2010, p. 3). Coon, Rosenberg-Robinson, and Lefley (2016)

asserted that psychologists have the ability to draw upon their knowledge of policy to become active agents of change in their communities. Though not directly stated, it appears psychologists have a role in effecting social change in the school system, specifically by introducing social justice elements into bullying prevention programs.

In their review of the concept of social change and the development of its definition, Kenny, Horne, Orpinas, and Reese (2009) included several discussions on the concept of prevention as it applies to social justice. Kenny et al.'s hope was that with the proper use of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention efforts related to social justice issues, intervention efforts would be more successful and have lasting positive effects. They postulated that the goal of social justice is:

To achieve full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. (Bell, 2007, as cited in Kenny et al., 2009, p. 4)

Though there is some agreement within the field of psychology about what constitutes social justice (Fondacaro & Weinberg, 2002; Fouad, Gerstein, & Toporek, 2006; Kenny et al., 2009; Prilleltensky, 1997; Swenson, 1998), the relationship between prevention as designed and implemented by psychologists and social justice has only recently been addressed in the research (Kenny et al., 2009). How prevention programs contribute to social justice is an area that is in need of more investigation.

Drawing on the view of bullying prevention as a social justice issue and the APA's call for its members to be active agents in this regard, the current study was designed as a review and analysis of the existing research on bullying prevention and social justice issues as a means to

articulate principles of social justice as they apply to the development of bullying prevention. The proposed outcome of the current study was a comprehensive critical review of the literature on the effectiveness of current bullying prevention programs, bullying as a social justice issue, and the role of psychologists/psychology in contributing to social justice through prevention. This chapter provided an introduction and overview of the purpose of the study, project aims, and its significance. Chapter 2 consists of a critical review of the relevant literature, including definitions of bullying, effects of bullying, literature on bullying in the United States, current research on bullying prevention programs, bullying as a social justice problem, and the role of psychologists as agents of social change. Chapter 3 contains details of the research approach and method by which the researcher reviewed, synthesized, and critiqued the literature. Chapter 4 includes a discussion and conclusions based on the critical review of the literature, a discussion of the limitations of the study, and recommendations for future studies.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Definitions

Bullying. Dan Olweus, who is widely considered to be the “pioneer of the modern-day systemic approach to bullying,” defined bullying as follows: “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” (M. B. Greene, 2006; Olweus, 1986, 1991, as cited in Olweus, 1993, p. 2). According to Olweus (1993), the term *negative actions* can be defined as when a person intentionally inflicts or attempts to inflict injury onto another person. These negative actions can be verbal (e.g., threatening, teasing, taunting, name-calling), physical (e.g., kicking, hitting, punching, pushing), or nonverbal (e.g., making faces, intentionally excluding someone from the group; Olweus, 1993). Olweus explained that bullying is carried out repeatedly over time by an individual or a group. The victim may also be an individual or a group; however, in the school setting the victim is usually a single student (Olweus, 1993). Olweus (1993) argued that the term bullying should also include an “imbalance in strength” or power (p. 2). This occurs when a student is exposed to the negative actions and has a difficult time defending him or herself and feels helpless against the bully (Olweus, 1993). Last, it is important to distinguish direct bullying from indirect bullying. *Direct bullying* can be defined as open attacks on a victim whereas *indirect bullying* can be defined as social isolation and intentional exclusion from a group (Olweus, 1993).

Most school bullying researchers used Olweus’s (1993) definition of bullying. However, some bullying research included varying definitions. According to a national survey called the School Crime Supplement, bullying is defined as what students do to make others feel bad or when they are hurtful toward others (Evans & Smokowski, 2016). However, this definition does

not mention the power imbalance or indicate that the bullying is repeated (Evans & Smokowski, 2016). The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, a program that monitors behaviors and was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2013), defines bullying as occurring:

When one more students tease, threaten, spread rumors about, hit, shove, or hurt another student over and over again. It is not bullying when two students of the same strength or power argue or fight or tease each other in a friendly way. (p. 7)

Finally, researchers in the Health Behavior in School-Aged Children study, a cross-national study designed in Europe, defined bullying as occurring when a student or a group of students says or does unpleasant things toward another student, when a student is teased repeatedly in a way he or she does not like, or when the student is left out of activities on purpose (Evans & Smokowski, 2016; Iannotti, 2012). The researchers explained that it is not bullying when two students who are of the same strength or power argue or fight, or when one student is teased in a friendly or playful manner (Evans & Smokowski, 2016; Iannotti, 2012). In light of the variety of definitions of bullying, the CDC established components that must be included in any definition of bullying that is provided as part of a bullying measure. The CDC expanded the definition used by Olweus to include the following five elements: unwanted aggressive behavior; observed or perceived power imbalance; repeated multiple times or has a high likelihood of being repeated; causes physical, psychological, social, or educational harm; and occurs between youth who are not siblings or dating partners (Gladden et al., 2014).

Victimization. Though the terms bullying and peer victimization have been used in the literature interchangeably, researchers continue to debate whether there is a distinct difference between the terms. One definition of *peer victimization* refers to “a form of peer abuse in which a

child is frequently the target of peer aggression” (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996, p. 1305).

Finkelhor, Turner, and Hamby (2012) further defined victimization as “harm caused by other persons,” and in the case of peers as “acting outside of the norms of appropriate conduct” (p. 3).

Unfortunately, these definitions of peer victimization do not include the idea of a power imbalance or the aggressor’s intent, which are critical pieces included in the definition of bullying. However, other researchers argue that because peer victimization tends to be aggressive and repetitive, it is safe to assume that victims of bullying are unable to respond to the situation effectively and that those who bully are not acting with positive or benign intent (Hunter, Boyle, & Warden, 2007). Therefore, for the purpose of this dissertation, the terms bullying and peer victimization are used interchangeably.

Aggression. *Aggression* is defined as acts that are intended or perceived to cause harm (Finkelhor et al., 2012). Though peer victimization tends to be aggressive, this may not always be the case. For instance, according to Finkelhor et al. (2012), certain acts, such as stealing someone’s property and sexual offenses such as flashing, may not be intended to harm, but nonetheless violate the norms of appropriate behavior.

Though physical aggression is used as a means to cause physical harm to another person, *relational aggression* can be defined as “a nonphysical form of aggression whereby the perpetrator’s goal is to inflict or threaten damage to relationships, including harm to the target child’s social standing or reputation” (Dailey, Frey, & Walker, 2015, p. 79). Relational aggression can include direct forms of behavior, which can be verbal or nonverbal threats that are confrontational, or indirect behavior, which can include rumor spreading with the intention of causing damage to another’s reputation (Dailey et al., 2015). Last, relational aggression can occur through social media or face-to-face.

Bullying can be considered a subset of aggression (P. K. Smith, 2016). At the same time, bullying behaviors are intentionally aggressive acts against another student who is unable to easily defend him or herself, whereas aggressive acts, including fights or quarrels, generally occur between equally matched students (P. K. Smith, 2016).

Teasing. Teasing can be difficult to define and the descriptions can vary widely. However, a popular definition of *teasing* is “a deliberate act designed by the teaser to cause tension in the victim, such as anxiety, frustration, anger, embarrassment, humiliation, etc., and it is presented in such a way that the victims can escape if they ‘catch on’” (Warm, 1997, as cited in Land, 2003, p. 150) or recognize they are being teased. Later the definition changed to include “nonambiguously negative verbal and physical aggression with no opportunity for escape” (Land, 2003, p. 150). There is some debate as to whether teasing can be considered a form of bullying. Some researchers include teasing in their definition of bullying, though they stipulate that the teasing needs to be repeated and harsh. Others believe teasing is a separate form of victimization that can accompany bullying behavior. Still others contrast teasing as acceptable while bullying is unacceptable (Land, 2003).

Types of Bullying

Physical. Gladden et al. (2014) attempted to create more uniform definitions of the different types of bullying for the CDC and defined bullying as “the use of physical force by the perpetrator against the targeted youth” (p. 7). *Physical bullying* includes attacks such as “hitting, slapping, kicking, nudging, spitting, tugging on hair, stepping on someone’s toe, tripping, inappropriate touching, or throwing an object at the victim” (Kuykendall, 2012, p. 43). Olweus explained that physical bullying occurs when another person “hits, pushes, kicks, pinches, or restrains another” by physical means (Olweus, 1993, p. 17). Physical bullying takes a physical

and emotional toll on both the bully and the victim, and takes a lot of energy to carry out.

Therefore, bullies tend to recruit other students to help them carry out these physical attacks or use short and more limited-duration attacks (Kuykendall, 2012).

Verbal. *Verbal bullying* is known to be direct and includes “face-to-face name calling and insults” (Bradshaw, Waasdorp, & Johnson, 2015, p. 495). It can also be defined as “oral or written communication by the perpetrator against the targeted youth that causes harm” (Gladden et al., 2014, p. 7). Though name-calling is considered to be the most common form of bullying, verbal bullying can also include taunting, mean or threatening written notes or hand gestures, verbal threats, or inappropriate sexual comments (Gladden et al., 2014; Kuykendall, 2012). Mean messages can be sent either verbally, through notes or media, or nonverbally, through nasty looks, rolling of the eyes, or mean expressions.

Psychological/Relational. Physical and verbal forms of bullying occur face-to-face, whereas *relational bullying* is an indirect behavior (Bradshaw et al., 2015). This type of bullying involves “actions that are intended to result in embarrassment, humiliation, indignity, grief, or emotional upset to the victim” (Kuykendall, 2012, p. 44). It can include not allowing someone into a group, spreading rumors, lying to get another student into trouble, threatening to hurt another student, or making a student do something against his or her will. The goal is to cause harm by damaging another student’s relationship with peers and to destroy his or her social status through the spreading of rumors, gossip, or social exclusion (Bradshaw et al., 2015; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Crick & Nelson, 2002; Gladden et al., 2014). Psychological bullying may be more difficult to detect than others forms of bullying because it is more subtle than physical bullying. Psychological bullying is particularly dangerous because adults and other students may

go along with the rumors if they think they are true or if they think the student deserves the bullying (Kuykendall, 2012).

Damage to property. Damage to another's property can be defined as "theft, alteration, or damage of the target youth's property by the perpetrator to cause harm" (Gladden et al., 2014, p. 8). This can include damaging another student's property in front of the student, taking something and not giving it back, or deleting personal electronic data (Gladden et al., 2014).

Electronic. *Cyberbullying* occurs when students use technology "deliberately and repeatedly to 'bully, harass, hassle and threaten their peers'" (Goodno, 2011, p. 641). Cyberbullying can involve the use of text messages, e-mails, and social media accounts, and is often an extension of bullying that starts in schools or communities (Kuykendall, 2012). This type of bullying may be especially dangerous to students, as it is continuous and victims are unable to escape the bullying. Researchers have argued that tackling cyberbullying is one of the biggest challenges in public schools in the United States (Goodno, 2011). Cyberbullying is similar to traditional bullying in that it still includes the power imbalance, there is an intent to inflict harm on another student, and it is repeated over time. However, cyberbullying is particularly dangerous because it tends to be anonymous and therefore students do not know who is perpetrating the abuse. Further, students are more disinhibited as cyberbullying does not involve face-to-face contact, it is more accessible because students can bully others even when not in school, and there is less reporting because victims do not want to lose their own electronic media privileges (Smit, 2015). Last, as the digital world continues to expand and grow and as students obtain access to multiple forms of electronic devices (e.g., phones, tablets, and laptops), it is crucial that researchers have a clear understanding of cyberbullying and its direct negative impact on students across the United States and the world.

Effects of Bullying

Bullying appeared in the academic literature as early as the 19th century (Burk, 1897) and historically it was viewed as commonplace or even a “rite of passage” (Hertzog, 2011, para. 4). However, in response to a Swedish phenomenon consisting of physical bullying termed “mobbing” in the 1960s and 1970s, research interest increased in the topic of peer-to-peer aggression (Harris & Petrie, 2003, p. 1). Over the last half century, there has been an emphasis on developing a more nuanced understanding of this complex construct (Koo, 2007; Olweus, 1978, 1994; P. K. Smith & Brian, 2000), leading to a broadening of the definition of bullying from simple developmentally-normative conflict to a multifaceted social interaction involving an imbalance of power between the victim and the perpetrator, the repetitive nature of the act, and the intent to inflict harm (Olweus, Limber, & Mihalic, 1999), as well as manifesting in several forms: physical, verbal, emotional, and cyberbullying (Brank, Hoetger, & Hazen, 2012).

A new national estimate is that one out of every four students will report being bullied during the school year (Zhang, Musu-Gillette, & Oudekerk, 2016). According to figures provided by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), in 2011, 18% of youth ages 12 to 18 were verbally bullied, 18% were victims of rumors being spread about them, 8% experienced direct physical bullying, 6% were intentionally excluded from social activities, and 5% experienced a physical threat (Robers, Kemp, & Truman, 2013). Other research indicated students were bullied because of their appearance (55%), body shape (37%), and race (16%; Davis & Nixon, 2010). Although the national estimates used different definitions and thus produced varying estimates, there is consistent research to indicate a considerable number of youth are bullied in the United States.

As stated previously, bullying has been identified in the literature as having many negative mental health consequences. For example, Espelage and Holt (2012) found children who were victims of bullying were 2.4 times more likely to report suicidal ideation and 3.3 times more likely to report a suicide attempt. Among the reported consequences of bullying are feelings of low self-esteem and isolation, poor academic performance, having fewer friends, having a negative view of school, experiencing psychosomatic problems (e.g., headache, stomachache, or sleeping problems), and reporting mental health problems (e.g., depression, suicidal thoughts, and anxiety; Eisenberg, Neumark-Sztainer, & Perry, 2003; Halpern, Jutte, Colby, & Boyce, 2015; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Klomek, Marrocco, Kleinman, Schonfeld, & Gould, 2007; Nansel, Craig, Overpeck, Saluja, & Ruan, 2004; O'Brennan, Bradshaw, & Sawyer, 2009). Additionally, being bullied during childhood is predictive of depression as an adult (Farrington, Loeber, Stallings, & Ttofi, 2011; Ttofi, Farrington, Lösel, & Loeber, 2011).

Furthermore, Hertz, Donato, and Wright (2013) framed bullying as a public health issue following the findings of a panel convened by the CDC to respond to increasing evidence of a link between bullying and suicide behavior. Findings indicated bullying affects both victims and perpetrators (Ttofi, Farrington, & Lösel, 2012). Those who bully are also at an increased risk for mental health problems later in adolescence and adulthood. According to the CDC (2015), perpetrators of bullying are at an increased risk for academic problems, substance use, and violent behavior in adolescence and later in life.

High-Risk Populations

Researchers maintain that certain children are more prone to being bullied than others. According to Kuykendall (2012), children who are new to a community, children who have disabilities, children with mental health disorders, children with learning disorders, and children

who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) report higher rates of bullying than other children. Children who do not have friends or who are new to a school may have difficulty breaking into the established social groups. Further, children who are of a different cultural background, who speak a different language, or who practice different customs or bring different food to class are particularly prone to bullying (Kuykendall, 2012).

Children with special needs often require medical interventions while at school. They are also at a higher risk for bullying because they may exhibit physical and behavioral differences, they may miss more school, and they may exhibit emotional distress as a result of their condition (Kuykendall, 2012). Research has shown children who have special needs are significantly more prone to bullying than are children without special needs (Van Cleave & Davis, 2006). Further, research has indicated bullying is three times higher for children with cancer and for children with speech and language problems, nine times higher for children with psychiatric problems, and 10 times higher for children with ADHD (Conti-Ramsden & Botting, 2004; Kuykendall, 2012; Lahteenmaki, Huostila, Hinkka, & Salmi, 2002; Nordhagen, Nielson, Stigum, & Kohler, 2005).

Anti-Bullying Laws in the United States

There is currently no federal law that specifically applies to bullying (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2017). However, according to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (2010), when bullying occurs because of one's "race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or religion" (p. 1), then it overlaps with harassment, and school leaders are legally obligated to report it to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights and the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division. Currently, 39 states have both anti-bullying laws and policies, whereas 11 states have anti-bullying laws only. These policies

include the mandate that educators have to intervene when protected classes of students are bullied. Hall and Chapman (2016) investigated the fidelity with which programs that address this mandate are implemented. Their findings indicated race is the most frequently addressed protected class whereas sexual orientation and gender identity are the least likely to be addressed both in terms of training and intervention (Hall & Chapman, 2016). The authors' findings are notable in that they revealed the lack of attention given to non-race-related bullying. Ultimately, it appears as though anti-bullying laws protect a designated group of students, but may not protect all students who might be bullied based on other characteristics that make them vulnerable.

Bullying Prevention Programs

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) was developed by Dan Olweus in 1983 when the Norwegian Ministry of Education initiated a national campaign against bullying in schools after three adolescent males from Norway committed suicide subsequent to being bullied by peers (Olweus & Limber, 2010). The goals of the OBPP were to reduce bullying behaviors at the school, prevent the development of new bullying behaviors, and achieve better peer relationships at the school by restructuring the school environment. Further, the OBPP was based on four key requirements for adults in the school system: (a) show warmth and positive interest in students; (b) set boundaries against unacceptable behavior; (c) provide consistent, non-physical consequences when rules were broken; and (d) serve as both role models and authorities (Olweus & Limber, 2010). The program was initiated in the First Bergen Project Against Bullying, “a longitudinal study that followed approximately 2,500 school children over a period of 2.5 years, from 1983 to 1985” (Olweus & Limber, 2010, p. 126). The results revealed that after 20 months, the rates of being

bullied reduced by 64% and rates of bullying others reduced by 52.6% (Olweus & Limber, 2010). These results were reflected in teacher ratings, and indicated bullying was reduced within the classroom as well.

