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School-wide Bully Prevention Programs Designed for use in Elementary Schools

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SCHOOL-WIDE BULLY PREVENTION PROGRAMS DESIGNED
FOR USE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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A Capstone Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Master of Science Degree in
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

CAPSTONE PROJECT

School-wide Bully Prevention Programs Designed
for use in Elementary Schools

This is to certify that the Capstone Project of
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Has been approved by the faculty advisor and the CE 695 – Capstone Project
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Master of Science Degree in
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Abstract

Every day children all over the world become the victims of bully behavior. The notion of bullying can mean very different things to different people, yet the results can be devastating and long-lasting. Leading the charge in bullying research, Dan Olweus, helped to develop a school-wide bullying prevention program aimed at reducing and ultimately ending bullying in schools. Olweus' research and subsequent prevention program helped lead the charge and push for other school-wide bullying prevention programs. This study will examine the goals, components, evaluation and effectiveness of school-wide bullying prevention programs from all over the world including the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program from Norway; Kiusaamista Vastaaan (KiVa) out of Finland; Walk away, Ignore It, Talk it out, and Seek help (WITS) from Canada; and Steps to Respect: A Bullying Prevention Program developed and implemented in the United States. Although the programs differ in their content and delivery, all seek to stop school and childhood bullying during a child's formative elementary school years.

Keywords: bullying, school-wide prevention program, Dan Olweus, Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, KiVa, WITS, Steps to Respect, elementary

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School-wide Bully Prevention Programs designed for use in Elementary Schools

Introduction

Children of today are challenged by the realities of bullying every day. The term bullying has many different connotations for people. Dan Olweus (1993), a leader in school bullying research and prevention, initially defined bullying as a situation where a student has been subjected to repeated negative actions, over a period of time, by one or more students. The current revised Olweus definition of bullying is “when someone repeatedly and on purpose says or does mean or hurtful things to another person who has a hard time defending himself or herself” (Olweus, et al., 2007). Fellow researchers’ definitions of bullying include: an incidence of bullying has occurred when there is an imbalance of power or strength (Seigle, 2012); it is an aggressive behavior that is repetitive with an intent to harm (Bauer, Lozano, & Rivara, 2007); intentional, uncalled-for, and long-lasting psychological or physical violence (Safran, 2007). Although many definitions state that bullying need be a repetitive act, a single traumatic incident can cause a child to have an expectation and fear that the abuse will continue (Juvonen & Graham , 2014). Despite the vast array of definitions for the term bullying, most, if not all, are indicative of an individual being harmed by another either emotionally or physically. Due to the numerous and varied definitions, it is difficult to establish a complete understanding of the prevalence of bullying, especially in schools (Hong, 2008).

Though bullying occurs in a variety of forms, it can have devastating effects and consequences for children that may be long-lasting. Current research has indicated that the pervasive and cyclical nature of bullying can be dealt with in a school setting. The use of school-wide bullying prevention programs to reduce bullying and victimization is on the rise. A variety of programs exist, yet there are vast differences amongst them.

Review of Literature

Types of bullying

In the realm of bullying, traditionally speaking, there are two main types of bullying: direct and indirect. Bullying that is direct is typically either physical or verbal, whereas indirect bullying is psychological or relational (Baldry, 2004). Physical bullying can be defined as the use of physical actions to harm or threaten another; examples include hitting, kicking, pushing, taking or destroying another's belongings (Wang & Iannotti, 2012). Verbal bullying is usually done face to face and meant to hurt or threaten another, this includes name calling and teasing (Wang, Iannotti, & Nansel, 2009; Wang & Iannotti, 2012). Indirect bullying uses tactics such as spreading rumors, backstabbing, exclusion from group and frequently involve relational manipulation (Juvonen & Graham, 2014). The intent behind both psychological and relational bullying is to hurt someone else through purposeful damage to their social relationships (Wang & Iannotti, 2012).

More recently, a third form of bullying has cropped up: cyberbullying. Cyberbullying involves the use of technology and telecommunications to harass, threaten or hurt another person(s) (Wang & Iannotti, 2012). Individuals send and post hurtful messages, pictures or videos via text messages, emails, social network sites, and instant messages (Hanley, 2009). Cyberbullying can also be used to sexually harass others, which may include the distribution of unsolicited text and/or photos of a sexual nature and the request of sexual acts online or offline (Mishna, Saini, & Solomon, 2009). Studies have found that children and youth who are victims of cyberbullying are less likely to report this to their parents (O'Connell, Price, & Barrow, 2004). The fear of internet privileges being taken away can cause children to be reluctant to tell their parents about any cyberbullying they may experience (Agatston, Kowalski, & Limber, 2007).