The OBPP has since been implemented in the United States. The first evaluation of the OBPP in the United States was conducted in the mid-1990s (Olweus & Limber, 2010). Elementary and middle schools from six rural school districts in South Carolina participated in the study, and the sample consisted largely of African American students. The results indicated there was a 16% decrease in the number of students who stated they had bullied others, and a 12% increase in bullying rates among students in comparison schools who were not in the program (Olweus & Limber, 2010). The program was also reported to reduce other forms of antisocial behavior among students (Olweus & Limber, 2010).

Further, studies using the OBPP have been conducted in Pennsylvania, Washington, and California. The components used were similar to those of the original OBPP study. However, several adaptations were made to better fit the U.S. school context (Limber, 2011). For example, researchers found that U.S. schools used the Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee (BPCC) more so than in Norway. Schools in the United States are larger with a more complex system; therefore, the BPCC was used for coordination purposes (Limber, 2011). Teachers in the United States also had more difficulty with classroom meetings; thus, the BPCC and administrators were used to ensure these classroom meetings were still held on a consistent basis. Extra training was also provided to teachers during these classroom meetings (Limber, 2011). Last, a training DVD was developed for teachers to help them conduct meetings effectively (Limber, 2011).

The results from the OBPP revealed several changes in the rates of bullying across the United States. In Pennsylvania, bullying behaviors appeared to decrease by 45% over the course of 4 years, whereas in Washington, effects were seen among White students but no program effects were found for students of other races and ethnicities (Bauer, Lozano, & Rivara, 2007; S. A. Black & Jackson, 2007; Limber, Olweus, Breivik, & Wang, 2013). Several researchers in California also evaluated the effectiveness of the OBPP in three elementary schools. The results indicated being bullied decreased by 21% after the first year and 14% after 2 years. Self-reports of bullying others decreased by 8% after the first year and 17% after 2 years (Olweus & Limber, 2010). There was also an increase in the number of students who told their teachers about bullying behaviors (Olweus & Limber, 2010). Students stated more teachers and other adults attempted to stop the bullying, and there was an increase in the number of teachers who felt like they knew how to stop the bullying (Olweus & Limber, 2010). Additionally, several school-based bullying prevention programs, inspired by the OBPP, have been created and implemented in the United States (Eslea & Smith, 1998; P. K. Smith, Sharp, Eslea, & Thompson, 2004; Whitney, Rivers, Smith, & Sharp, 1994, as cited in Olweus & Limber, 2010). However, research into the effectiveness of these programs has yielded mixed results, which may be the result of there being more heterogeneous populations within the school systems in the United States (Olweus & Limber, 2010). Therefore, it appears as though the original OBPP is an effective program that can be used throughout Europe and the United States, whereas adaptations to the program yield mixed results across different populations.

Clemson University's Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life has worked with Olweus to disseminate the program throughout the United States. Training programs are available throughout the United States, and training courses are held at the national, state, and

local levels. More than 500 trainers in 42 states have been certified to provide trainings (Olweus & Limber, 2010). The training program consists of a 2-day course and at least one full school year (approximately 9 months) of ongoing telephone consultations, although 18 to 24 months of consultation is preferred (Clemson University, 2018). The training costs several thousand dollars for each school site (Clemson University, 2018). As of 2016, more than 600 educators had been trained and certified in the OBPP (Hazelden Foundation, 2016). Overall, although the OBPP appears to have promising results in the United States, the implementation of the program within schools appears to be expensive and time consuming for teachers and administrators. Therefore, given budgetary and other limitations, more affordable programs are needed to fill the gaps in the literature and in the implementation of these prevention programs in the United States.

Components of prevention. The OBPP includes various school-, individual-, classroom-, and community-level components that have since been implemented in the United States. Components at the school level include establishing a BPCC, conducting trainings for the BPCC and all other staff, administering the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire to students in Grades 3 through 12, holding staff discussion group meetings, introducing school rules against bullying, reviewing and refining the school's supervisory system, holding a school-wide event to launch the program, and involving parents (Olweus & Limber, 2010). The classroom-level components include posting and enforcing school-wide rules against bullying, holding weekly class meetings to discuss bullying and related topics, and holding class-level meetings with students' parents (Olweus & Limber, 2010). Individual-level components of the OBPP include supervising students' activities, ensuring all staff intervene on the spot when bullying is observed, meeting with students involved in bullying, meeting with the parents of involved students, and developing individual intervention plans for involved students (Olweus & Limber, 2010). Last,

community-level components include involving community members on the BPCC, developing school–community partnerships to support the school’s program, and helping to spread anti-bullying messages and principles of best practice in the community (Olweus & Limber, 2010). These program components, including those at the individual, school, classroom, and community levels, have largely remained unchanged, though Olweus and Limber (2010) reported that research is underway to determine which components should be modified to better fit the culture in the United States.

Effectiveness. Though this program has been used throughout the world and within the United States, the components are difficult to implement. As stated previously, the program is extremely costly and time consuming for school personnel, trainers, and parents, and may be difficult to implement on a large scale. Further, the program was first implemented in Norway, where there is a largely homogeneous population. Schools within the United States can vary greatly with regard to their level of funding, socioeconomic status of students, heterogeneity, and level of training provided to teachers. Therefore, though certain components of the program (i.e., staff training, classroom rules that are explicitly against bullying, and classroom meetings about bullying) may be useful within schools in the United States, the original program in its entirety would be difficult to implement. Last, it is important to note that though the components discussed above have been implemented in the United States, there is no individual or classroom component that addresses cultural diversity and minority groups and the negative impact of bullying on these populations. Though the OBPP is largely successful in Norway and other European countries, it is lacking a key cultural/minority component that would make it more successful in the United States.

The KiVa program. The KiVa program was developed in 2006 after the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture recruited researchers at University of Turku to develop a bullying prevention program that could be implemented in schools throughout the county. KiVa is an acronym for Kiusaamista Vastaan, which means “against bullying,” and the word kiva is a Finnish adjective that means “nice.” The focus within the KiVa program is on comprehensive school systems that provide education to students ages 7 to 15 years old (Grades 1 through 9 in the Finnish system). The first phase of the project took place between 2006 and 2009 and included program development, training school personnel, and a large-scale evaluation study. The program was then implemented on a larger scale in 2009 and 82% of schools in Finland are implementing the program (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012).

The KiVa program focuses on bystanders and how they can either maintain bullying or put an end to it, depending on their response. Salmivalli and Poskiparta (2012) postulated that rather than siding with the victim, bystanders tend to encourage bullies by providing them with social rewards. Although most children and adolescents believe bullying is wrong, this attitude is rarely expressed in public. For children who are bullied, the most painful experience may not be the one or two children who are bullying them, but the perception that a larger group is against them. Research has indicated bullying occurs more frequently when more students reinforce the bullying behavior and bystanders do not side with the victims (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012). According to the developers of the KiVa program, the key to successful and sustainable bullying intervention is influencing peer bystanders.

The goals of the KiVa program are to “put an end to ongoing bullying, prevent the emergence of new bully-victim relationships, and minimize the negative consequences of victimization” (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012, p. 44). The program uses a whole-school

approach, is implemented throughout the school year, and is meant to become a part of the school's ongoing bullying prevention efforts. More specifically, the program includes student lessons in primary school, themes containing lessons in secondary school, and virtual learning environments (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012). During the original study, three versions of the lesson were used with students in Grades 1 through 3, 4 through 5, and 7 through 9. It has since been recommended that 10 double lessons, lasting 90 minutes each, be delivered at the first and fourth grade levels (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012). The four themes are targeted in the seventh-grade level. The goal is that students will attend the lessons three times during their education, first when they enter school, then in fourth grade, and last in seventh grade (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012). The lessons are taught by teachers and include "discussion, group work, short films about bullying, and role-play exercise" (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012, p. 44). The lessons include discussions of emotions, respect with regard to relationships, group pressure, and bullying and its mechanisms and consequences. Several other lessons focus on the importance of a group in either maintaining or stopping bullying behavior (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012).

In addition to the lessons taught by teachers, each school has a KiVa team that consists of three teachers or school personnel who work with classroom teachers to tackle any bullying that comes to their attention. Teachers who are monitoring recess also wear vests to signal that bullying is taken seriously. Posters are hung throughout the school and information leaflets are sent home to parents at the beginning of the year. Further, parents receive presentation slides during back-to-school night and there is a website where parents can learn more about bullying and its prevention (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012).

Prior to the beginning of school, school personnel are given 2 days of face-to-face training and they then train others in the school about what they have learned. The KiVa program

also offers training programs online, including a discussion forum where personnel from various schools can discuss their comments and concerns regarding the program implementation.

Students and staff are also asked to take an annual survey regarding the prevalence of bullying and the level of the program implementation. School leaders are then able to compare progress from previous years. In 2010, the program organized biannual KiVa days, a 2-day conference where schools could get up to date information on KiVa's research, participate in training, and share their experiences (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012).

The results of the program evaluation were mixed. In a randomized control trial, the KiVa program significantly reduced bullying and victimization at the primary school levels (i.e., 1 through 6). In Grades 7 through 8, the results were mixed and researchers discovered larger effects in classrooms with higher proportions of boys (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012). Overall, they discovered students in the control group were 1.3 times more likely to be a victim or a bully than those in the KiVa intervention groups. After KiVa was disseminated to a broad range of schools, they again found that the effects on bullying and victimization were smaller overall, and the program was most successful in Grade 4 and least successful in middle school. These effects were maintained after one school year (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012).

The KiVa program has been shown to increase school liking, academic motivation, and academic performance. It also has been shown to reduce internalizing problems and negative peer perceptions, and to increase empathy, self-efficacy to defend peers, and constructive bystander behaviors. Students are shown to play the KiVa game online both in and outside of school. When KiVa teams were involved and facilitated discussions, 98% led to improvement of the victim's situation and bullying stopped in 86% of the cases. Overall, this indicates that when

teachers become involved when students report bullying, the bullying behavior can be reduced significantly (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012).

Components of prevention. The KiVa program is based on the notion that bullying is a group phenomenon, as there is long-standing research to support that bullying behaviors are either positively or negatively affected by others in a group depending on whether the group encourages or discourages the bullying (Salmivalli, Karna, & Poskiparta, 2011). Therefore, the main component of the program focuses on bystander behavior as a way to combat bullying in schools. The other main component used in the KiVa program is that the program is implemented throughout the year and builds as students enter secondary school.

The community components involve sending information leaflets to parents, a presentation on back-to-school night, and a website where parents can read more about bullying, its effects, and prevention strategies. School components include KiVa teams who work with individual teachers when they see bullying, posters that are hung around the school at the beginning of the year, and teachers who monitor recess wear vests so students know the teachers are watching for any bullying behavior. School teachers and personnel are provided with training both face-to-face and online, and can attend biannual conferences to learn more about the research and training. Each school should also have one person who is in charge of the implementation of KiVa who understands the program and can coordinate its implementation (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012). Teachers and students are also asked to complete annual surveys about bullying and the implementation of the KiVa program. Classroom-level components include 10 lessons that are taught by teachers throughout the school year. Lessons can include role-plays, group work, discussions about emotion and respect, and the role of groups in either maintaining or putting an end to bullying. Last, individual components include

discussions with the victim and the bully regarding the bullying behavior. This also includes involving several other students who can encourage and support the victim (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012).

Effectiveness. The whole-school approach has been used throughout a multitude of bullying programs and appears to be one component that is effective at reducing bullying. It is an interesting approach, in that children are taught from the moment they enter school about the KiVa program and their school's effort to combat bullying. However, it is important to note that the original study used virtual learning to teach students about the effects of bullying. This component, while innovative, may be challenging to implement in the United States. Public schools within the United States have a wide variety of budgetary restrictions, making it difficult for some to obtain these virtual learning tools. However, the KiVa program does take it one step further by acknowledging the effect bystanders can have on a bully. If bystanders encourage a bully, either by verbal or nonverbal signs of encouragement, this makes the imbalance of power between the bully and victim even stronger. Therefore, though the KiVa program, like the OBPP, does not include a component on minority groups, it does acknowledge the impact that bystanders can have on bullying, which is a necessary component when combating bullying.

Empathy Training Program. Sahin (2012) looked at the effectiveness of empathy training on bullying with sixth graders in Trabzon, Turkey. Previous research showed mixed results regarding empathy training and bullying behavior, with some researchers finding that empathy training increases bullying behaviors and others indicating that empathy has a positive impact on reducing bullying behaviors. Empathy can be defined as having both a cognitive and affective reaction, in which a person has the ability to be aware of another's thoughts and feelings and is able to understand another's feelings (Barnett, 1990, as cited in Sahin, 2012;

Bernadett-Shapiro, Efremsaft, & Shapiro, 1996, as cited in Sahin, 2012; Borke, 1971; Feshbach & Roe, 1968; Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972). Though researchers argue that empathy cannot be taught, empathic potential can become more developed through training (Tanridag, 1992, as cited in Sahin, 2012).

Sahin (2012) studied the effectiveness of empathy training on bullying behaviors. This particular study was unique because Sahin used a true experimental design, with a pretest for the experimental and control groups, a posttest, and a follow-up. Sixth grade students were given the Scale of Identifying Bully and Victim/Child forms and 82 students were found to exhibit bullying behaviors. These students were then given the Empathy Index for Children, and 38 volunteer students were then included in the study. Students were then separated into the experimental and control groups. The experimental groups were exposed to the empathy training program, which was composed of a total of 11 sessions lasting 75 minutes each. The control groups were given 30-minute discussion sessions over a period of 11 weeks to exchange ideas on daily issues. The training program used didactic, experimental, role-play, and modeling techniques. Students were also given homework to complete and each week had a different theme and slogan. During the first half of the sessions, students were taught about empathy and states of emotion. They were given homework, asked to draw sketches of their own emotions and to discuss the emotions of others, and to listen to music and asked what they thought about the composers. In the latter half, they were given a lecture on the awareness of others' desires, needs, wants, feelings, and thoughts. They read poems, were asked to write about how they perceived their parents' warnings and advice, discussed effective communication styles, were given seminars about empathic responding, and were asked to narrate another student's feelings

and content based on an experience the other student narrated. In the final session, they were asked to evaluate the empathic training program (Sahin, 2012).

The results indicated the intervention group displayed significant decreases in bullying behavior as a result of the empathy training program, whereas there was no change in the control groups. The results also showed the program made a positive impact on the development of empathic skills of students who were identified as bullies (Sahin, 2012). The change was still significant in the 60-day follow-up questionnaire, these empathic skills were seen in the children in the experimental group after the program was applied (Sahin, 2012). Further, this study supports previous literature that showed a negative relationship between bullying and empathy (Sahin, 2012). Sahin (2012) recommended that empathy training be incorporated into bullying prevention programs. Last, in-service training and instruction on social skills and anger management should be introduced to teachers in order to increase their knowledge (Sahin, 2012). Overall, the Empathy Training Program showed promising results, and may be effective at reducing some bullying behaviors in schools.

Components of prevention. School components included several questionnaires that students completed to identify bullying and their level of empathy. Classroom components included small group discussions to teach students about empathy. Students were given homework, listened to music and drew sketches of emotions, discussed effective communication, and role-played where they were asked to identify other students' feelings. The group discussions lasted for 11 weeks and each session was 75 minutes. Community components involved the students' doing home assignments in which they were asked to write down how they perceived their parents' warnings or advice (Sahin, 2012). Additional home assignments involved writing down how they perceived problematic actions in the classroom. Last, in this

study, a group leader provided a discussion on the flow of empathic information and facilitated the group. In future studies, where this is applied to actual classrooms, it is assumed that the teacher will be the group leader for these 11-week discussions.

Effectiveness. The Empathy Training Program, like the KiVa program, takes a unique approach to bullying and uses empathy training as a way to combat bullying. This small group component to prevention is particularly unique, because though students learn about empathy, they are not taught explicitly about bullying. However, this component may be effective at combating bullying behavior.

Sahin (2012) suggested bullying prevention in schools should include an empathy training dimension and believed in-service teacher training on empathy, social skills, and anger management should be provided to teachers in order to improve their skills and knowledge on the issue. However, though the program was effective at reducing bullying in Turkey, it has not yet been replicated in the United States. Further, though the study yielded promising results and used a true experimental design, the small sample of only 38 students limited its generalizability. Finally, the Empathy Training Program did reduce bullying in the experimental group, but a larger study must be conducted to determine whether the findings can be replicated.

SEL program. In conjunction with the empathy training model, the social emotional learning (SEL) model is a structural approach to help increase students' range of social and emotional competencies in order to reduce bullying behaviors. Researchers of this model claim the social-ecological framework is "the most validated heuristic model for understanding and preventing bullying perpetration and victimization" and highlights the importance of "reciprocal, dynamic influences on bullying behaviors from individuals, families, schools, peer groups, communities, and the larger society" (B. H. Smith & Low, 2013, p. 280). Previous research

indicated the SEL provides schools with an approach that builds skills and promotes individual and peer attitudes that can help prevent bullying. It has also been shown to reduce disciplinary referrals, arrests, the amount of time in special education, school absences, and aggressive behavior, and it has increased graduation rates, academic achievement, self-efficacy, and prosocial skills (B. H. Smith & Low, 2013).

B. H. Smith and Low (2013) defined *empathy* as being able to “identify, understand, and respond to how someone is feeling” (p. 282) and claimed that empathy may play a direct role in reducing bullying by increasing acceptance and tolerance of other children. Empathic concern toward others may also make students more likely to intervene when they see someone else being bullied. The focus within the SEL program is on teaching students about *perspective taking*, defined as a cognitive process of understanding what another student is experiencing without having to feel the same emotion (B. H. Smith & Low, 2013). The SEL program is designed to improve perspective taking skills by teaching students that others may have different feelings and by asking them to practice putting themselves in others’ shoes. Teachers can also help their students by asking them to talk and read about feelings and others’ emotions. They can also assist students by helping them consider what other students may be thinking or feeling during conflicts.

Students are also taught to increase their emotion regulation skills during the SEL program. Students are further taught to manage strong emotions such as “anger, embarrassment, anxiety, fear, and jealousy,” which can improve their ability to use coping strategies and positive self-talk in order to avoid responding in ways that will make them a target of continued victimization (B. H. Smith & Low, 2013, p. 282). Emotion management also helps students engage in socially appropriate ways to gain more friends and social skills, and enables them to

use problem-solving skills in challenging situations. Teachers can help students practice their skills so they are ready to face emotionally challenging situations.

SEL also involves increasing students' social problem-solving skills, as researchers have found low social problem-solving skills to be a predictor of involvement in bullying (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010; B. H. Smith & Low, 2013). Children who are aggressive and bully other students tend to misread social cues and see others as more aggressive than they really are. Students who are bullied also may lack social problem-solving skills, which may impair their ability to effectively respond when they are being bullied. If students are able to use their social problem-solving skills, conflicts may be de-escalated 13 times more effectively than if they used aggressive and retaliatory behaviors (B. H. Smith & Low, 2013). Many programs that use SEL provide posters for classrooms that teachers can use to help their students remember how to use these skills (B. H. Smith & Low, 2013).

The final aspect to SEL is social competence. Research has indicated an increase in friendships and social support decreases student victimization (B. H. Smith & Low, 2013). Students who have at least one friend have been shown to be less bullied by their peers and are better able to cope with situations when they are bullied. Assertiveness is commonly taught in SEL programs to help students learn how to respond appropriately when they are bullied. It has also been shown to reduce bystander behavior because students are better able to intervene and state when they do not approve of a certain behavior (B. H. Smith & Low, 2013). Structured lessons are used to teach students the differences between passive, aggressive, and assertive behaviors. Teachers then assist students in practicing how to use assertive behaviors in the classroom. Finally, students are taught communication skills they can use to ask to join groups

and to treat peers respectfully. Teachers are expected to provide lessons on these skills and to teach their students how to use these skills throughout the day.

Components to prevention. The SEL program also uses both a whole-school and classroom approach when implementing the bullying prevention program. Classroom approaches include structured lessons on a variety of topics, including empathy, emotion management, social problem-solving, and social competence. Components that should be used to complement SEL are school-based rules and policies, improved supervision of students, and staff training to improve awareness when bullying does occur (Farrington & Ttofi, 2009; Bradshaw, Waasdorop, O’Brennan, Gulemetova, & Henderson, 2001, as cited in B. H. Smith & Low, 2013).

Effectiveness. It is important to note that previous meta-analyses have shown the SEL program by itself is not sufficient in reducing bullying, but should be used as a component in whole-school interventions. According to B. H. Smith and Low (2013), school-based bullying prevention programs that include SEL should also include bullying-related school rules, increased supervision of students, and staff training to increase staff intervention. This is in line with previous programs, such as the Empathy Training Program, that implemented an empathy training approach to bullying. SEL is delivered through lessons within the classroom. In order for SEL to be effective, teachers must ensure students both learn and use SEL skills and reinforce them when they do. Though this appeared to be effective, it may be difficult to monitor whether teachers are actually teaching and reinforcing these SEL skills. Ultimately, though the SEL program appears to be an important aspect of effective bullying prevention, it is not a solution by itself, and it must be implemented in conjunction with another bullying prevention program.

Steps to Respect program. The Steps to Respect (STR) program is based on the social-ecological model of bullying, “which views youth behavior as shaped by multiple factors within

nested contextual systems” (Committee for Children, 2001, as cited in E. C. Brown, Low, Smith, & Haggerty, 2011, p. 425). The underlying theory behind the STR program is that peers play an important role in both maintaining and combating bullying behavior (E. C. Brown et al., 2011). The program is designed to change students’ attitudes surrounding bullying through “clearly labeling bullying behavior as unfair and wrong, increasing empathy for students who are bullied, and educating students about their responsibilities as bystanders to bullying” (E. C. Brown et al., 2011, p. 425). The program was originally designed to be implemented over three consecutive years. Evaluations of previous STR programs indicated students who participated in the programs demonstrated less acceptance of bullying and a greater responsibility among bystanders (E. C. Brown et al., 2011; Frey, Hirschstein, Edstrom, & Snell, 2009). Students also saw increased adult responsiveness and a lesser increase in physical and relational forms of bullying than the control group (E. C. Brown et al., 2011; Frey et al., 2005; Low, Frey, & Brockman, 2010). Further, previous evaluations showed a reduction in relational aggression was limited to only those with supportive friends (E. C. Brown et al., 2011).

More current research implemented the program on a larger scale, using 33 elementary schools in California (E. C. Brown et al., 2011). There was a 1-day training provided to staff; 11 lessons on social-emotional skills, emotion management, and recognizing, refusing, and reporting bullying were implemented in the classroom; and parents were given take home letters that described the classroom curriculum. Teachers also completed a Program Implementation Log to keep track of the lessons implemented. Pretest measures indicated African American students reported higher rates of school bullying-related problems and more bullying perpetration than White students. Students of other minority groups also reported higher rates of bullying and low levels of school connectedness and teacher interventions than White students.

In addition, Hispanic students reported higher levels of bullying perpetration than non-Hispanics, and bystanders, teachers, and staff were less likely to intervene when students were being bullied. Students also reported higher rates of bullying among males than females. These higher rates of bullying among African American, Hispanic, and other minority students, as well as the higher rates of bullying among males rather than females, were all consistent with previous studies (E. C. Brown et al., 2011).

The results of the study indicated greater increases in school anti-bullying policies and strategies and a more positive student and staff climate. Students were more inclined to intervene when others were being bullied and there was an overall decrease in school bullying (E. C. Brown et al., 2011). Students reported teachers and staff were more likely to continue the bully prevention program throughout the year and were more likely to intervene when bullying occurred (E. C. Brown et al., 2011). Further, this study coincides with previous research, which indicated programs are most effective when the intervention occurs within multiple levels and includes individual and school components (E. C. Brown et al., 2011). Overall, the STR program was successful in reducing bullying behaviors and results supported previous research on the program's effectiveness. Research is needed to continue to monitor the long-term effects of the STR program on combating bullying behavior in schools.

Components to prevention. The program's success is likely because, like the OBPP, it uses a multilevel approach to stop bullying. Specifically, the STR targets school, classroom, peer, and individual components. At the school level, staff and teachers are provided with an on-site, 1-day training. In addition, school leaders are typically provided with program materials to train their own staff. All staff receive a 3-hour training on program goals and features of program content. Teachers, counselors, and administrators can receive an additional 1.5-hour training on

how to help students who are involved in negative bullying behavior. E. C. Brown et al. (2011) also provided third through sixth grade teachers a 2-hour overview of classroom materials and lesson instructional strategies, as the focus in their study was on that age group. The goal at the school level is to increase the willingness of staff to intervene in bullying, improve school norms regarding bullying, and provide coaching to students who are either the bully or being bullied (E. C. Brown et al., 2011). At the classroom level, students are provided with semi-structured lessons on topics such as friendship and social skills, assertiveness and bullying refusal skills, emotion management skills, help seeking skills, positive bystander behaviors, empathy, and bullying awareness (E. C. Brown et al., 2011). At the peer level, the goal of the program is to increase positive bystander behavior, decrease support for bullying, increase the willingness to intervene in bullying, increase the willingness to support students who are bullied, and increase reports of bullying. On the individual level, the goals are to improve social competence, increase social connections, decrease peer rejection, and decrease vulnerability (E. C. Brown et al., 2011). Last, parents are given letters regarding the new classroom curriculum and skills their children will be taught, and they are encouraged to support these new skills at home.

Effectiveness. The STR program is a step forward on the long road toward a more effective bullying prevention program, as it uses a multilevel approach to bullying, like the OBPP, while also incorporating aspects of empathy and respect, much like the Empathy Training Program. However, the program still fails to look at bullying through a social justice lens. Though E. C. Brown et al. (2011) indicated there were higher levels of bullying across minority groups and among males rather than females, the researchers stated these differences were “not central to aims of the current study” (p. 440), hence indicating these differences were not taken into consideration when designing this program. It is noteworthy that the STR program includes

classroom topics such as empathy and social skills, but does not include a discussion of culture and its connection to bullying.

Effectiveness of Bullying Prevention Programs

There are a number of bullying prevention programs, including, but not limited to, the OBPP, the KiVa program, the Empathy Training Program, the SEL program, and the STR program, that vary in their overall effectiveness. Though the OBPP and the KiVa program are more widely used throughout Europe and the United States, aspects of the other programs, namely empathy and social skills, can be effective at reducing bullying in schools. Further, the above programs have similarities and differences in the components they use and vary in the way in which the programs are evaluated. The meta-analyses presented in this section were conducted to take a more in-depth look into the effectiveness of bullying prevention programs and their components.

Several researchers have completed meta-analyses into the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs among the student population, with mixed results (Ferguson, San Miguel, Kilburn, & Sanchez, 2007). One meta-analysis showed certain program elements, including parent training/meetings, disciplinary methods, and playground supervision, were the most important elements of a bullying prevention program (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). Ttofi and Farrington (2011) also discovered that programs influenced by the OBPP were the most successful at decreasing bullying behaviors among students, and the most important program elements that resulted in a decrease in victimization were disciplinary methods and bullying videos (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). Further, the intensity and duration of the program for both students and teachers were associated with a significant decrease in victimization (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). Ttofi and Farrington found that consistently, programs that included the formal engagement of

peers in tackling bullying resulted in an increase in victimization. Their study was congruent with previous research, which showed that programs involving delinquent peers caused an increase in offending behaviors (Dishion, McCord, & Poulin, 1999; Dodge, Dishion, & Lansford, 2006; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). This was consistent with the results reported by Ferguson et al. (2007), who suggested bullying is more “advantageous to bullies than is non-bullying” (p. 411) and stated that because bullies or violent children do not see the benefits of following a program, they simply ignore it. They further discovered that child skills training, which includes teaching children various social skills and interaction skills, was effective at reducing bullying behavior (Losel & Beelmann, 2003; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). Overall, Ttofi and Farrington concluded bullying programs reduced bullying by 20% to 23% and victimization by 17% to 20%, and suggested future programs focus on child skills training.

Though Ttofi and Farrington (2011) found bullying prevention programs to be effective at reducing both bullying and victimization, Ferguson et al. (2007) used different statistical methods in conducting their meta-analysis, and discovered the effect size for the bullying prevention programs was very small. This may be because the researchers focused on the strength of the effect size rather than statistical significance. The findings support that the impact of anti-bullying programs ranged from less than 1% for low-risk children to 3.6% for high-risk children (Ferguson et al., 2007). The researchers suggested these prevention programs may be ineffective because antisocial and violent behavior involve both “genetic as well as nongenetic causal influences” (p. 411), and a phenomenon that is biologically based may be more resistant to behavioral interventions. Further, it is important that researchers are aware of the biological bases if that intervention is to succeed (Ferguson et al., 2007). Ultimately, the findings from this meta-analysis indicated that although bullying prevention programs produce an effect that is

statistically significant, the programs are not practical, and may provide readers with misleading information and lead to defective policies (Ferguson et al., 2007). This supports the need for additional research to improve the practicality and overall effectiveness of these programs among students.

Research shows that bullying prevention programs are more effective with children age 11 or older (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). This may be because older children have “superior cognitive abilities, decreasing impulsiveness, and increasing likelihood of making rational decisions” (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011, pp. 46-47). Researchers further explained that effective bullying prevention programs are based on social learning theories that include “encouraging and rewarding prosocial behavior and discouraging and punishing bullying” (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011, p. 47). In addition, bullying across time appears to be relatively stable, as research indicates bullying increases in childhood and peaks during early or middle adolescence (i.e., Grades 6 through 10; Nocentini, Menesini, & Salmivalli, 2013). Initial bullying behavior is usually based on gender, trait aggression, or a need for social dominance, although bullying increases the most over time with students who are competing for social dominance (Nocentini et al., 2013). As such, it is important that programs are provided at the middle school and high school levels because they are not only more effective for older children, but adolescence is also the age when bullying behavior peaks.

There is limited research on the effectiveness of bullying prevention programs with bystanders. A *bystander* is defined as an “individual who lacks participation in bullying scenarios as either the bully or victim. The bystander may actively intervene to stop the bully, encourage the bully to continue, or view bullying passively” (J. R. Polanin, Espelage, & Pigott, 2012, p. 49). J. R. Polanin et al. (2012) conducted a meta-analysis to measure the effectiveness of

school-based programs that focused on bystander intervention behavior. The results of their meta-analysis indicated bystander intervention programs resulted in a greater reduction in bullying. However, they also discovered that the intervention programs did not have an effect on empathy for the victim (J. R. Polanin et al., 2012). The researchers suggested programs are more effective when they explicitly target bystanders' attitudes and behaviors, and when there is ample teacher and adult support (J. R. Polanin et al., 2012). Future bullying prevention programs should include the bystander construct, as it appears as though bystander behavior has a positive impact on bullying.

Overall, various components of bullying prevention programs, including parent trainings, disciplinary methods, additional playground supervision, child skills training (i.e., social skills training), and bullying prevention videos, appear to decrease bullying in schools. In addition, bullying prevention programs that include bystander interventions have resulted in a decrease in bullying. However, other studies have shown that bullying prevention programs do not have as big of an impact as researchers had hoped. Further, formal engagement with peers who are involved in bullying (i.e., bullies, victims, or bystanders) has been shown to result in an increase in victimization, and research indicates bystander intervention programs did not have an impact on student empathy toward victims of bullying (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). Therefore, though it is clear that various components of bullying prevention programs are more effective than others, the overall effect size of these programs is small. As such, it is imperative that future research continue to focus on identifying components that have a greater impact on bullying behavior.

Meta-analyses indicated the school system also plays an important role in the implementation of bullying prevention programs. Ttofi and Farrington (2011) discovered that there is little U.S. literature on bullying, and most U.S. studies focused on school violence and

peer victimization. Therefore, the researchers focused their meta-analysis on the effectiveness of school-based bullying prevention programs on bullying behaviors. They discovered that when programs included parent trainings/meetings, improved playground supervision, classroom management, disciplinary action, classroom rules, school conferences, information for parents, and a whole-school anti-bullying policy, there was a decrease in bullying behavior (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). More specifically, playground supervision was one of the elements most strongly related to the decrease in bullying. Ttofi and Farrington suggested that through the reorganization of the playground and the identification of bullying “hot spots,” school leaders can decrease bullying behaviors. It is also a “low-cost intervention component” (p. 45) that is relatively easy to implement on a daily basis. In addition, firm disciplinary action, including serious talks with bullies, sending them to the principal, making them stay close to teachers during recess, and depriving them of privileges, was related to significant declines in bullying and victimization (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). This coincides with findings related to the OBPP that indicated components of the program are effective at reducing bullying behavior (Olweus & Limber, 2010).

However, school leaders must be willing to create and enforce these firm disciplinary actions in order for them to be effective. The discovery that more intensive programs are more effective (Olweus & Limber, 2010) is in line with Ttofi and Farrington’s (2011) meta-analysis, which also revealed a positive relationship between the number of components of a program and the effect on bullying. Such results directly affect the school system because programs need to be intensive and long-lasting in order to have an effect on bullying, but these programs are rigorous for the school body and tend to be expensive to implement. School systems that use firm disciplinary action, additional playground supervision, and more intensive bullying programs

tend to be more effective at reducing bullying and victimization. More research is required related to understanding how to implement these programs in schools.