Effects of School bullying

Bullying that takes place at schools has only recently, in the last forty to fifty years, been widely studied and written about. It is a dangerous phenomenon that affects children worldwide (Tsiantis, et al., 2013). Reports indicate that every single day, over 160,000 American children skip school, due to a fear of being bullied (Hirsch, Lowen, & Santorelli, 2012). In the United States, an estimated 25 to 50 percent of students have indicated that they have been victims of bullying at some point during their school careers (Hirsch, Lowen, & Santorelli, 2012). On the other hand, between 15 and 20 percent of students have reported bullying other students (Seigle, 2012). School bullying has been seen as a social trend that involves ordinary children in specific circumstances (Horton, 2011).

School bullying is associated with a negative classroom and/or social environment (Juvonen & Graham, 2014). Most students report that they believe bullies are a normal part of school, which is suggestive of bullying being enmeshed in a school's culture (Safran, 2007). Any child who has been bullied or been a bully is at an increased risk to develop issues that affect his/her overall well-being. School bullying has been labeled as a problematic behavior that affects school achievement, prosocial skills, and psychological well-being of both the perpetrator and the victim (Wang, Iannotti, & Nansel, 2009).

Much research has been done on the detrimental effects of bullying. Students that have been victimized by bullying may deal with negative effects on concentration and learning in school, and may refuse to attend school or avoid it altogether (Menard & Grotper, 2014). Past research has found that peer victimization is adversely associated with academic achievement with the link being greater for boys than for girls (Wang & Iannotti, 2012). Due to a lowered sense of self-efficacy, victims of bullying tend to have lower academic achievement than their

peers and are more likely to be absent from school (Williams & Kennedy, 2012). Research has also found that students feel less safe and less satisfied with school life when bullying behavior and problems occur in the school and in schools where the bully and victim problems are not dealt with (Menard & Grotzinger, 2014).

The effects of bullying can be profound and long-lasting. A child may experience feelings of stupidity, shame, unattractiveness, failure, have psychosomatic symptoms like headaches or stomachaches, or be physically injured (Menard & Grotzinger, 2014). Victims usually have more internalizing problems like depression, loneliness, anxiety and suicidal ideation (Wang & Iannotti, 2012). In early childhood, between the ages of 3 and 6, internalizing problems are stable (Leadbeater & Hoglund, 2009). Victims, particularly girls, are more likely to have mental health conditions, with reported higher rates of depression and suicidal ideation (Baldry, 2004). Rigby (2000) indicated that if teachers, peers or parents provide social support, the negative consequences of bullying can be reduced; it is expected that a positive relationship with parents will protect a child against the effects of victimization and reduce the child's risk of developing poor mental and physical health because the student may feel more supported thus they are more likely to report problems and seek out help.

Bullies have higher incidence of externalizing problem behaviors like substance use and violent behaviors (Wang & Iannotti, 2012). Externalizing problems such as physical aggression and hyperactivity can be detected and stable in early elementary school grades (Leadbeater & Hoglund, 2009). Reports have indicated that parents of bullies are generally less supportive of their children; this can lead to vaster feelings of anxiety and insecurity (Baldry, 2004). It is difficult to say with certainty that a child who participates in bullying behavior will have low self-esteem as other studies have suggested that bullies can have both higher and lower self-

esteem than non-bullies (Patchin & Hinduja, 2010). In the long term, bullies are more likely to be convicted of crimes in their adulthoods (Olweus, 1993).

Students who are bully-victims are at the most risk for having both internalizing and externalizing problems (Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003). It is more likely that these children will be hyperactive, have a greater chance of being referred for psychiatric consultation and have lower self-esteem than their peers; they may also have fewer friends and be more stigmatized (Holt, Finkelhor, & Kantor, 2007).