As previously mentioned, J. R. Polanin et al. (2012) discovered through their meta-analytic research of bullying prevention that bystander intervention programs are effective at reducing bullying in schools. These researchers suggested “state and national bullying legislation should implement and evaluate programs that address bullying behaviors as a group process” (J. R. Polanin et al., 2012, p. 61). They further proposed that “prevention frameworks and programs that attempt to abate bullying within schools are increasingly emphasizing changes in school climate that desist reinforcing bystander behavior or bullying perpetration” (J. R. Polanin et al., 2012, p. 61). The authors recommended that leaders of school systems provide students with the opportunity to practice bystander intervention through role-plays (J. R. Polanin et al., 2012). They further recommended that school leaders consistently encourage students to adopt prosocial bystander behaviors and provide students with ample adult and administrative support (J. R. Polanin et al., 2012). Ultimately, this particular meta-analysis provided additional information on the positive impact of school-based bullying prevention programs on those who bully, those who are bullied, and those who are bystanders.

Research supports that it may be more challenging to design effective bullying prevention programs in the United States in light of the population’s heterogeneity (Evans et al., 2014). According to Evans et al. (2014), “These elevated rates of U.S. poverty complicate both design and implementation of bullying prevention programs” (p. 539). According to the authors, effective programs, such as the OBPP, cost several thousand dollars for participating schools. Schools that are in lower socioeconomic communities may not have the resources necessary to implement an effective bullying prevention program.

As stated prior, a majority of the studies that reported significant decreases in bullying perpetration or victimization had “relatively homogenous samples,” whereas studies that reported nonsignificant effects had samples that were more heterogeneous (Evans et al., 2014, p. 540). In order for programs to be effective, they must be culturally sensitive (Evans et al., 2014). Bullying prevention programs, in general, need to encompass more culturally diverse settings in order to address the heterogeneous factors present in the United States. More specifically, “Little is known about whether or how a youth’s ethnicity may influence bullying victimization and perpetration” within the United States (Connell, El Sayed, Reingle Gonzalez, & Schell-Busey, 2015, p. 807). This indicates that additional research on how race/ethnicity and other diversity factors influence bullying behaviors and victimization is needed. Studies with a focus on diversity factors and bullying revealed a significant relationship. For example, one study involved immigration in 11 countries and the results showed bullying victimization was the highest in first generation U.S. girls (18.1%; S. D. Walsh et al., 2016). In addition, immigrant school composition was positively related to physical fighting and bullying for immigrant and nonimmigrant students (S. D. Walsh et al., 2016). Further, research indicates LGBTQ youth are at an increased risk for peer victimization (Gayles & Garofalo, 2012). Overall, these studies support that race/ethnicity, LGBTQ affiliation, and immigration/acclimation factors may play a role in school bullying within the United States, and further research into the role of such factors in prevention is required.

Social Justice

School systems play an integral role in the effective implementation of a bullying prevention program, making it necessary that they teach children about social justice and its impact at an early age. According to the APA, “A supportive, organized, and predictable school

climate is a powerful tool for social justice within public schools, as a positive school climate benefits every student, regardless of race, sex, level of ability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or SES” (as cited in Bosworth, Orpinas, & Hein, 2009, p. 231), and all students must feel safe and valued in order to maximize their learning within the school system. If children are taught the importance of social justice at an early age, disparities within the classroom will decrease, and a positive school climate will increase. According to Bosworth et al. (2009), “A free public education is a powerful tool for social justice. For some students, school may provide the only alternative to violence, drug use, and other destructive behaviors experienced in the community” (p. 230). School climates are a social justice imperative because they have the potential to create a positive educational and social climate, which is especially important to children living in impoverished neighborhoods (Bosworth et al., 2009). School leaders have a responsibility to teach students the importance of social justice at an early age in order to create a positive school environment and to reduce bullying. Social justice can be integrated into the whole-school component of already developed bullying prevention programs.

Over 2,500 years ago, Plato asked, “What is justice,” and since then political philosophers have engaged in debate about what makes a society just (B. Jackson, 2005). It was only in the 19th century that the phrase “social justice” was originally introduced, reflecting a growing controversy about the role people play in maintaining social justice in society (B. Jackson, 2005). The focus on society as a whole placed the efforts toward achieving social justice in the realm of political discourse. To date, *social justice* is defined as:

Full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is

equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. (Bell, 1997, as cited in M. Polanin & Vera, 2013, p. 304)

Though social justice proponents typically use the term *social resources* to describe economic goods and their distribution, researchers have argued that social justice also involves resources that are non-economic goods, including self-esteem, resilience, and other protective factors (Kenny et al., 2009). Allowing every member of society an equal opportunity to acquire psychological goods is also a form of social justice, and this idea plays a vital role in justice-oriented professions (Kenny et al., 2009). Clinical psychologists, for example, can play a significant part in community-level interventions because the goal of psychology is to assist clients in making an enduring change for themselves and the society around them (Kenny et al., 2009). However, though it is clear that the term social justice has expanded to include equal opportunity for psychological goods, the prominence of social justice-oriented prevention in the field of psychology has fluctuated over the years (Kenny et al., 2009).

Vasquez (2012) stated in her APA Presidential address that the definition of social justice is “fairness; it implies behaving toward others in an impartial manner, with the goal of treating others equally” (p. 338). According to the APA (2010) *Code of Ethics*, General Principle D, “Psychologists recognize that fairness and justice entitle all persons to access to and benefit from the contributions of psychologists and to equal quality in the processes, procedures, and services being conducted by psychologists” (para. 5). Though the concept of social justice began as a political concept, it has since been expanded into other areas, including psychology. Therefore, it is imperative that clinical psychologists take a closer look at the definition of social justice and how it applies to treatment.

Bullying as a Social Justice Problem

Researchers have recently conceptualized bullying as a social justice issue. They argue that bullying, which is defined by an imbalance of power between bully and victim, is an example of social injustice in society (M. Polanin & Vera, 2013). More specifically, M. Polanin and Vera (2013) looked at the relationships among bullying, social justice, and culture-based intolerance and recommended that professionals assist students in building an awareness and understanding of injustice while fostering openness and understanding among all cultures. When students combine perceived power with prejudicial attitudes toward others from a different cultural group, this can be viewed as *cultural bullying*. Children in schools may be excluded or bullied based on their race, religion, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status, and this represents a form of social injustice. M. Polanin and Vera further posited that bullying intervention techniques should be aimed at reducing prejudices in order to improve the relationships among students and reduce bullying behaviors and further recommended that multicultural themes be added into the everyday class curriculum. As previously stated, some students are subjected to more bullying than others, and it is important to look at which students are more subject to bullying than others, particularly in the United States, in order to properly address this injustice and create a more inclusive bullying prevention program.

Social justice is based on the notion that every person has a right to be safe and secure within society (M. Polanin & Vera, 2013). However, students who are bullied at school no longer feel safe within their school community, which is a direct violation of their right to social justice. Halpern et al. (2015) argued that professionals have a moral responsibility to protect children in the school system from being bullied. The researchers claimed:

Case and state law establish that society holds special responsibility for harm done to prisoners when inadequate supervision and other shortages fail to prevent harm. We believe that society has this same fiduciary obligation to children, an obligation created through a combination of conscription and dependency. (Halpern et al., 2015, p. 26)

Furthermore, the authors claimed that school leaders have an inherent moral responsibility to protect children's well-being, to protect them from harm, and to provide a space where children can develop a sense of self-respect.

As stated previously, M. B. Greene (2006) took a human rights approach to bullying and bullying prevention. A human rights perspective addresses both bias-based bullying behavior along with bullying that is not otherwise motivated by bias. *Bias-based bullying* can be defined as attacks that are motivated by a victim's membership in a legally protected class, and *harassment* toward a protected class is considered to be a civil rights violation. M. B. Greene also argued that if schools adopted a human rights framework, bullying prevention programs would be more effective. This is consistent with Olweus's position that it is a child's fundamental right to feel safe at school, and every child should be spared the humiliation of being victimized or bullied (Olweus, 2001, as cited in M. B. Greene, 2006). Many times, children are bullied because of their race, sexual orientation, disability, or religion, which is a violation of their human rights. According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the education of a child should focus on "the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" (UN General Assembly, 1989, as cited in M. B. Greene, 2006, p. 70). Bullying causes unjust harm or distress, and therefore there is little doubt that the child's welfare is being threatened in a way that violates the protections stated in the Convention. It has been suggested that schools must use a human rights approach when implementing bullying

prevention programs (M. B. Greene, 2006). Ultimately, this indicates bullying is a social justice issue and there is a need for additional research into the types of effective bullying prevention programs that use this approach.

Race/ethnicity. Though previous research primarily focused on various individual, classroom, and whole-school components that may be effective at combating bullying, more recent research has included a focus on the intersection between bullying and race/ethnicity. Unfortunately, the research in this area is somewhat conflicting. Some previous research indicated African American students are bullied less than Caucasian or Hispanic students (S. Fisher et al., 2015; Nansel et al., 2001; Spriggs, Ionnatti, Nansel, & Haynie, 2007). Other studies have shown that Caucasian and African American students are bullied more often than Hispanic youth (S. Fisher et al., 2015; Hanish & Guerra, 2000). This inconsistency indicates that though students experience “race-based” bullying, race and ethnicity alone may not be the sole reason for bullying behavior, and other individual and group factors are also involved (S. Fisher et al., 2015, p. 1242; Vervoort, Scholte, & Overbeek, 2010). However, though there is inconsistency in the literature as to who experiences more racially-based bullying, the research shows that racially-biased bullying does exist and school leaders need to better address this type of bullying.

Cardoso, Szlyk, Goldbach, Swank, and Zvolensky (2017) investigated the impact of “ethnically-biased” bullying on Latino students in North Carolina (p. 1). The Latino population is the largest minority group in the United States and recent immigration has resulted in “unprecedented growth” in states that previously had fewer Latino residents (Cardoso et al., 2017, p. 2). Previous research indicated minority youth are more subject to bullying compared to non-minority students, yet the results of such studies remain inconsistent. This study in particular looked at racial bullying and its impact on depression, suicidal ideation, and substance use

among middle and high school students North Carolina because the state is one that has seen exponential growth in the Latino population when it previously had fewer residents. Further, the researchers applied a risk-centered framework to their study as the Latino population has a high prevalence of depression symptoms, suicidality, and substance use. This is particularly true for students who are U.S.-born compared to foreign-born youth (Cardoso et al., 2017).

In this particular study, Cardoso et al. (2017) asked 534 students who identified as Latino to fill out a survey regarding various types of bullying, including ethnic-biased bullying. Students were also given questionnaires regarding depression, suicidal ideation, and substance use. Of the students, 70.8% were born in the United States, 11.6% in Mexico, 11% in Central America, 3.6% in South America, and 3.0% in another country or a region that was not mentioned (Cardoso et al., 2017). The results indicated ethnically-biased and verbal and relational bullying were associated with depression, whereas general and physical bullying were not. This was consistent with previous findings that showed ethnically-biased bullying was associated with greater mental health problems (Cardoso et al., 2017; Russell, Sinclair, Poteat, & Koenig, 2012). Additionally, ethnically-biased and verbal or relational bullying were found to be indirectly related to suicidal ideation through clinical depression. This again was consistent with previous research (Cardoso et al., 2017). Further, the results were consistent with those of previous studies as ethnically-biased and verbal and relational bullying had significant indirect effects on both alcohol and drug use. The study also revealed marginally significant effects between the students' nativity, depression, and ethnically-biased bullying. This study showed how ethnically-biased bullying can have a direct negative impact on a student's mental health and overall well-being, both inside and outside of school.

Though there is little research on the ethnically-biased bullying of Latino students, there are even less data on Asian American students. Asian American students are often overlooked in light of their overall higher academic achievement and generally high household income. However, previous research has shown the discrimination of Asian American students stems from “linguistic differences, high levels of academic achievement, perceptions of teacher favoritism, and other stereotypes of Asian American students” (Cooc & Gee, 2014, p. 840; Qin, Way, & Rana, 2008; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004; Way, Santos, Niwa, & Kim-Gervey, 2008). Additionally, previous research has indicated Asian American students report higher levels of peer discrimination, such as name-calling and exclusion from social activities as a result of their race (Alvarez, Juang, & Liang, 2006; Cooc & Gee, 2014; C. B. Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000; M. L. Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006; Qin et al., 2008; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). Peer discrimination of Asian American students has been linked to poor psychological and social outcomes, including lower self-esteem, increased depression and stress, and lower feelings of general well-being (Cooc & Gee, 2014; M. L. Greene et al., 2006; Grossman & Liang, 2008; Juang & Cookston, 2009; Liang, Grossman, & Deguchi, 2007). Further, results of one study showed that Chinese American students are often teased about their physical size and strength, which can contribute to social avoidance, fear and distrust of school, feelings of powerlessness, and frustration surrounding their peers who are unable to fight back (Niwa, Way, Okazaki, & Qin, 2011, as cited in Cooc & Gee, 2014).

Cooc and Gee (2014) expanded on the previous research and looked at the trends of victimization of Asian American students from 2001 to 2011. It is important to note that for the purpose of this study, the authors broadly defined *victimization* to refer to a variety of experiences, ranging from minor verbal or physical harassment to violent experiences, and

included bullying and race or ethnicity-related hate words in their measurement of school victimization (Cooc & Gee, 2014; Elias & Zins, 2003; Ho, 2008; Maffini, Wong, & Shin, 2011). Additionally, the researchers included gender, academic achievement, and family income in their study to determine whether any of these areas contributed to peer bullying.

The results of the study indicated the rate of bullying was lower when the survey only included one question regarding bullying compared to a questionnaire that included questions related to a range of bullying incidents (Cooc & Gee, 2014). The results also showed that Asian Americans have the lowest probability of being bullied compared to other racial groups, but “have the second highest rate of experiencing race or ethnicity-related hate words” (Cooc & Gee, 2014, p. 844). This was consistent with other studies that showed Asian American students were more likely to experience discrimination in school (Cooc & Gee, 2014; C. B. Fisher et al., 2000; M. L. Greene et al., 2006; Qin et al., 2008; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). Additionally, students who reported earning Cs or less had a 32% chance of being bullied, compared to 15% for those who received As. This contradicted previous research that showed students are bullied more for higher grades (Cooc & Gee, 2014; Peguero & Williams, 2013). This may be because Cooc and Gee used self-reported grades rather than standardized assessments, which were used in the previous study. It also may be related to the fact that lower achieving students may be struggling in other ways or marginalized by their peers (Cooc & Gee, 2014). Further, Asian American male students are more likely to be targets of race-related hate than are female students, and there was no statistically significant difference by family income. This may be related to Qin et al.’s (2008) findings in which Asian American male students were targeted based on their physical size and perceived weakness. Overall, this study indicated that though Asian American students may be bullied less, they are more likely to be targets of race-related hate words. More research must be

conducted and school leaders need to be aware of this issue when creating and implementing culturally appropriate bullying prevention programs. As is evident from the review of the literature on the bullying of African American, Latino, and Asian American youth, the relationship between race/ethnicity and bullying victimization is complex as studies have produced results that are at times contradictory. Nonetheless, a conclusion can be drawn regarding the relevance of social justice to the study of bullying and bullying prevention.

S. Fisher et al. (2015) looked at bullying and race within the imbalance of power hypothesis. Based on previous research, the researchers looked at whether the prevalence of bullying changed based on racial diversity within the schools, and whether patterns of general bullying differed from race-based victimization. A total of 4,581 students in Grades 6 through 8 participated in the study. A total of 89.4% identified as Caucasian and 10.6% identified as African American. Students completed questionnaires related to both bullying and race-based victimization. Each school's diversity was calculated by "dividing the number of students from a particular racial group by the total number of students" in the school (S. Fisher et al., 2015; Vervoort et al., 2010, p. 4). The results of the study showed there was a significant relationship between bullying and race, and African American students were bullied significantly less than Caucasian students (S. Fisher et al., 2015). When Caucasian students were the ethnic minority, they were bullied more frequently, and female students were bullied less often than were male students. When gender and ethnic compositions were held constant, Caucasian students suffered from race-based victimization at a higher rate than African American students and male students suffered from race-based victimization more than female students. Further, the researchers discovered that Caucasian students who were in the minority suffered from race-based victimization more than African American students who were in the minority (S. Fisher et al.,

2015). However, African American students who were in the majority suffered from race-based victimization more than Caucasian students (S. Fisher et al., 2015).

The imbalance of power hypothesis states that “the power of a certain group in a school context is partially determined by the relative number of group members” (S. Fisher et al., 2015, p. 1242; Graham, 2006). Therefore, the imbalance of power between ethnic groups in the school system can lead to higher rates of victimization, which is in line with the bullying definition because bullying involves an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim (Felix & You, 2011; S. Fisher et al., 2015; Graham, 2006; Juvonen, Nishina, & Graham, 2006). S. Fisher et al. (2015) explained that few researchers have studied the relationships between race, diversity, and peer victimization in schools, and the research that has been conducted has mostly been conducted outside of the United States. They argued that conducting these types of studies within the United States is crucial:

Due to the United States’s history of privilege and oppression that may differ from other countries . . . The history of slavery, segregation, and ongoing acts of racism and discrimination in the U.S. may affect interracial relationships in schools. (S. Fisher et al., 2015, p. 1243)

The imbalance of power hypothesis provides support for the idea that bullying is a social justice issue and there is a need to incorporate this crucial component into bullying prevention programs.

The results of the S. Fisher et al. (2015) study coincided with previous research, which showed that when Caucasian students are the ethnic minority they are bullied more compared to other ethnic groups. The researchers provided several potential explanations for this phenomenon, including the imbalance of power hypothesis. The authors suggested that in their

study, where there were more diverse schools, minority groups were in power because of their size and were therefore more likely to bully Caucasian students. In addition, various groups may define bullying behaviors differently depending on their cultural background. For example, the authors stated that “within African American communities ‘playing the dozens’ or ‘signifying’ is often common. This is often a game of insults and putdowns deeply rooted in the African American culture” (Jemie, 2003, as cited in S. Fisher et al., 2015, p. 1246). This indicates that though African American students may think of this kind of teasing as banter, students from other cultures may look at it as bullying. Last, the authors claimed that White privilege makes the imbalance of power hypothesis more complicated because White students are more privileged within a broader society, and this may or may not translate into settings where they may be the minority (S. Fisher et al., 2015). Overall, this study partially supports the imbalance of power hypothesis, in that students who are the minority in schools are more likely to be bullied. Race-based victimization may look different depending on the school population, and understanding these differences may help with creating successful interventions (S. Fisher et al., 2015).

Though researchers are beginning to focus on the role of race and ethnicity in bullying, the studies are still scarce and are relatively difficult to find and the research that has been conducted provided conflicting evidence. It is also important to note that confounding variables, such as cross-sectionality of diversity factors and environmental factors affecting the school and the larger community, that complicate the research on race-based bullying. It is therefore challenging to point out which factors directly contribute to race-based bullying. However, the research does indicate race/culture and bullying are related to one another. Given the knowledge that bullying has such an adverse impact on mental health and that racially-based bullying may

increase these negative outcomes, it is imperative that researchers look further into the impact of racially-based bullying on a child's education.

Sexual orientation. Unlike racially-based bullying, research has consistently shown that students who identify as LGBTQ are more likely to be bullied compared to their heterosexual peers. Sexual minority youth are those who identify as “gay, lesbian, or bisexual or who have sexual contact with persons of the same or both sexes” (CDC, 2016). Several studies have shown a high percentage of LGBTQ youth have either witnessed or experienced some form of *homophobic bullying*, defined as “behavior or language which makes a young person feel unwelcomed or marginalized because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation” (The Rainbow Project: Homophobic Bullying, 2012, as cited in Kahle, 2017, p. 3). *Transphobia* refers to “discomfort with, fear of, or discrimination against people who are transgender or gender variant” (Laframboise & Long, 2000, as cited in O’Neil, McWhiter, & Cerezo, 2008, pp. 287-288). According to a national survey conducted in 2013, 50% of LGBT youth experienced violence at school compared to 9% of heterosexual youth (Kahle, 2017; Kosciw, Greytak, Palmer, & Boesen, 2014). In that same study, 55% of students reported feeling unsafe at school because of their sexual identity and 38% reported not feeling safe because of their gender expression (Abreu, Black, Mosley, & Fedewa, 2016; Kosciw et al., 2014). Additionally, a third of LGBT students skipped at least one day of school in the last month, over a third avoided segregated spaces such as bathrooms or locker rooms, and 68% avoided school activities because of a perceived lack of safety within their schools (Abreu et al., 2016; Kosciw et al., 2014). Further, in an additional study, Diaz and Kosciw (2009) found that 80% of LGBTQ students of color were harassed for their identity. LGBTQ youth also endorsed being harassed based on their race and ethnicity with 51% of LGBTQ African Americans, 55% of LGBTQ Latinos, 55% of

LGBTQ Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 59% of LGBTQ multiracial students reporting being verbally harassed (Diaz & Kosciw, 2009, p. xi).

Not only did students report being harassed by their peers, they also reported hearing negative remarks from teachers and school personnel (Kosciw et al., 2014). A total of 51% of the students reported hearing homophobic and 55% reported hearing transphobic remarks from teachers or staff (Kosciw et al., 2014). Further, 57% of the LGBT students did not report the harassment they endured at school to their teachers or to school personnel because they did not think the intervention was effective and worried that the situation would only get worse if they reported it. Students who did report being bullied stated 62% of teachers and staff did not respond (Kosciw et al., 2014). This lack of response exacerbates the already high incidence of bullying in schools (Abreu et al., 2016; S. A. Black, Fedewa, & Gonzalez, 2012; Kosciw et al., 2014). The lack of response and appropriate intervention are common throughout schools in the United States, and demonstrate why there is a need for a more inclusive bullying prevention program. It is also clear that psychoeducation for teachers and school personnel is a large component that is missing from previous bullying prevention programs, and teachers need better training in order to effectively stop sexual minority bullying in schools.

One particular study showed that 78% of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and gender atypical students reported verbal bullying, 11% reported physical bullying, and 9% reported sexual victimization (D'Augelli, Grossman, & Starks, 2006; Kahle, 2017). The average age was 13, but some reported the bullying started as young as 6 years old (D'Augelli et al., 2006, as cited in Kahle, 2017). Last, the 2013 National School Climate survey showed that 74.1% of LGBT students were verbally victimized, 36.2% were physically victimized, and 49.9% were electronically victimized based on their sexual orientation (Kahle, 2017).

An additional problem LGBTQ students face is that there is little information on the LGBTQ population in the school system because it is difficult to obtain publicly funded state and national data. It was only in 2013 that the U.S. Department of Education announced it would prioritize data collection with a focus on LGBT students (Kahle, 2017; Slater, 2013). National questionnaires and data collection sites are now including information on LGBT youth so more data can be collected from schools.

A more recent study involved collecting data from 193 schools in Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, and North Carolina to investigate the distinction between bullying among LGBQ and heterosexual youth (Kahle, 2017). The researcher also investigated whether identifying as LGBQ influenced bullying victimization and whether there was an interaction between gender and sexual orientation and whether that had any influence on bullying (Kahle, 2017). Self-report measures were used to identify students' sexual orientation and involvement in traditional bullying, electronic bullying, and sexual orientation bullying. Students were also asked to identify their gender, race, weight, and level of misbehavior.

The results of the study indicated there were statistically significant differences between LGBQ and heterosexual students' experiences with bullying (Kahle, 2017). LGBQ students reported higher rates of traditional (32% vs. 16%), electronic (26% vs. 12%), and sexual orientation (33% vs. 6%) bullying than their heterosexual peers. LGBQ students who reported being bullied were more likely to be female. There were also statistically significant differences in sexual orientation for students who identified as "other" racial or ethnic identities, and there were significant differences among misbehavior, where LGBQ students were more involved than heterosexual students (Kahle, 2017). With regard to bullying based on sexual orientation, LGBQ students were significantly more likely to experience bullying than were heterosexual students.

Additionally, as misbehavior (i.e., skipping classes or not following school rules) increased, so did the likelihood of sexual orientation bullying (Kahle, 2017; Peguero, 2008). As expected, as a student's grades increased, the likelihood of sexual orientation bullying decreased. Further, LGBQ students who identified as Black, Latino, and Asian or Pacific Islander were less likely to experience sexual orientation bullying than were White LGBQ students. It is also interesting to note that Kahle (2017) found that LGBQ female students were more likely to experience sexual orientation bullying than were male students, whereas heterosexual female students were less likely to experience sexual orientation bullying than were heterosexual male students. Finally, this study showed that students who identified as LGBQ were twice as likely to be victims of traditional and electronic bullying as were heterosexual youth, and they were eight times as likely to be victims of homophobic bullying compared to heterosexual youth (Kahle, 2017). The statistics are staggering, and yet the prevention programs that have been brought to the United States from various European countries have failed to integrate a sexual orientation component. Students and teachers should be required to participate in psychoeducation programs about the LGBTQ community. Students in the LGBTQ community are more at risk for both bullying and subsequently depression and suicidal ideation, making it imperative that bullying prevention programs include LGBTQ primary, secondary, and tertiary components.

One final study took an interesting approach to addressing bullying and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and gender non-binary (LGBTQ/GN) students by interviewing teachers about their perceived seriousness regarding LGBTQ-based bullying, the level of empathy toward the victim, and the likelihood that they would intervene (Perez, Schanding, & Dao, 2013). Previous research indicated this type of biased bullying may stem from homophobic beliefs, attitudes, and stereotypes (Perez et al., 2013; Poteat, 2008; Wright, Adams, & Bernat, 1999).

More specifically, teachers may not intervene when students identify as LGBTQ/GN as they have a “lack of knowledge about how to intervene, normalizing the victimization behaviors, believing the victimization experience is a means of learning resiliency and self-confidence, and acting out their own aggressive feelings toward certain minority groups” (Perez et al., 2013, p. 68; see also Conoley, 2008). Perez et al. (2013) asked 186 educators (e.g., teachers, principals, aides, etc.) from 24 states to fill out a bullying attitude questionnaire. The teachers had a mean of 15.3 years of professional experience and worked in early education, elementary school, middle school, and high school. Teachers read various vignettes about physical, relational, and verbal bullying with both LGBTQ/GN and non-LGBTQ/GN victims.

The results showed teachers viewed physical bullying as the most serious form of bullying, followed by verbal and then relational bullying in scenarios involving non-LGBTQ/GN students (Perez et al., 2013). Teachers ranked all three forms of bullying as being highly serious and all expressed feeling high amounts of empathy. They also reported being highly likely to intervene for both LGBTQ/GN and non-LGBTQ/GN students. Surprisingly, teachers rated physical bullying of LGBTQ/GN students as being less serious than verbal and relational bullying. They also endorsed being slightly less likely to intervene and have empathy toward physical bullying of LGBTQ/GN youth. Based on there being a lack of awareness and experience with students who identify as LGBTQ/GN, the researchers argued that there needs to be continued awareness and training for teachers so they can look at their own biases and better understand the seriousness of bullying (Perez et al., 2013; Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004). Last, 81% of the teachers indicated they had an anti-bullying policy at their school but they did not specify the type of policy and whether it addressed anti-LGBTQ/GN biases. Unfortunately, only 48% stated their school employer provided anti-bullying training and only 30% reporting using a

specific bullying program (Perez et al., 2013). This study further proves that school leaders need to provide better training to their personnel so they can assist students who are being bullied as a result of their sexual orientation.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to implement safe school programs and effective bullying prevention programs for all students on campus when federal and state laws do not protect LGBTQ youth. As of 2015, Alabama, Arizona, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, and Utah had “No Promo Homo” or “Don’t Say Gay” laws (Barrett & Bound, 2015; Lenson, 2015, as cited in Abreu et al., 2016). “No Promo Homo” laws are “local and state education laws that expressly forbid teachers from discussing gay and transgender issues (including sexual health and HIV/AIDS awareness) in a positive light - if at all” (GLSEN, n.d., para. 1). These laws forbid teachers in kindergarten through Grade 12 from talking about gay or transgender issues in the classroom. This also includes discussion regarding sexual health and HIV/AIDS awareness. Several laws also require that teachers portray LGBT people in a negative light. GLSEN argues that though these laws are only to be applied to sexual health education, they are often misapplied to other aspects of the school, including curriculum, school events, and extracurricular activities. This may directly violate the Equal Access Act and limit a student’s ability to join student groups such as the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA). For example:

Arizona mandates that “no district shall include in its course of study instruction which...(1) promotes a homosexual life-style...(2) portrays homosexuality in a positive alternative life-style...(3) suggests that some methods of sex are safe methods of homosexual sex” (AZ Rev. Stat. § 15-716(c). (GLSEN, n.d., para. 6)

Though these laws still exist, many have been repealed by various states and within the school districts, and some are currently revising their sexual health education laws. For example,

according to GLSEN (n.d.), Minnesota is revising its sexual orientation curriculum at the district level after being sued by several students.

These “No Promo Homo” laws and state anti-bullying laws have negatively affected local school districts. Kull, Kosciw, and Greytak (2015) evaluated 13,181 school districts across the United States. The results showed that 70.5% of school districts had anti-bullying policies, whereas only 20.1% of school districts had LGB-inclusive anti-bullying policies and 9.9% of districts had LGBT-inclusive anti-bullying policies. Further, 26.8% of districts required professional development for their teachers and school staff with regard to school bullying (Kull et al., 2015). Overall, results support that though schools have anti-bullying policies, they fail to protect students who identify as LGBTQ.

Previous research, along with state laws known as the “No Promo Homo Laws,” support that the United States is failing to protect LGBTQ/GN students both in and outside of the school system. LGBTQ/GN youth are bullied more by both teachers and other students because of their sexuality, making them more susceptible to mental health problems. Bullying based on sexual orientation also violates the student’s right to receive a fair education. When students are bullied because of their sexual orientation, they are no longer protected and are no longer safe at their schools. This violates a student’s basic human rights, making it a social justice issue. Bullying based on someone’s sexual orientation is a serious issue that must be addressed immediately by leaders of school districts and the United States governing body in order to better protect students and provide them with a safe and encouraging school environment.

Socioeconomic status. *Socioeconomic status* (SES) can be defined as both resource-based, such as material and social resources, or prestige-based, such as an individual’s rank or status. Socioeconomic status can be measured across individual, household, and neighborhood

levels and throughout various periods of time. It can be measured through individual measures such as “education, income, or occupation” or through composite measures that “combine or assign weights to different socioeconomic aspects to provide an overall index of socioeconomic level” (Tippett & Wolke, 2014, p. e48; see also Krieger, Williams, & Moss, 1997; Galobardes, Shaw, Lawlor, & Lynch, 2006). Previous literature indicated there may be a link between low SES and both victims and bully-victims (i.e., those who both bully others and who are victims of bullying themselves), and victims of bullying have been shown to be associated with poorer parental education and occupation, economic disadvantage, and poverty (Alikasifoglu, Erginoz, Ercan, Uysal, & Albayrak-Kaymak, 2007; Bowes et al., 2009; Glew, Fan, Katon, Rivara, & Kernic, 2005; D. Jansen, Veenstra, Ormel, Verhulst, & Reijneveld, 2011; P. W. Jansen et al., 2012; Lemstra et al., 2012; Lumeng et al., 2010; Nordhagen et al., 2005; Tippett & Wolke, 2014). Additionally, students who are bully-victims have been found to be more likely to come from low SES backgrounds, including low maternal education and unemployment (Alikasifoglu et al., 2007; D. Jansen et al., 2011; P. W. Jansen et al., 2012; Magklara et al., 2012; Tippett & Wolke, 2014). Further, some studies have shown bullying other students to be associated with low SES, economic disadvantage, poverty, and low parental education, and students from low economic backgrounds have been found to bully other students more often (Bowes et al., 2009; Glew et al., 2005; D. Jansen et al., 2011; P. W. Jansen et al., 2012; Tippett & Wolke, 2014; Wolke, Woods, Stanford, & Schulz, 2001).

Based on the findings reported in the previous literature, Tippett and Wolke (2014) conducted a systematic review of the literature and a meta-analysis that focused on providing a better understanding of the potential relationship between SES and bullying. The researchers looked for cross-sectional and prospective longitudinal studies from January 1970 to November

2012, and only used studies that focused on children and adolescents between the ages of 4 and 18 years old. A total of 28 studies met all of the inclusion criteria and provided the researchers with data on victims, bullies, and bully-victims, along with measures of SES (Tippett & Wolke, 2014). The overall results of the study indicated victimization was positively associated with low SES and negatively associated with high SES. In addition, overall results indicated bullying perpetration was positively associated with low SES and negatively associated with high SES. It is important to note that there were stronger relationships between low SES and bullying perpetration in studies conducted outside of North America, whereas stronger associations between bullying perpetration and high SES were found in studies conducted in North America (Tippett & Wolke, 2014). Overall, the researchers argued that they found significant but weak associations between SES and bullying.

Bullies were only slightly less likely to be from higher SES backgrounds and the results showed bullying had significant but weak relationships to SES (Tippett & Wolke, 2014). Tippett and Wolke (2014) also found that low SES was strongly linked to behavioral problems, including aggression and antisocial behavior. Further, the results indicated being from a peer group that was different was the main motivator for victimization, and being from a lower SES background or not being able to afford the same goods as others in a group may be why children are being victimized by their peers (Tippett & Wolke, 2014). The researchers also postulated that children who come from higher SES backgrounds have more resources and access to education, which may aid in better developed social skills and coping strategies. Children from lower SES backgrounds may experience more adverse home environments, including “facing harsher punishment, restrictive and authoritarian parenting practices, experiencing greater levels of sibling violence, and being more often exposed to incidents of domestic violence” (Tippett &

Wolke, 2014, p. e55). Previous unpublished data from the researchers supported that both victims and bully-victims were exposed to harsher parents, abuse, and sibling violence compared to children not involved in bullying (Tippett & Wolke, 2014). This supports that bullying and SES may have a more indirect relationship that may be mediated by the child's home environment. Finally, the researchers found higher levels of bullying in countries with high social inequality, and argued that the relationship between SES and bullying perpetration "might therefore be better understood at a societal rather than individual level" (Tippett & Wolke, 2014, p. e57). Overall, this meta-analysis provided good insight into the relationship between SES and bullying perpetration, and showed why school leaders and personnel need to have a better understanding of how SES, both on an individual and societal level, can affect bullying and victimization.