Profiles of Victims and Bullies

Every child has the possibility of being a victim of bullying, a perpetrator of bullying, or a bully-victim. Different research has had different results regarding the profile of bullies and victims. Olweus (2003) identified two types of victims, passive/submissive and provocative victims; around 80 – 85 percent of the time the victims are passive/submissive. Other researchers have indicated that there are similar characteristics amongst victims of bullying and perpetrators of bullying. Children who display internalizing symptoms, cry easily, overly fearful, sad, have excessive worry, may become chronic targets of peer victimization (Leadbeater & Hoglund, 2009). They may also have poor social skills and poor peer relationships (Casebeer, 2012). Olweus (1993) wrote that victims may have a combination of both an anxious and aggressive reaction pattern, may be hyperactive and behave in ways that may irritate others and create tension. It should be noted that relational aggression amongst girls can take place within or outside a popular clique (Safran, 2007). Bullies, on the other hand, demonstrated have beliefs that support aggression and tend to enjoy a higher social standing among their peers (Casebeer, 2012). Oftentimes they are impulsive, have a strong need to dominate others, have little empathy for victims and have a positive view of themselves (Olweus, 1993).

Researchers have indicated that gender and race differences exist in terms of bullying. It is more common to find boys involved in bullying than girls (Baldry, 2004). Boys, typically viewed as aggressors, are usually the ones to use physical violence (Stassen Berger, 2007). Girls are more likely to employ the indirect method of bullying known as relational aggression more so than physical aggression and more girls have indicated that they have been hurt by relational aggression than boys (Leadbeater, 2010). Despite this, boys and girls have similar rates and proportions of victimization, though several studies have found that boys are more often bullied than their female peers (Baldry, 2004). Wang, Iannotti and Nansel (2009) conducted a study of American school children and found that African-American and Hispanic adolescents are more likely to be perpetrators of bullying rather than victims when compared with their Caucasian counterparts.

School -Wide Bully Prevention and Intervention

School bullying began to be universally recognized and researched in the 1970s by researcher Dan Olweus (Tsiantis, et al., 2013). Due to the numerous tragic consequences related to bullying incidences along with the need for more psycho-educational programs, many bully prevention programs have been created (Newman - Carlson & Horn, 2004). Universal programs were created to prevent bully behavior and violence in schools by training students, teachers, and staff about the issues; most programs also aim to change the entire school environment, since everyone in the school is affected by bullying (Orpinas, Horne, & Staniszewski, 2003).

Researchers Smith, Schneider, Smith & Anadidou (2004) stated that the use of a whole-school approach is grounded on the notion that bully behavior and peer victimization are systemic problems, and any intervention program must be directed at the whole school instead of individual bullies or victims. The most successful antibullying prevention programs typically use

a holistic approach, which is based on a socio-ecological perspective (Tsiantis, et al., 2013). In these types of programs, the school environment is seen as a system comprised of both social relationships and networks that can be made better as change occurs across the entire school population (Cowie & Jennifer, 2008) An advantage of using a whole-school approach, is that it removes the potential issue of stigmatizing the victims or bullies, and provides information to the entire school community about bullying and what the appropriate response is (Smith , Schneider, Smith, & Ananiadou, 2004)

It is common that school wide prevention programs include training educators to recognize and intervene successfully in bullying incidences, informing students about bullying, changing their attitudes and incorporating parents (Mishna, 2008). Olweus (1993) noted that adult involvement is a necessary requirement in counteracting bully behavior and victimization in a school-based program; it is essential that adults do not view bullying as an expected part of a child's life.

Bullying Prevention during the Elementary Years

It is important to begin executing prevention programs in a child's early childhood years, as bullying can become more pervasive later on. Bullying, both by peers and siblings, as well as victimization has been witnessed in children as young as preschool, and this advocates for addressing bullying early (Ostrov, et al., 2008). Bullying has appeared to become more persistent in the later stages of primary school, thus it would seem that the implementation of a bullying prevention program that is targeted at this age group is both timely and necessary (Tsiantis, et al., 2013). Although there are a variety of school-wide bullying prevention programs aimed at all elementary grades, approaches need to be more akin to the developmental differences that exist from children in kindergarten to students in 6th grade (Leadbeater & Sukhawathanakul, 2011).

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

In 1983, three male students in Norway, aged 10 to 14, committed suicide as a result of bullying; their deaths sparked a national movement in Norway to end bullying and youth aggression (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003). Norway's Ministry of Education appointed psychology professor Dan Olweus to do large-scale research and construct an intervention program about bullying and victimization (The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program: A proven school-based program to reduce bullying, 2005). This resulted in the program, the First Bergen Project Against Bullying, known today as the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (Limber, 2011). It has the distinction of being the first comprehensive whole school intervention program that has been implemented on a large scale and systematically evaluated (Smith, Schneider, Smith, & Ananiadou, 2004). The Olweus program was designed to function as a multi-level and multi-component school based program that focuses on the decrease of school bullying, with a hope of complete elimination of the behavior (Olweus, 1993). It can, and has been, put into practice at all school levels - elementary, middle and high schools (Limber, 2011).