Research has also been conducted to compare income inequality and school bullying among adolescents in 37 countries. Previous research has shown a relationship between state-level income and homicide rates and violent crimes including assault, rape, and robbery (Elgar, Craig, Boyce, Morgan, & Vella-Zarb, 2009). Income inequality has also been linked to social capital within communities, which directly affects adolescents' "cohesive and cooperative family relationships, peer networks, and school environments" (Elgar et al., 2009, p. 352). Therefore, Elgar et al. (2009) looked at the association between income inequality and bullying while also looking at the mediation of social support. They specifically studied 11-year-olds because previous research has shown that violence in younger adolescents can cause lifelong antisocial behavior (Elgar et al., 2009). A total of 66,817 students from 37 countries were studied using HBSC survey data.

The results indicated income inequality and bullying were significantly correlated in male and female students (Elgar et al., 2009). In conjunction with the Tippett and Wolke study (2014), bullying was four to five times greater in countries where there was high income inequality than in countries with low income inequality. Country and individual wealth were highly correlated and both were negatively associated with bullying rates (Elgar et al., 2009). Income inequality was not associated with social support, and social support and bullying were also nonsignificant. However, school support was correlated with low bullying among female students (Elgar et al., 2009). In addition, there were significant associations between income inequality and both low family and low school support, and positive associations between income inequality and peer support were found (Elgar et al., 2009). Further, there was a significant contribution of income inequality to bullying after accounting for country and individual wealth. Family and school support were associated with less frequent bullying by both male and female students, and peer support was found to be unrelated (Elgar et al., 2009). Last, income inequality had a negative relationship with family and school support and was positively associated with peer support (Elgar et al., 2009). The researchers postulated that inequality may have detrimental effects on schools while strengthening peer relationships. Overall, this study showed a significant relationship between bullying and income inequality across countries.

Though the literature is scarce, the research that has been conducted showed a correlation between bullying and income inequality. Based on previous studies, students tend to be more at-risk for being victims of bullying if they “stand out” in any way. Students who appear to be of a lower SES than other students may therefore be prime targets for bullies, as bullies may see themselves as being stronger and more powerful. Further, students from lower SES families may not have the same opportunities to succeed in school as other students because they may have a

more challenging time attending school regularly, obtaining books and supplies, and wearing proper school attire. The inability to obtain equal access to education along with the increased risk of being bullied indicates students from low SES families need additional support in schools. Socioeconomic status must also be addressed in bullying prevention programs so every child has an opportunity to succeed in school.

Immigration status. Previous studies have revealed there is significance to the relationship between bullying and immigration but there is little research into how immigration status affects bullying. In recent years, there has been an increase in immigration to the United States. According to S. D. Walsh et al. (2016), in 2013, a total of 17.4 million children in the United States under the age of 18 lived at home with at least one parent who was an immigrant. Youth who are immigrants may be more at risk for bullying because they may look, dress, and talk differently than other students, and are therefore prime targets for bullies (Mendez, Bauman, & Guillory, 2012; Qin et al., 2008; Strohmeier, Karna, & Salmivalli, 2011; S. D. Walsh et al., 2016). In addition, immigrants experience limited upward social mobility and may be disproportionately exposed to both school and community violence (Garcia-Coll & Magnuson, 1997, as cited in Sulkowski, Bauman, Wright, Nixon, & Davis, 2014; Kelser & Bloemraad, 2010; Peguero, 2009; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). *Immigrant bullying* is defined as “bullying that targets another’s immigrant status or family history of immigration in the form of taunts and slurs, derogatory references to the immigration process, physical aggression, social manipulation, and exclusion because of immigration status” (Scherr & Larson, 2010, as cited in Sulkowski et al., 2014, p. 651). This is consistent with the imbalance of power definition of bullying because immigrant students may have lower social power in certain contexts (Schwartz, Proctor, & Chien, 2001, as cited in Sulkowski et al., 2014). In the United States, which is

considered to be a cultural melting pot, immigrants continue to experience discrimination (Jaret, 1999; Sulkowski et al., 2014). Therefore, more research is needed into immigrant students and bullying behaviors in schools.

Sulkowski et al. (2014) studied immigration and bullying through the social identity theory. This theory is based on the notion that in-group members bully out-group members in order to maintain social dominance (McDevitt et al., 2011, as cited in Sulkowski et al., 2014). Therefore, the researchers posited that immigrant students may be more at risk of being victimized because they are members of the out-group (Sulkowski et al., 2014). The authors further hypothesized that immigrant families are more likely to be victimized because of their “race, physical appearance (i.e. looks, body shape), religion, and family income” (p. 653) and examined the ways in which bystanders respond to peer aggression in both immigrant and non-immigrant populations. The sample included 2,929 students who reported through the Youth Voice Project that they had been victimized two or more times per month. A total of 280 students out of the 2,929 reported being from families who immigrated over the last 2 years. The measures included peer victimization, focus of victimization, responses to peer aggression, and bystander responses to peer aggression. The results indicated immigrant youth were more likely to be physically hit, but were not more likely to be called names, socially excluded, threatened, or have rumors spread about them (Sulkowski et al., 2014). In addition, students from immigrant families were more likely to tell the bully or school personnel about how they felt, make plans to get back at the aggressor, or hit the aggressor than were their peers. Moreover, students from immigrant families reported that telling school personnel “made things better,” whereas non-immigrant students thought pretending the bullying did not bother them tended to “make things better” (Sulkowski et al., 2014, p. 658). Non-immigrant students were also more likely to pretend

that they did not care about being victimized, and were more likely to state that the victimization did not change as a result of pretending that the victimization did not bother them, making jokes, telling the bully to stop, walking away, telling a friend, or telling an adult at home (Sulkowski et al., 2014).

The study also showed bystanders were less likely to listen to youth from immigrant families than to non-immigrant youth. Students from immigrant families stated that when bystanders responded it only made things worse. Immigrant students also stated nothing changed when bystanders made fun of them, blamed them, or helped them get away from the bad situation compared to non-immigrant youth (Sulkowski et al., 2014). Based on these findings, Sulkowski et al. (2014) suggested youth from immigrant families are more likely to be bullied as a result of the imbalance of power, as they are members of the out-group. They are also victimized more because of differences in religion, culture, and social status (Duffy & Nesdale, 2009; Gini, 2006; Sulkowski et al., 2014). Ultimately, this study showed students from immigrant families are more likely to be physically victimized than are their non-immigrant peers and are less likely to be protected from bystanders, indicating immigrant students need to be better protected in schools and bullying prevention programs must incorporate components to address the special needs of this population.

An additional study included a focus on immigration and bullying in 11 countries across Europe, the Middle East, and North America. The goal of the study was to “investigate the impact of immigrant school composition on the involvement of immigrant and non-immigrant adolescents in 11 countries” (S. D. Walsh et al., 2016, p. 2). The researchers specifically looked at bullying perpetration, bullying victimization, and physical fighting and the role of student support on bullying in Denmark, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, the

Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States (S. D. Walsh et al., 2016). Data were retrieved from the 2009-2010 World Health Organization Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (WHO-HBSC) survey with a focus on school-aged children age 11, 13, and 15.

Students were asked about their immigration status, immigrant school composition, physical fighting and bullying, perceived classmate support, and sociodemographic variables. The term immigrant included both first-generation and second-generation adolescents (S. D. Walsh et al., 2016).

The results from the S. D. Walsh et al. (2016) study indicated that, much like students from low SES backgrounds, students from immigrant families are at a higher risk for being bullied. Immigrant school composition and low classmate support appeared to be negative components that contributed to bullying. Classroom components involving acceptance of immigrant students should be implemented into every classroom in order to decrease bullying and increase classmate support. Classroom and whole-school components that involve psychoeducation on immigration are also necessary in order to reduce this type of bullying. According to S. D. Walsh et al., immigrant adolescents were more likely to report bullying, and the results from this study indicated higher percentages of immigrants and lower levels of support in school were related to an increased risk of bullying. School composition and its positive relationship with physical fighting and bullying may be explained through the integrative threat theory and the social identity theory, which both explain that “a higher number of immigrants in schools may lead to greater tension between pupils enabling greater in-group/out-group competition for resources, social status, or identity” (Stephan & Stephan, 1996, 2000, as cited in S. D. Walsh et al., 2016, p. 11; Stephan et al., 1999, as cited in S. D. Walsh et al., 2016, p. 11; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, as cited in S. D. Walsh et al., 2016, p. 11; see also Esses,

Jackson, Dovidio, & Hodson, 2008; J. W. Jackson, 2002; Tajfel, 1982). In addition, in conjunction with previous studies, low and medium levels of Family Affluence Scale (FAS) were associated with higher risks of bullying. The results further showed immigrant adolescents were at a higher risk for bullying victimization. Last, when classmate support was low, higher immigrant school composition was associated with lower bullying victimization (S. D. Walsh et al., 2016). This may indicate that being a part of a larger in-group is important when classmate support is low (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, as cited in S. D. Walsh et al., 2016). This ultimately supports that having a greater number of students who are immigrants can be a protective factor against bullying. The researchers stated their hope that their study would lead to better interventions in schools with higher levels of immigrant populations.

The United States has a large number of immigrant families, and the number is only increasing. Therefore, it is important that school leaders incorporate the topic of immigration into their classrooms. As stated previously, bullying tends to occur because there is an imbalance of power. Prevention components that focus on immigration and its impact on both immigrant and non-immigrant students are required. Immigrant students and their families have already undergone the difficult transition to a new country, and students from these families need to feel accepted in their schools. As stated previously, every student, including those of immigrant families, should have an equal opportunity to obtain both economic and non-economic goods, including self-esteem and other protective factors. When these students are not accepted and are bullied at school for being from a different country, the bullying clearly becomes a social justice issue.

Religion. Religious differences among students may also have a negative impact on bullying in schools, though the research is difficult to find and is usually embedded in other

studies. The little research that has been published supports that students discriminate and can be aggressive toward other students based on ethnicity, nationality, and religion (Durkin et al., 2012). One particular study conducted in England and Scotland involved asking 925 students between the ages of 8 and 12 to complete a questionnaire regarding their ethnicity and religion (Durkin et al., 2012). Students were also asked to circle whether they identified as Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, boy, girl, Scottish, British, Pakistani, Indian, Chinese, or Other. Students were further asked to identify which group was first, second, and third most important to them, and students who circled “Other” were asked to indicate what it was in the free space. Further, students were asked about the level of peer aggression they experienced, if any, and whether it was related to the student’s skin color or religion (Durkin et al., 2012).

The results indicated 65.5% of the students reported experiencing peer aggression and children who indicated they were of ethnic or religious minority status were more than twice as likely to report being a target of peer aggression (Durkin et al., 2012). These students were also twice as likely to report the aggression was discriminatory (Durkin et al., 2012). The researchers further discovered that as the proportion of students who were minorities increased in a school, there were higher levels of peer aggression. This may be related to intergroup tensions and the perceived threat from the majority group. Unlike other research, Durkin et al. (2012) argued that even though in some cases minority children exceeded majority children within a school, these children remain a minority within the larger society which is why they still may be bullied more frequently (C. S. Brown & Bigler, 2002; Verkuyten, 2007, as cited in Durkin et al., 2012). However, when the minority rate exceeded 81%, discriminatory aggression was experienced among majority children more often. This finding was in conjunction with other studies conducted in U.S. schools (Durkin et al., 2012; Hanish & Guerra, 2000). Last, it is important to

note that most of the minority participants in this particular study were Muslim and the numbers of students in the other minority groups were too small to warrant comparisons (Durkin et al., 2012). Ultimately, results indicated students who are of a different religion than the majority may be subject to increased peer aggression compared to other students.

Additional research on religion and bullying was not found. Though research may reference a connection between religion and bullying, it does not appear as though a study has specifically been conducted into whether there is a causal relationship between the two. However, an informal search of parents' blogs and websites provided many examples of parents asserting that their children were being bullied or victimized based on religious differences. This supports that students might be more likely to be bullied based on religious differences and more research on this relationship is needed.

Disabilities. Students with disabilities may be particularly at risk for bullying at schools because they may have difficulty with perceiving social skills, they may be unable to comprehend the abuse, and they may not be able to adequately defend themselves. Though previous research has shown that students with disabilities are two to four times more likely to be bullied than are students without disabilities, the research is limited, previous sample sizes have been small, there were problems with measurement techniques, and the definition of a disability has been inconsistent (Blake, Lund, Zhou, Kwok, & Benz, 2012). For example, it is difficult to provide valid self-report measures on bullying victimization to students with severe disabilities and their teachers. Further, though there has been cross-national research on students with disabilities and bullying, there are a variety of definitions of the term "disability," making it difficult to compare studies (Blake et al., 2012). More consistent research should be conducted into the relationship between students with disabilities and bullying.

Blake et al. (2012) sought to assess the prevalence rates of bullying in a large sample of students with disabilities in elementary, middle, and high school who received special education services in the United States. Data were taken from both the Special Education Elementary Longitudinal Study (SEELS) and the National Longitudinal Transition of Study-2 (NLTS2). Students were selected if they attended either a private or public school such as a “regular (general) education school, special school for students with disabilities, magnet school, charter school, vocational school, or alternative school” (Blake et al., 2012, p. 214). The researchers chose to use a parent-report measure to study the prevalence rates of bullying among children with disabilities as previous research indicated they may be adequate informants (Blake et al., 2012). Disability status was determined based on the primary disability classification reported by each student’s school district at the time the research was conducted. The disability categories used for this study were consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA) and were as follows: emotional disturbance (ED), mental retardation (MR), specific learning disability (LD), speech or language impairment (SLI), autism (AU), orthopedic impairment (OI), other health impaired (OHI), multiple disabilities (MD), visual impairment (VI), deaf-blindness (DB), hearing impairment (HI), and traumatic brain injury (TBI). Last, parents were asked whether their child had been picked on or bullied by another student during the current or previous school year (Blake et al., 2012).

The results of the study indicated 24.5% of the students with disabilities were bullied in elementary school, 34.1% in middle school, and 26.6% in high school (Blake et al., 2012). Middle school students were bullied at significantly higher rates, which coincided with previous research that showed bullying peaks in middle school (Blake et al., 2012). In middle school, 51.8% of students diagnosed with emotional disturbances indicated they were bullied, which was

significantly higher than the overall bullying rate for students with disabilities in middle school (Blake et al., 2012). High school students diagnosed with emotional disturbances also had a significantly higher rate of bullying (39.0%) compared to the overall rate in high school (Blake et al., 2012). Students diagnosed with other health impairments in elementary school were also bullied at a higher rate than other students with disabilities.

The researchers hypothesized that students with emotional disturbances were specifically targeted because they may exhibit “excessive worry, fearfulness, or marked sadness,” which may signal to bullies that these students are unable to defend themselves (Bernstein & Watson, 1997; Blake et al., 2012, p. 218). Students with emotional disturbance may exhibit behavioral outbursts or aggressive behaviors that also may increase their risk of being bullied because they violate peer norms (Blake et al., 2012). Students with other health impairments tend to have ADHD diagnoses and they also tend to be victimized more than other students because they may have difficulty with impulse control, which again violates peer norms (Beran, 2009, as cited in Blake et al., 2012). These students were also more likely to experience repeated victimization, with the exception of students who were visually-impaired or deaf-blind. Finally, students in elementary and middle school who were diagnosed with autism and high school students who had orthopedic impairments were more likely to be bullied than were other students. Children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) may be more likely to be victimized because of their social impairments, making it difficult for them to receive social cues. They also tend to have difficulties in their ability to judge the intentions of other students, and they may be more susceptible to the manipulation of others because they are eager to befriend their peers (Blake et al., 2012). Students with orthopedic injuries tend to be more susceptible to bullying because they have visible differences, and bullies tend to target people they think are weaker and unable to retaliate

(Rose et al., 2011, as cited in Blake et al., 2012). This study was one of the first in the United States in which the researchers looked at bullying among the population of students with disabilities, and results showed students with disabilities are significantly more likely to be bullied than are students without disabilities.

McNicholas, Orpinas, and Raczynski (2017) asked open-ended questions to college students with disabilities about the bullying and peer victimization they experienced in middle and high school. The goal was to determine whether the frequency of bullying was higher among students with disabilities than students without disabilities to contribute to the theory that family, peer, and school support are negatively associated with bullying and peer victimization, and to explore how participants coped with their bullying experiences. Students from a disability resource center at a larger southeastern university were invited to participate in the study. A total of 161 students completed the survey; 20% identified as male, 78% as female, 2% as transgender, and 15 students did not report their gender. A majority of the participants reported identifying as White and 14 did not disclose their race. Over half were not employed and 90% were enrolled as full-time students. Students reported being diagnosed with a psychological disorder, ADHD, learning disability, systemic disorder, mobility disorder, sensory processing disorder, acquired brain injury, pervasive developmental disorder, or other. On average, students reported 2.2 disability diagnoses. Students were asked about their previous bullying experiences, the type and frequency of the aggression they endured when in middle and high school, coping and protective factors, and demographic information (McNicholas et al., 2017).

The results of the study showed 68.4% of the students experienced some form of peer aggression, which was much higher than the 20% the researchers originally predicted (McNicholas et al., 2017). The most common form of aggression was relational aggression, such

as being excluded from social groups (53%) and having lies or rumors spread about them (46%). One in eight students reported they were excluded from social groups constantly, 37% reported being bullied through verbal aggression, 20% reported being cyberbullied, 9% reported experiencing physical aggression, 11% reported being stolen from, and 11% reported being threatened. In addition, 15% reported the aggression was directly related to their disability, 45% stated it was related to their disability and other things, and 40% stated it was not related to their disability. More students reported being victimized in middle school than in high school, which again was consistent with the results of previous studies (McNicholas et al., 2017).

Students further reported using friends and family for support and explained that this support helped them cope with the victimization they endured (McNicholas et al., 2017). Friends and family also protected students from being victimized in the first place. Several students explained that the school climate and school rules protected them from being victimized as their schools had strict no tolerance policies. Students also coped with the victimization by avoiding socializing, trying to blend in, participating in sports, ignoring the bully, or normalizing the aggression. Further, 49 participants endorsed feeling like their peers did not understand their disability, which further excluded them from their peers (McNicholas et al., 2017). Last, six participants explained that they experienced “negative interactions and a lack of support from school staff” (McNicholas et al., 2017, p. 18). This directly violates laws designed to protect children with disabilities from bullying. This study was unique because it showed students were more likely to be victimized in relation to their disabilities and indicated the support students receive from their families and friends is a crucial coping mechanism and protective factor. This study also supports the need for better bullying intervention programs that provide

psychoeducation on disabilities to students in order to reduce this type of discriminative bullying in schools.

Though there is an increase in bullying of students with disabilities, there are multiple laws that should protect students from this kind of bullying behavior. Students with disabilities have rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), and the IDEA. According to the Office of Civil Rights in the U.S.

Department of Education:

Although there is a broad consensus that bullying is wrong and cannot be tolerated in our schools, the sad reality is that bullying persists in our schools today, and especially so for students with disabilities who are frequently the targets of bullying. (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, 2010, p. 1)

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) issued guidance documents called dear colleague letters (DCLs), which can be used to inform school district officials, teachers, and school administration about their obligation to help students with disabilities who are being bullied (Yell et al., 2016). According to both the OCR and the OSERS, disability-based harassment is a form of discrimination. They define harassment as including “verbal acts and name-calling, as well as nonverbal behavior, such as graphic and written statements, or conduct that is physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating” (Yell et al., 2016, p. 277). In addition, Section 504 requires that school districts prohibit the discrimination of students with disabilities so they have an equal opportunity to participate and thrive in school activities. According to Yell et al. (2016), the bullying of students with disabilities further violates the free appropriate public education (FAPE) requirement of

Section 504 because these students are not able to gain equal access to an education when they are being bullied.

Bullying may also violate the IDEA federal law. If a student is being bullied, he or she is unable to obtain equal access to education, and if the school does not prevent the bullying from occurring, then the school may be in violation of the IDEA in light of the student's denial of FAPE. If there is a violation, the school's IEP or 504 Plan team is required to meet and reevaluate whether the plan continues to meet FAPE. Bullying based on a student's disability is in fact a social justice issue, because the bullying is in direct violation of the free appropriate public education required. The laws clearly state that disability-based bullying violates a student's humanity. Every student must be able to obtain equal access to an education, and school systems must be held responsible when students are unable to obtain equal access; therefore, bullying prevention programs must begin to acknowledge and incorporate disability-based bullying in order to better protect students.

Prevention

As demonstrated by the review thus far, there is a need to address bullying at an individual, school, classroom, teacher, and community level in order to properly address it as a social justice issue. Therefore, it is important that prevention efforts take place within and outside the school system. The social justice approach to prevention focuses predominantly on psychological well-being. According to Prilleltensky (2001), social justice and prevention should focus on the "promotion of healthy development, the enhancement of wellness, and the acquisition of skills and competencies that enable individuals and groups to participate fully in society" (as cited in Kenny et al., 2009, p. 9). When applied to the school system, M. Walsh,

DePaul, and Park-Taylor (2009) asserted that primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention strategies can be used to support student learning and increase social justice.

Primary prevention. Primary prevention strategies are provided to an entire population and are created to stop a problem before it occurs. In the school system, they include “interventions for all students, such as health and social competence programs, that seek to promote healthy development and prevent nonacademic barriers to learning” (Marx, Wolley, & Northrop, 1998, as cited in M. Walsh et al., 2009, p. 66; Mckenzie & Richmond, 1998, as cited in M. Walsh et al., 2009, p. 66). Every student is involved in the primary prevention of school bullying, not just those who are bullies or victims, and school leaders create school-wide bullying prevention programs (Elinoff, Chafouleas, & Sassu, 2004). Additionally, primary prevention includes “systemic and redistributive change in student support systems” in order to create a broad range of community resources to which every student has equal access (M. Walsh et al., 2009, p. 66; Weissberg & O’Brien, 2004). As previously mentioned, several studies have demonstrated the whole-school approach can be an effective primary bullying prevention strategy. Past studies have indicated several common primary prevention components that can be useful in bullying prevention programs, such as restructuring the school environment by improving peer relations, teaching and promoting prosocial behaviors, and providing training to all school personnel. According to previous studies, the goal of each bullying prevention program is to “alter the school environment” (Elinoff et al., 2004, p. 893). Whole-school approaches can include education for teachers so they can learn about the goals of the program and become more active in the intervention process. Other whole-school components elicit parent involvement in the form of a home component that involves family activities, homework

assignments, and parent meetings. These whole-school primary prevention components may be useful in preventing bullying in schools before the bullying even begins.

Secondary prevention. Secondary prevention includes early intervention in order to pinpoint and address student problems as soon as they arise (M. Walsh et al., 2009). It is designed for specific students who are exhibiting early signs of bullying and is used to prevent bullying before it becomes more severe (Meyers & Nastasi, 1999, as cited in Elinoff et al., 2004). The goal is for school professionals to identify student issues and coordinate programs that address those issues directly (i.e., bullying prevention programs; M. Walsh et al., 2009). At this level, it may be important to identify risk factors or problems with aggression or victimization among students. This is particularly important in communities where violence and aggression are part of daily life inside and outside of school. Further, Larson et al. (2002) suggested “targeting students for this level of prevention may rely on identifying early childhood aggression and peer rejection in students as both are relatively stable and have been found to be correlated with later anti-social behavior” (as cited in Elinoff et al., 2004, p. 893). Students who are at risk may benefit from individual or small groups focused on social skills and assertiveness training along with problem-solving and self-control techniques (Elinoff et al., 2004). For individual students who are at risk, the goal during secondary prevention is find out what specifically is maintaining the behavior. Though it may be difficult to determine why a student bullies, it may be related to several factors, including peer pressure and popularity, or clinical problems including a conduct disorder or an emotional disturbance (Elinoff et al., 2004).

Tertiary prevention. Tertiary prevention is designed to fix more of the severe and chronic issues students face through both in-school and community-based services (e.g., mental health counseling; M. Walsh et al., 2009). Tertiary prevention is provided to students who

already have established problems with bullying. The goal is to “remediate the problem, decrease the duration of the problem, and minimize the effects of the problem” (Meyers & Nastasi, 1999, as cited in Elinoff et al., 2004, p. 894). During this phase, individual students who already suffer from aggression may need individualized behavior plans and staff may need the appropriate training to implement such plans (Elinoff et al., 2004). It is critical that prevention that targets these whole-school approaches, at-risk students, and students who already suffer from aggressive behaviors also incorporate social justice training in order to stop bullying and increase resilience, self-esteem, social support, and coping skills.

Person-centered and environment-centered prevention. Prevention approaches can be either person-centered or environment-centered. *Person-centered approaches* “involve directly working with clients in individual or group settings in an attempt to enhance protective factors or decrease risk factors via psychoeducational approaches or skills training” (Vera, Buhin, & Isacco, 2009, p. 84). It has been argued that though the person-centered approach can be effective at reducing social injustices, its main focus is to help people adapt to an unjust world (Vera et al., 2009). *Environment-centered approaches*, on the other hand, are used in an attempt to enhance a client’s quality of life more indirectly by finding ways to increase environmental protective factors and decrease environmental risk factors through public policy work, outreach, and advocacy. The environment-centered approach is used to advocate for clients on a larger scale (Vera et al., 2009). In order to make changes related to social injustices, environment-centered prevention requires that psychologists form partnerships with legislators, community members, grassroots organizations, and public health professionals in order to address communities at risk (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002; Vera et al., 2009). These partnerships must include relationship building, collaborative efforts, and needs assessments (Lerner, 1995, as cited

in Vera et al., 2009). This type of professional activity will ultimately increase mental health professionals' credibility within their communities so they can create positive change (Vera et al., 2009). Overall, prevention is a critical piece in creating social change and allows for “culturally appropriate interventions” that can reduce problems in underserved populations (APA, 2000; Conyne, 2004, as cited in Vera et al., 2009, p. 92; Young, 1990, as cited in Vera et al., 2009, p. 92).

Role of Psychologists in Bullying Prevention and Social Justice

Although it has been demonstrated that bullying can be conceptualized as a social justice issue and there is a need for more effective bullying prevention programs, the implications of the role of psychologists as agents of change in society to bullying prevention remain unclear. The role of psychologists in promoting social justice is a relatively new concept, and much of the research related to social justice and the role of mental health professionals focused on counseling psychology, school psychology, and social work (Crethar & Winterowd, 2012; Hage et al., 2007; Motulsky, Gere, Saleem, & Trantham, 2014; Swenson, 1998). Even though the role of psychologists in promoting social justice is a relatively new concept in the field of psychology, it coincides with prevention, which is an acceptable professional activity for psychologists.

People who are the most marginalized are often the least likely to obtain psychological services, which in and of itself is a social justice issue and a source of concern within the mental health field. Though traditional forms of treatment can be transformed to become culturally sensitive, they are not reaching culturally diverse populations. Albee (2000), therefore, challenged the mental health community to expand services to include advocacy, community outreach, and prevention. Further, it is suggested that more “nontraditional” types of services be

expanded upon, rather than solely focusing on making the traditional services more culturally sensitive (Atkinson, Thompson, & Grant, 1993, as cited in Vera et al., 2009; Lewis, Lewis, Daniels, & D'Andrea, 1998, as cited in Vera et al., 2009; Thompson & Neville, 1999; Toporek & Reza, 2001; Vera & Speight, 2003). Though it is clear that psychologists have a role in being agents of social change, there is a continued assumption that psychologists work primarily with individuals and their families, which is now being considered limiting and potentially inadequate. Psychologists instead must start looking into working with larger systems, such as schools (Santiago-Rivera, Talka, & Tully, 2006; Speight & Vera, 2004; Vera et al., 2009).

According to Meara, Schmidt, and Day (1996), clinical psychologists engage in prevention and have the ability to provide opportunities for disempowered individuals so everyone has the option to access both the benefits and burdens of society (as cited in M. Walsh et al., 2009). In addition, clinical psychologists work with both communities and individuals and focus on restoring “self-esteem, resilience, and other individual protective assets” (M. Walsh et al., 2009, p. 65). Although psychologists may improve social inequalities, oftentimes it is a byproduct of their interventions and prevention efforts (M. Walsh et al., 2009). Therefore, leaders within the field of psychology are requesting that social justice be more explicitly integrated into the field (Prilleltensky, 1997; M. Walsh et al., 2009).

The APA has stated its commitment to social justice issues. APA Bylaw 1.1 states, “The objects of the American Psychological Association shall be to advance psychology as a science, a profession, and as a means of promoting health, education, and human welfare” (APA, 2008). The APA’s vision statements are also relevant to social justice, indicating clinical psychologists are committed to promoting health, welfare, and human rights. Last, although there is some controversy about the degree to which the APA should advocate for social justice issues,

ultimately, the literature supports that clinical psychologists do have a role in promoting social justice. However, it remains somewhat unclear what exactly this role entails, and there is little research with a specific focus on clinical psychologists as agents of social change.

Though clinical psychologists are still discovering their exact role in promoting social justice, counseling psychologists see prevention as a vital part of their identity as mental health professionals, and their interest in prevention has recently expanded (Albee, 2000; Gelso & Fretz, 2001, as cited in Hage et al., 2007; Romano & Hage, 2000; Vera, 2000). However, though the *Handbook of Counseling Psychology* includes several chapters on prevention, studies have indicated that counseling psychologists' involvement in prevention activities has actually decreased over time (Fretz & Simon, 1992, as cited in Hage et al., 2007; Goodyear et al., 2007, as cited in Hage et al., 2007). Goodyear and colleagues found that only approximately 25% of surveyed counseling psychologists participated in prevention/outreach programs (as cited in Hage et al., 2007). Researchers have attributed this lack of involvement to an absence of formal training in psychology programs (Matthews, 2003, 2004, as cited in Hage et al., 2007; McNeill & Ingram, 1983). It has been suggested that there should be increased involvement of counseling psychologists in schools. This includes activities that can lead to systematic changes for children and adolescents.

Others argue that counseling psychologists are given the tools to do the prevention work through their programs and change needs to take place in the psychology field itself. The focus should be on "giving greater emphasis to a prevention viewpoint," which involves a greater recognition for "the complex social, physiological, biological, and psychological factors involved in mental or emotional problems" (Bond, Belinky, & Weinstock, 1998, as cited in Hage et al., 2007, p. 499). Counseling psychologists also created 15 best practice guidelines that are

considered to be applicable to other areas of specialty psychology. Some of these guidelines include the following: “Psychologists are encouraged to seek ways to prevent human suffering through the development of proactive interactions,” “Psychologists are encouraged to use culturally relevant prevention practices that are adapted to the specific context in which they are delivered and that include clients and other relevant stakeholders in all aspects of prevention planning and programming,” and “Psychologists are encouraged to consider the social justice implications of prevention research” (Hage et al., 2007, p. 496). These guidelines indicate counseling psychologists are making strides in promoting prevention and social justice issues. Ultimately, though counseling psychologists may more directly discuss prevention strategies in their handbook, there is still a great need for these prevention strategies to be implemented in order to effectively reduce these social injustices.

School psychologists are also vital as agents of change within the school system. Research has shown there is a need for school psychologists to protect everyone’s rights and opportunities in the school environment. Shriberg et al. (2008) defined the social justice approach as a call for action in all settings with the goal being to protect both children’s’ and families’ educational rights and opportunities and to bring action in broader areas in order to protect human and civil rights in all aspects of life. School psychologists’ call to social justice is in line with the public health model because they focus on preventing problems in an entire population. According to *School Psychology: A Blueprint for Training and Practice III*, school psychologists must “embrace and address diversity issues effectively at all levels” (Ysseldyke et al., 2006, p 16). More specifically, school psychologists are called to advocate for students and to challenge the biases in schools that alienate students and keep them from functioning at their highest level (Dawson et al., 2004; Rogers & O’Byron, 2008). They are expected to advocate

both internally and externally in the school system and advocate at the district, state, and national levels (Doll, 1996; Rogers & O'Bryon, 2008). The current issue is that, much like counseling psychology, though there is a clear need for school psychologists to be more involved as agents of change, there is little information surrounding how to advocate for social justice (Rogers & O'Bryon, 2008). Though there is a need for clarity on how to better advocate for social justice in schools, it is clear that school psychologists have a role in being agents of change both within the school systems and beyond.

The goal of prevention for all psychologists is to address the “causes of the causes” of injustice, instead of focusing on surface level problems (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 1997, as cited in Hage et al., 2007). The hope is that this will prevent problems for oppressed people and other marginalized groups “who share unequal power in society because of their immigration, age, socioeconomic status, religious heritage, physical ability, or sexual orientation” (Hage et al., 2007, p. 500). Overall, research has shown that though there is a need for psychologists and mental health professionals to act as agents of social change both on an individual level and within their communities, there is still some discrepancy as to what exactly this entails. With regard to bullying, it is a psychologist’s duty to help prevent bullying on both an individual basis (e.g., empathy training) and at the environmental level (e.g., advocating for prevention).

Psychologists can help students and their schools by advocating for more inclusive bullying prevention programs at the governmental and school district levels and by collaborating with parents, teachers, and local government officials on bullying prevention in schools (Hage et al., 2007). More specifically, mental health professionals can be agents of social change within each component of bullying prevention. These components include providing psychoeducation on the negative mental health effects of bullying on students to parents, teachers, and local officials;

going into classrooms to discuss how bullying affects a student's ability to succeed; and providing individual services to students who are bullies, victims, and bystanders in order to help them cope with the specific negative effects of bullying. Ultimately, mental health professionals have an important role as agents of social change within their communities and additional research is needed with a specific focus on how they can serve as better advocates for their clients and their surrounding environment.

Chapter III: Review and Analysis Procedures

Overview

This chapter outlines the methods by which the researcher reviewed and analyzed the literature on bullying, bullying prevention, and social justice in the present study. This chapter includes the following: (a) the process of obtaining relevant literature for the review, (b) how the literature was organized and integrated.

Identification of Relevant Literature

The literature reviewed pertained to bullying prevention, social justice, and psychologists as agents of change. Literature pertaining to these topics was identified through comprehensive searches using EBSCO Host, PsycINFO, WorldCat, and any public searches through Google Scholar. The key terms and phrases used in the research included: bullying, bullying prevention, school systems, agents of change, clinical psychology, and social justice. Additional terms, including victimization, social work, education, school psychology, and counseling psychology, were used to broaden the search criteria. The literature search focused primarily on studies that were published in the last 10 years. However, key studies, such as meta-analyses on bullying prevention or studies that used the OBPP, that were published over 10 years ago were also reviewed. The researcher also consulted the reference pages of relevant articles and book chapters to find additional resources.