The main goals of the program are to reduce existing bullying and victimization problems, both in and out of school, prevent the development of new issues and create a more cohesive school community (Olweus, 1993). Schools must work to restructure their environment in order to lessen the opportunity for bully behavior and any rewards associated with the behavior; it is also important to build community amongst students, administrators, teachers and staff (Limber, 2011). Additionally, the program was based around four principles needed to create a positive and safe environment for students (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003). Adults in the school should be interested in the students and demonstrate warmth; there should be set limits in regards to unacceptable behavior; consistent, non-physical and non-hostile negative

consequences should be used when school rules are broken; and adults need to act as the authorities and be positive role models (Olweus, et al., 2007).

At the heart of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program are the components that combine to create the program. The core components are targeted at the school-level, classroom-level, individual-level and community-level (Bauer, Lozano, & Rivara, 2007). It is through these components that a school will have the best chance of having a reduction in bully behavior and victimization; that being said, the program is highly dependent on teachers, students and parents faithfully and fully implementing the program with fidelity (Stephens, 2011). Specific measures were generated for use at the school, classroom, and individual levels (Olweus, 1993).

The focus of the school-level is on each and every student. Olweus (1993) stated that actions are to be directed at the development of attitudes and conditions that decrease the amount of bully behavior and victimization at a school. One of the first steps is to establish a bullying prevention coordinating committee (BPCC) typically composed of 8 to 15 members; members are representatives from the administration, teachers, nonteaching staff, counseling and mental health professionals, parents and other school professionals (Olweus & Limber, 2010). During the first year of the program, the committee meets once a month and is chaired by either a counselor, administrator, prevention specialist or other staff member that is an on-site Olweus coordinator (Limber, 2011). The program manual written by Olweus et al., (2007) specifies that a certified Olweus trainer provides at least one year of consultation to the on-site coordinator.

The primary responsibilities of the bullying prevention coordinating committee are to attend a 2-day training by a certified Olweus Bullying Prevention Program trainer; develop a plan to implement the program in school; share the plan with school staff, students and staff; confirm that the committee is synchronized with other prevention and intervention efforts in the

school; provide one full day of training to all staff prior to implementation of program; get feedback from all parties involved about implementation of the program; and represent the program to the community (Olweus, et al., 2007; Limber, 2011). It is encouraged that each year new staff members are supplied with training, and that supplemental trainings are given that offer additional information about topics of interest (Limber, 2011).

Assessment of school bully behavior and victimization is a huge part of the efforts at the school level. Schools administrator the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire, an anonymous self-report measure, prior to the implementation of the program and then at regular intervals (Solberg & Olweus, 2003). Created to assess student experiences and attitudes about bullying, the questionnaire is given to students in grades 3 through 12 (Limber, 2011). In regards to reliability, at the individual level the questionnaire has an internal reliability in the .80s or higher (Limber, 2011), while Solberg & Olweus (2003) note that for the school unit reliabilities have been in the .90s. Data gleaned from the questionnaire is helpful in that it will raise awareness about school bullying, help the bully prevention coordinating committee make specific plans about ways in which to implement the program, and allow for an assessment of change over time (Olweus & Limber, 2010).

In addition to the coordinating committee and questionnaire, school staff meetings are held to discuss the program, a coordinated system for supervision is developed and a school kick off is held (Hong, 2008; Olweus D. , 2004). Having staff discussion groups enables there to be a whole-school approach to bullying and victimization (Stephens, 2011). The school must provide good supervision of students' activities, such as recess and lunch time as well as in "dead zones", or areas in which bullying is usually out of an adult's sight; adults need to be prepared to

intervene quickly and decisively and report any incidents of bullying (Olweus, 1993; Stephens, 2011).

The school-level component and the classroom level portion of the prevention program usually occur simultaneously. A major focus at this level is to raise awareness of the problems of bullying and to promote empathy for all students who are bullied (Hong, 2008). One of the first things that is done is to implement four classroom rules, that all students are expected to follow: “We will not bully others; we will try to help students who are bullied; we will try to include students who are left out; if we know that somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and at home” (Limber, 2011). These rules are meant to foster democratic, whole school participation (Stephens, 2011). Olweus & Kallestad (2010) determined that the classes which had adopted these rules had greater reductions in bullying.

Classroom meetings, led by the teacher, are held to discuss and bring awareness to bullying and students learn how to deal with it; related topics are also discussed (Stephens, 2011; Limber, 2011). Ideally, classroom meetings occur regularly, at least once a week at the elementary level and every other week at the secondary level, and preferably towards the end of the week; doing this allows discussion of events from the previous week and for a plan to be put in place as to how to follow up and respond to them (Olweus, 1993). Parents are involved at this level, not in classroom meetings but they are asked to participate in information meetings with the teachers to nurture a united front against bullying (Hong, 2008; Stephens, 2011).

Although both the school and classroom measures are implemented to reduce and curb incidences of bullying and victimization, bullying may still occur. If a bullying incident comes to the attention of the adults in the school building, there are additional actions that can be taken. Follow-up meetings are held with all students involved, both the bully and the victim; these

meetings are done separately, and more often than not, parents are present (Limber, 2011).

Parents of the bully are encouraged to tell their child to stop the bullying behavior, while parents of the victim are encouraged to persuade their child to make friends with a confident and kind student (Stephens, 2011). The meetings can be lead by administrators or counselors, but it is recommended that whenever possible the student's classroom teacher is involved (Olweus & Limber, 2010).

The primary aim for the bullies is to get them to stop the bullying (Limber, 2011). Bullies are also informed that there will be consequences for their actions. This may include an apology to the victim; paying for any damage to the victim's possessions; verbal reprimand; sitting outside principal's office during recess; time – out; school will contact bully's parents; or a removal of privileges (Stephens, 2011). Victims are provided support, parents are informed, and safety plans are developed, when appropriate, with the assistance of the student (Olweus, 1993). Often, there is a development of an individual intervention plan, which in some cases, can require students involved to switch classes or even schools (Stephens, 2011).

The many layers incorporated into the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program are all necessary for the program to be successful and effective. It has been said that an optimal approach to program implementation involves the selection of the on-site coordinator and administration of the questionnaire in the spring; staff training is to take place in August, prior to the start of the school; and that a school-wide kickoff is held at the beginning of the fall semester (The Olwues Bullying Prevention Program: A proven school-based program to reduce bullying, 2005).

The initial evaluation of the First Bergen Project against Bullying (as it was known then) took place in Bergen, Norway. A total of 2,500 students, from 42 elementary and middle schools,

participated (Olweus, 2003). Students were from 112 classes in grades 4 through 7, between the ages of 10 and 15 (Olweus, 1993). Each of the grades and age cohorts had approximately 600 – 700 students with a roughly equal distribution of boys and girls (Olweus, 2005). The project was part of a national campaign, so it was not possible to use an experimental study with schools randomly assigned to the program (Limber, 2011).

Data was collected using the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire and was given in May of 1983, about four months before the intervention program began (Olweus, 1993). The intervention program started in October and was in place for a 20 month period between October 1983 and May/June 1985 (Olweus, 2005). New data was gathered in May of 1984, eight months after the introduction of the program, and then again in May of 1985, twenty months after the program began (Olweus, 1993).

Olweus (1993) reported that the first evaluation of the bullying prevention program led to reductions in indirect, direct and in bullying others by a decrease of 50 percent and more; these numbers are statistically significant. In terms of being bullied, students reported a reduction of 62 percent after the first eight months and 64% after 20 months; in regards to bullying other students, they reported a reduction of 33 percent after the first eight months and 53 percent after twenty months (Olweus & Limber, 2010). This information was gleaned from the self-reported bully and victim questionnaire. The data also indicated that there was a clear reduction in antisocial behavior such as truancy, drunkenness, vandalism, fighting with police, and pilfering (Olweus, 2004). Additionally, students' perceptions of the school environment improved, which included increased satisfaction with school and improved discipline and order (Olweus, 1993).

Since the original evaluation, further studies have been conducted. Six follow up evaluations have taken place in Norway, which involved more than 20,000 students from over

150 schools. Olweus & Limber (2010) looked at data from students in grades 4 through 7 and consistently found positive effects from the program. A five-year study was done in Oslo, Norway, between October 2001 and October 2006, at 14 schools and had about 3,000 students at each of the five assessment points; this resulted in relative reductions of 40 percent in self-reported bully victimization and 51 percent in self-reported bullying (Olweus & Limber, 2010). Again, data was taken from the anonymous self-reported Olweus Bullying Questionnaire.

Several studies have been carried out in the United States which have had mixed results. The first time the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program was evaluated in the United States was in the mid-1990s in South Carolina elementary and middle schools in a quasi-experimental study (Olweus & Limber, 2010). Students in these schools were predominantly African-American and the school districts were mainly in the low socioeconomic category (Limber, 2011). The Olweus Bullying questionnaire (OBQ) documented there was a 16 percent decrease in bullying among students in the intervention schools, whereas the comparison schools had a 12 percent increase (Limber, 2011).