Organization of the Literature

Literature pertaining to bullying as a social problem, bullying prevention, and the role of psychologists in promoting social justice was included or excluded depending on its relevance. Relevance was determined via a preliminary review of the abstract and conclusion sections of articles and book chapters. As well, literature was included based on its availability through

electronic databases from Pepperdine University and through the interlibrary loan. Exclusion criteria included literature not published in the English language.

The researcher's goal was to acquire all relevant data related to bullying prevention and social justice through an extensive literature search for research articles and books. The researcher carefully reviewed and evaluated the selected literature. The literature review included a detailed review of the definition and prevalence of bullying as well as established bullying prevention programs and their specific components. Next, literature on social justice and the role of prevention in promoting social justice was reviewed in reference to the role of psychologists as agents of change. Finally, based on the critical review of the literature, the researcher provided a summary and conclusion chapter, identifying the ways in which the scholarly research on social justice and prevention is applicable to bullying prevention. Based on the conclusions of the literature review, the researcher also provided recommendations for future research.

Chapter IV: Summary and Conclusions

Summary

The primary goal of this dissertation was to provide a critical review of the literature on bullying prevention to highlight bullying as a social justice issue. In order to demonstrate that bullying is a social justice issue, the author: (a) reviewed detailed definitions of bullying, (b) provided information on the current bullying prevention programs that are readily used throughout the United States and Europe, (c) offered additional information through a review of meta-analyses on the effectiveness of these programs in the United States, (d) presented information on why certain populations are more at risk for being bullied, (e) presented a definition of social justice and a discussion of bullying as a social justice issue, (f) and presented research as to why psychologists have a role in promoting social change through bullying prevention.

Bullying has become much more prevalent in today's society, yet there are mixed results when it comes to the overall effectiveness of bullying prevention programs. As stated previously, bullying occurs when a student is exposed, on more than one occasion, to negative actions by one or more students (M. B. Greene, 2006; Olweus, 1986, 1991, as cited in Olweus, 1993). National data support that approximately one in four students in middle and high school have been bullied (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2017). Therefore, bullying can no longer be considered as simply an experience that students are forced to endure throughout their school years, but rather an experience that, unless prevented, yields long lasting mental health sequelae, including depression and suicidal ideation. Though bullying is gaining more attention in the media, current bullying prevention programs have failed to encompass all aspects of bullying prevention that would make them most effective. Therefore, this critical review of the

literature involved examining bullying prevention through a social justice lens in the hopes that future researchers could look further into the role of social justice in bullying prevention.

Current popular bullying prevention programs, like the OBPP, provide a framework for an effective bullying prevention program. At the same time, such programs originated in Europe where school populations tend to be more homogeneous in nature (Evans et al., 2014). In addressing the effectiveness of such programs in the United States, attempts to implement prevention programs have noted budgetary constraints and cultural diversity as considerations (Evans et al., 2014). There is a scarcity of prevention studies addressing the power imbalance associated with bullying, as well as the relevance of bullying prevention programs in impoverished and disadvantaged communities, where financial resources are limited and an imbalance of power is part of everyday experiences.

It is noteworthy that when prevention programs have been studied for their effectiveness, the research has shown that certain groups are more at risk for bullying. However, researchers often stated it was not their central aim to explain this finding, causing very important information to remain unexplained. Ultimately, though current bullying prevention programs have provided the necessary framework for a successful bullying prevention program, most have failed to address an integral part of the definition of bullying, namely that bullying involves an imbalance of power.

An imbalance of power seems to play a role in explaining why certain groups are more prone to bullying victimization. The research clearly indicates certain populations are more at risk for bullying than others. For example, though the research is relatively scarce and somewhat contradictory, studies have shown there is a correlation between race/culture identity and bullying. Research has also indicated students who identify as LGBTQ suffer from high rates of

bullying and are at a higher risk for subsequent mental health problems. Current laws known as “No Promo Homo Laws” do not protect students, and in fact make them more susceptible to bullying both inside and outside of schools. Additionally, research has shown there is a distinct correlation between belonging to other minority groups and bullying, as is the case with those who come from lower SES families, those from immigrant families or have immigrated to the United States, and those with different religious or spiritual backgrounds. Furthermore, research has indicated students who suffer from emotional and physical disabilities may be at a higher risk for bullying. Overall, the research shows students who have been identified as being in minority groups have an increased likelihood of being bullied, indicating bullying involves a violation of the right of all students, regardless of any particular minority status, to a safe school environment. As such, bullying can be conceptualized as a social justice issue. It is this author’s hope that with the data presented in this dissertation, future researchers will look more closely at the impact of bullying on various populations, and ultimately create a bullying prevention program that directly addresses the imbalance of power that affects the safety of at-risk groups while at school.

As stated earlier, in order for bullying prevention programs to be effective, bullying must be thought of as a social justice issue. According to the definition of social justice, every person has an equal opportunity to goods and services (Bell, 1997, as cited in M. Polanin & Vera, 2013, p. 304). However, when students are bullied, especially when they are bullied based on their minority status, they do not have equal opportunity to goods and services (i.e., educational and extracurricular resources). This is in direct violation of their rights, therefore making bullying a social justice issue. Further, school leaders have a responsibility to teach about social justice issues and cultural diversity. Previous research has shown that if schools adopted more of a

human rights framework, then perhaps bullying prevention programs would be more effective (Olweus, 2001, as cited in M. B. Greene, 2006).

More recent research is being conducted into how teaching social justice in the classroom affects students. *Teaching for social justice*, a term coined in the 1990s, features two core components: teaching teachers to foster social consciousness and encouraging students to act toward social change (Ayers, Hunt, & Quinn, 1998, as cited in Kraft, 2007). One model in particular requires teachers to infuse social justice into their everyday teaching “by teaching about issues of social justice, by practicing socially just teaching, and by fostering a socially just school community” (Kraft, 2007, p. 79). Kraft (2007) also integrated culturally relevant teaching practices into this model. Though not addressed in this article, it is the belief of the current author, based on a comprehensive review of the available literature, that culturally relevant teaching practices are an integral piece to a successful bullying prevention program. It is the hope that when students are taught about other cultural backgrounds and beliefs, they may learn to be more accepting of others’ differences and the imbalance of power, translated into the school environment from society at large, may be mitigated. Teaching for social justice is still a relatively new concept and the goal should be to empower both minority and more privileged students to work toward social change together (Kraft, 2007). This concept is a crucial component to incorporate into bullying prevention programs as it can reduce the imbalance of power between a bully and victim, making bullying prevention programs more successful at reducing bullying behavior.

Though the author of this dissertation asserts that bullying prevention programs must integrate social justice components in order to be effective, it is still unclear precisely what role psychologists play in both social justice and bullying prevention. As stated prior, research has

indicated that clinical, counseling, and school psychologists have a role as agents of change within society, but what exactly the role is remains unclear. For example, the *Guidelines for Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organizational Change for Psychologists* state that “psychologists are in a position to provide leadership as agents of prosocial change, advocacy, and social justice” (APA, 2003, p. 382) in order to promote social understanding and an appreciation of multiculturalism. Additionally, psychologists must be culturally aware and sensitive in relation to clients and their needs (APA, 2003). Further, the fifth principle in these guidelines states that psychologists are able to promote social justice and racial equity, which is supported by psychologists’ awareness of their impact on other people and influence on others, both professionally and personally throughout society (APA, 2003; Comas-Diaz, 2000). Therefore, it appears as though psychologists may play a more unique role in promoting social justice as they can teach others about the importance of multiculturalism and cultural sensitivity. By working with teachers and school personnel to promote multiculturalism and social change within the school systems, psychologists can help increase cultural sensitivity and thus reduce racially-based bullying.

Conclusion

Throughout this dissertation, several themes emerged that are important to integrate into a new and more effective bullying prevention program. First and foremost, bullying prevention programs should be multi-level and take a whole-school approach. In order for bullying programs to be more effective, they must include the full participation of school faculty, staff, and students. School-, individual-, classroom-, and community-level components must also be integrated into a successful bullying prevention program (Olweus & Limber, 2010). As stated prior, though empathy training and teaching social justice are crucial components of a successful

bullying prevention program, they cannot be used as stand-alone components and must be addressed through a whole-school bullying program (B. H. Smith & Low, 2013). Additionally, as previous research demonstrated that minority students are at a higher risk of being bullied, students may benefit from school-based minority support groups. These support groups could be integrated into bullying prevention programs so students who are more prone to bullying victimization have the opportunity to receive support from others with similar circumstances. Finally, it is crucial that topics such as empathy and social roles are not only discussed in formal bullying prevention programs, but also integrated into everyday teaching in the classroom. It is the hope that with additional education on empathy and multiculturalism, the imbalance of power in schools will diminish, and bullying will ultimately decrease. By empowering students and teachers to promote social justice within their schools and communities, all students will have an equal opportunity to a fair education.

This dissertation provided a focused review of the key components included in current bullying prevention programs. In addition, it illustrated the need for social justice to be integrated into these programs in order to make bullying prevention more successful. For instance, though it has already been determined that the whole-school approach is a necessary component to a successful bullying prevention program, social justice can be integrated into the whole-school approach by providing psychoeducation on social justice and asserting that bullying is a social justice issue. This includes thorough and accurate definitions of bullying and social justice, as students, teachers, and staff may not be aware that the definition of bullying includes an imbalance of power and that social justice involves equal access to all resources, including education and safety. Developers of bullying prevention programs can also encourage school leaders to display posters throughout the campus that demonstrate the need for equality and

promote multiculturalism and prosocial behaviors among students. Second, classroom components can include posters and signs that remind students about bullying prevention and social justice. As stated prior, it is crucial that teachers integrate multiculturalism and social justice into everyday language and throughout the curriculum in order to be effective. Further, students must be taught about social justice and cultural competency at an early age in order to increase empathy and reduce the imbalance of power. At the individual level, students must be encouraged to speak out when they witness bullying, both in general and when it is specific to groups representing a minority inside and outside of the school, and should be supported when they ask for help.

School personnel and parents should be provided with psychoeducation regarding the special risks some students face (e.g., LGBTQ students). There also must be increased monitoring during recess and lunch, with special attention given to at-risk students. At the community level, lawmakers and officials play an important role in providing more funding to schools in order to effectively train school personnel and systematically implement these types of prevention programs. Psychologists, through the environment-centered approach to prevention, can also assist in creating change at this level. Psychologists can join with legislators in advocating for change in order to increase the awareness of the impact of bullying on students and the role of social justice in bullying prevention. In addition, leaders of graduate programs may want to consider teaching and training graduate students in psychology in primary prevention and environment-centered approaches in order to encourage future psychologists to be agents of change within their communities. Hopefully, it is through this community-level component that people will begin to understand the long-lasting negative impact of bullying on students and the need for an effective bullying prevention program that integrates social justice

into all its components. Last, it is crucial to note that bullying prevention is not solely comprised of a one-time prevention program, but requires an ongoing effort to create deeper and more profound change in the school and surrounding environments. It is therefore important that psychologists and school personnel work toward creating and maintaining prosocial school environments using prevention approaches that create and maintain the more profound changes that are necessary for successful bullying prevention.

Overall, the author of this dissertation sought to demonstrate that bullying is a social justice issue and there is a need for effective bullying prevention programs in schools across the United States. Though previous programs varied in their success in reducing bullying in schools, it has been argued that social justice is a key component that is missing from the already created bullying prevention programs. Teaching about and integrating social justice into school programs may reduce the imbalance of power among student populations, which can ultimately reduce bullying. The current study was intended to encourage researchers to advocate for more effective and inclusive bullying prevention programs in order to reduce bullying and provide every student an equal opportunity to thrive in school.

Potential Limitations

First and foremost, this critical analysis did not address cyberbullying. However, researchers have recently begun to focus on the implications of cyberbullying for children and adolescents. In addition, there are multiple online resources for children and parents who are victims of cyberbullying, including multiple phone applications. Though cyberbullying is an important topic to discuss and perhaps also view through a social justice lens, it was beyond the scope of this study.

Additionally, this critical review used several meta-analyses and existing data that were inherently biased. Specifically, meta-analyses are prone to publication bias, leading to more inflated significant effects. As well, when comparing effect sizes across studies, meta-analyses include both randomized experiments and observational studies, making it difficult to draw accurate conclusions regarding effect size. An inaccurate effect size could cause readers to misinterpret the effectiveness of a study. Finally, it cannot be assumed that all of the techniques used within the meta-analyses were consistent, as variables may have been coded differently from study to study (Bartolucci & Hillegass, 2010).

Third, though the concept of bullying has been a focus of study in the fields of psychology and education since the late 1990s, compared to other concepts in psychology it is still in its infancy, as is evident by the various definitions of bullying (Hymel & Swearer, 2015). Therefore, information regarding the long-term negative impact of bullying on others is relatively limited, as is information regarding the effectiveness of prevention programs in the United States. In addition, though social change has been written about and addressed in multiple studies, the connection between bullying and psychologists as agents of social change is still extrapolatory, and few researchers have looked at this connection. Further, there is not as much information available regarding social justice and prevention, both theoretically and empirically, as there is for other more established and well-researched psychological constructs. Thus, it is important to note that the application of social justice principles, such as the imbalance of power, to the study of bullying prevention is inferential and based on this author's interpretation of the literature reviewed.

Last, this critical review demonstrated a clear overlap between the educational system and psychology, as both have a role in bullying prevention. Though the author attempted to

consider the role of the educational system throughout this critical review, it is important to note that the focus of this dissertation was on reviewing and addressing bullying from a psychological study framework. Therefore, this critical review did not provide a comprehensive review of the implications of the educational system on the planning and implementation of bullying prevention programs. Despite these potential limitations, it is believed that this critical review of the literature shed light on effective bullying prevention program components, the role of social justice in bullying prevention, and the role of psychologists in designing and implementing bullying prevention programs.

Recommendations for Future Research

The recommendations discussed are based on the findings of this critical literature review and some address the above limitations. First and foremost, it is recommended that future researchers look more closely at the impact of bullying on specific minority groups. Though the author of this dissertation reviewed the prevalence of bullying within different minority groups, it is recommended that future researchers take a closer look at how bullying negatively affects each minority group, perhaps by hypothesizing about the reasons why specific groups are victimized more frequently.

Second, it is recommended that researchers look further at the implications of this study for the development of bullying prevention programs that address the social justice issues discussed throughout. The results of this literature review showed that a more sophisticated theoretical conceptualization of bullying can inform studies about bullying behavior and its prevention. Therefore, though the focus of this literature review was on what bullying prevention programs are missing, it is this author's hope that future studies will inform a bullying prevention program that includes a social justice component focused on minority groups. As well, future

research can perhaps offer a more integrated prevention plan. It also may be beneficial for future researchers to inform prevention program development by conducting a “needs assessment” in various communities and building prevention programs that are specific to the schools’ populations and surrounding communities. This may be more beneficial than attempting to make already well-established programs fit specific populations.

Third, it is recommended that researchers look further into the role of psychologists as agents of social change. Though this critical literature review included a discussion of the role psychologists can play in creating social change, the current research is limited. This critical review of the literature supports that clinical, counseling, and school psychologists do have a role as agents of social change. However, it is unclear as to what the role actually is and how psychologists are expected to enact change. Therefore, it would be important for future researchers to look more closely at the exact role of psychologists in addressing and acting upon social justice issues, specifically in designing and implementing bullying prevention programs, as the current research is relatively new and scarce.

Last, based on the limitations already discussed, it is recommended that researchers look further into whether cyberbullying can also be considered a social justice issue. Though not addressed in this particular literature review, cyberbullying is becoming increasingly problematic in today’s society, and it would be beneficial for researchers to look at its impact on children and adolescents. Moreover, as previously mentioned, compared to other psychological constructs, research on bullying is still in its infancy. Therefore, it is highly recommended that researchers continue to research the concept of bullying and its negative repercussions.

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APPENDIX A

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

February 23, 2017

Elyssa Goodside Cacali

Project Title: Bullying Prevention Programs and Social Justice: A Critical Review of the Literature

Re: Research Study Not Subject to IRB Review

Dear Ms. Cacali:

Thank you for submitting your application, *Bullying Prevention Programs and Social Justice: A Critical Review of the Literature*, to Pepperdine University's Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB). After thorough review of your documents you have submitted, the GPS IRB has determined that your research is **not** subject to review because as you stated in your application your dissertation **research** study is a "critical review of the literature" and does not involve interaction with human subjects. If your dissertation research study is modified and thus involves interactions with human subjects it is at that time you will be required to submit an IRB application.

Should you have additional questions, please contact the Kevin Collins Manager of Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 310-568-2305 or via email at kevin.collins@pepperdine.edu or Dr. Judy Ho, Faculty Chair of GPS IRB at gpsirb@pepperdine.edu. On behalf of the GPS IRB, I wish you continued success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,



Judy Ho, Ph. D., ABPP, CFMHE
Chair, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives
Mr. Brett Leach, Compliance Attorney
Dr. Anat Cohen, Faculty Advisor