Bauer, Lozano and Rivara (2007) implemented the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program in Seattle middle schools, seven of which were in the intervention group and three were considered control schools. The researchers used the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire to uncover both the students' involvement and perception of bully behavior (Limber, 2011). They observed significant program effects in both physical (37 percent relative decrease) and relational victimization (28 percent relative decrease) for Caucasian students, but found that the program was not as effective for students of other races and ethnicities (Bauer, Lozano, & Rivara, 2007). Information gleaned from this study is contradictory to the results from the South Carolina study,

thus it is important to consider all available studies when deciding if the program should be implemented for non-Caucasian students.

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program has been on the cutting edge in terms of bullying prevention as well as school-wide action. Well-researched and frequently evaluated, the program has shown to be successful in the decrease of bully behavior and victimization in schools. That being said, one must be careful not to assume that the program is effective for all students. As with anything else, more information needs to be gathered and further research conducted so as to track and analyze the effectiveness of the program.

Kiusaamista Vastaan (KiVa)

Kiusaamista Vastaan (KiVa), meaning “against bullying”, a Finnish anti-bullying program was developed by the University of Turku and funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (Karna, et al., 2011a). The program was created in response to a World Health Organization report and intended to be for Finnish comprehensive schools, which is grades one through nine (ages seven through fifteen); the objective was for the program to be appropriate for countrywide application (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012; Garandau, Lee, & Salmivalli, 2014; (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012b). In the conception of the program, a total of three versions were created for use among students. These versions are based on the developmental stage of the child and include a version for grades 1 – 3, grades 4 – 6, and grade 7 – 9 (Karna, et al., 2011a). The grade and age range for the KiVa program could be used in American elementary schools, as it covers all (except kindergarten) grades typically housed in the school. If used, this program begins combating bullying early in a child’s developmental and educational journey.

The KiVa prevention program chose to primarily focus on the bystanders of bullying and created a program that looked at their attitudes. It has been suggested that it may be more effective to use interventions to influence a bystander than bullies; for the most part, bystanders agree that bullying is wrong, and feel empathy for the victim (Salmivalli, 2010). The intent of the program was to create more empathy for victims of bullying amongst bystanders and to develop useful strategies in assisting victims (Juvonen & Graham, 2014). By not stepping in to help victims of bullying, bystanders allow the cycle to continue, and thus, support the bullies; the KiVa program is centered around the idea that “positive changes in behaviors of classmates” can in effect, limit the incentives felt by the bullies and the motivation for bullying (Karna, et al., 2011a).

The program itself, like other school-wide programs, involves the entire school population: teachers, administrators and other staff. It is desired for the program to become a part of a school’s atmosphere and eventually part of its ongoing bully prevention efforts (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012b). Within the constructs of the program, there are two general areas in which efforts are placed, universal actions and indicated actions (Garandeau, Lee, & Salmivalli, 2014).

Universal actions, which are for all students, consist of a series of ten 90-minute lessons that center on bullying and are delivered during the course of the school year (Garandeau, Lee, & Salmivalli, 2014). The lessons are intended to bring awareness to the role of groups in continuing bullying, increase empathy toward the victims of bullying, and to encourage children to develop their own strategies to support a victim and hopefully raise their own self-efficacy (Karna, et al., 2011a). The main message is that students and their peer groups are capable of putting a stop to bullying, thus it has an influence on the attitudes and actions of a bystander (Ahtola, Haataja, Kama, Poskiparta, & Salmivalli, 2012).

Classroom teachers generally are responsible for the lessons that range from bullying and consequences, respect, emotions, group pressure; the lessons incorporate discussions, group work, short films, and role-play opportunities (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012b). A unique aspect of this particular program is its use of a virtual learning environment, a computer game, which is tied to the overall themes of each lesson; the game enriches what was taught during the lesson and allows students to practice their skills (Garandean, Lee, & Salmivalli, 2014; Karna, et al., 2011b). An additional piece of universal action includes a parent guide, web resources for teachers and staff, and aids that remind both students and school staff of KiVa (posters, highly visible bright vests worn by playground/recess supervisors) (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012a).

Indicated actions occur when an instance of bullying arises and is brought to the attention of administrators and/or staff (Garandean, Lee, & Salmivalli, 2014). A team of three teachers, or other school staff, meet with the classroom teacher and discuss every case of bullying that has been witnessed or shared with the staff (Karna, et al., 2011a). After this occurs, the victims and bullies are called in individually for small group and/or individual discussions; during this time, the victim(s) is asked to pinpoint welcoming classmates and then these classmates are given the task of finding ways to support the victim (Williford, et al., 2012). The purpose of these conversations is to end the bullying straightaway.

The first phase of evaluation for the KiVa program took place during the 2007 and 2008 school year with a participation total of 156 schools (78 intervention schools and 78 control schools) with students in grades 4 – 6; data was collected at three different times: May of 2007, December of 2007 or January of 2008 and finally in May of 2008. (Garandean, Lee, & Salmivalli, 2014; Karna, et al., 2011a). Students took an internet based questionnaire, which was compromised of the Participant Role Questionnaire and revised items from the Olweus

Bully/Victim Questionnaire; these questions challenged students to think about situations in which someone was bullied and measured bullying and victimization (Karna, et al., 2011a).

Karna, et al. (2011a), studied the results of the first phase and found that the KiVa anti bullying program was indeed successful in reducing overall bullying and victimization amongst the students. More specifically, by the end of the school year, the intervention schools had a 30% decrease in self-reported victimization and a 17% decrease in self-reported bullying when compared to the control schools (Karna, et al., 2011a). Additionally, the program was able to reduce undesirable bystander behavior, such as fortifying the bully, and increase students' empathy toward victims and self-efficacy in both support and defense of victims (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012a). Upon the completion of this study, the program was given the go ahead and disseminated throughout the entire country of Finland.

After the initial evaluation phase of the program, subsequent analyses have been conducted on the effectiveness of the KiVa antibullying program. In the second phase, children in both elementary (grades 1 – 6) and secondary (grades 7 – 9) schools had the opportunity to partake in the KiVa program and again the program proved to be effective based on the information that was gleaned from a web-based student questionnaire (given in May of 2009 and again in May of 2010) that provided feedback from the program; the KiVa program effects were statistically significant for the elementary grades, with 4th grade having the highest statistical significance (Karna, et al., 2011b). Overall, the program was found to more significantly reduce bullying and victimization in the elementary school levels, with varied results for the grades 7 – 9 and tended to depend on gender; KiVa had larger effect sizes in regards to reduction in bullying and victimization rates in male students (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012b). Karna, et al. (2011b) mentioned that when the program was broadly disseminated the effect sizes were

smaller, this can be attributed to two factors: schools in the study did not have as much interest as those that participated in the the random controlled study and they were more heterogenous. Additionally, it is important to note that the program had more of an effect on victimization rates than it did for rates of bullying (Karna, et al., 2011b). In the first year that the program was disseminated nationwide bullying and victimization decreased by 15% (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012a). On the whole, the program has been successful and has added to the overall environment of the schools.

The main goal of the KiVa antibullying program is to decrease the amount of bullying and victimization in a school, yet there are a variety of other ways that it effects both the individual student and the school. Williford, et al., (2012) looked at data collected prior to the implementation of the program and then twice during the course of program and noticed that students' levels of social anxiety dropped more quickly for those who received the interveniton than those in the control group. Also, students in the KiVa program self-reported less depression than those in the control group, yet these results are not statistically significant (Williford, et al., 2012). School-wide effects included an increase in liking school, more academic motivation and higher academic performance (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012b). Not only has the program been shown to effect the students, it has lead teachers to feel more competent to deal with bullying than teachers in control schools (Ahtola, Haataja, Kama, Poskiparta, & Salmivalli, 2012).

In spite of the positives of the KiVa antibullying program, one must be careful not to draw broad conclusions. For the most part, the program has only been employed in Finland, a primarily Caucasian country, where only about 3% of the population are immigrants (Karna, et al., 2011b). This being said, there is no data to support the use of this program in ethnically diverse areas, like the United States. The program has in fact been shown to be useful, yet many

questions remain. For that reason, more research must be conducted before promoting a more global implementation.

Walk away, Ignore it, Talk it out, and Seek help (WITS)

WITS, an acronym for Walk away, Ignore it, Talk it out, and Seek help was developed in Canada, with an aim to target children who are in kindergarten through third grade (Leadbeater & Sukhawathanakul, 2011). The WITS Rock Solid Primary Program came about through a collaboration between the Rock Solid Foundation, the Greater Victoria School District 61, and developmental psychologists from the University of Victoria's Centre for Youth and Society in response to incidents of violence that had occurred across North America, specifically Canada (Leadbeater, 2008; Høglund, Hosan, & Leadbeater, 2012). The use of the WITS acronym is helpful for younger children as it is simple to remember and provides developmentally appropriate strategies and skills to deal with conflict (Høglund, Hosan, & Leadbeater, 2012). The goal of the program is centered around targeting a child's socially capable behavior, which will eventually lead to the reduction of risk for peer victimization and a more responsive environment for prevention (Høglund, Hosan, & Leadbeater, 2012; (Leadbeater, 2008). A multi-component program, WITS, utilizes not only the school setting, but works to incorporate students' families, playgrounds and communities as well ((Leadbeater & Høglund, 2006; Leadbeater & Sukhawathanakul, 2011). The three main components are the classroom, emergency service providers and parents (Leadbeater, 2008).

Classroom teachers are asked to combine WITS into their reading or language arts, social studies and health curriculum by using specially selected books that concentrate on bullying and begin to plant seed about the WITS message (Høglund, Hosan, & Leadbeater, 2012; Leadbeater & Sukhawathanakul, 2011). Additionally, the curriculum strives to work on social

skills, as well as personal responsibility and planning (Leadbeater & Hoglund, 2006). Within the WITS manual, a list of early childhood books that use children characters who solve relational struggles is given and teachers are instructed to use these in their lessons; the manual specifies the exact WITS message(s) that each book endorses and offers ideas for classroom activities, such as role-playing, drawing and creative writing that reinforce the WITS message(s) incorporated in the storybooks (Leadbeater, 2008). The program has no real parameters about the number of books that are read or the order of which the activities and questions are completed, but at a minimum teachers are encouraged to read at least one book in a month's time (Hoglund, Hosan, & Leadbeater, 2012; Leadbeater & Sukhawathanakul, 2011).

Unlike other school-wide prevention programs, WITS works to include emergency response providers such as police, fire fighters and paramedics, into how the program is run in order to reinforce the WITS messages (Leadbeater, 2008). These individuals are invited to be part of the annual startup campaign at the school-wide gathering held at the beginning of each year (Leadbeater & Sukhawathanakul, 2011). Police officers typically hold a fun and hands-on swearing-in ceremony for the students, during which time every student is given the title of a WITS Special Constable; the intention is for all students to be responsible in keeping their peers and school safe (Hoglund, Hosan, & Leadbeater, 2012). The role of these individuals does not end after the initial ramp up ceremony. Ideally, the emergency service workers make monthly visits to classrooms over the course of the school year; the visits are meant to serve as encouragement to the students and again, reinforce the message that WITS is important outside school as well (Leadbeater, 2008). In addition, children are given activity workbooks, bookmarks, pencils and other items to be reminders of the WITS message (Leadbeater & Hoglund, 2006). Schools may also have members of the University sports teams, as well as

members of local sports teams visit the students; this is beneficial in that it allows students to have positive role models and can demonstrate their knowledge of WITS (Leadbeater, 2008).

Recognizing that parents and guardians are a largely influential force in a child's life, the WITS program sought to include them in the program. Parents are provided with the WITS for Siblings and Friends brochure which offers information for dealing with peer conflict and how the WITS program can be continued at home (Leadbeater & Hoglund, 2006). It is encouraged that parents fortify the WITS program in their home through the use of WITS language, books, and the WITS "time out" (Leadbeater, 2008). It is necessary for all three components to be in play for the WITS program to be as effective as possible.

A five-year study done by Leadbeater & Hoglund (2006) began in the fall of 2000, and followed 1st grade students from 17 urban schools and 41 classrooms; the purpose of the longitudinal study was to determine the overall effectiveness of the WITS program. Baseline data was collected at the beginning of first grade and subsequent data was collected at the end of first, second, third and fifth grades. (Leadbeater & Hoglund, 2006). Data was taken from children's self-reported peer, relational and physical victimization which was assessed using the Social Experience Questionnaire, as well as information teachers provided on the Early School Behavior Rating Scale (Leadbeater, Hoglund, & Woods, 2003). Leadbeater & Hoglund (2003) found the program to be successful in the reduction of peer victimization, but were unsure as to which of the components and settings had the most effect. Leadbeater and Sukhawathanakul (2011) conducted a quasi-experimental study, and chose to center the research around students in grades kindergarten through 3; in order to participate in the study, schools must have implemented the WITS program one year prior to the evaluation. This study supported previous research that has shown the effectiveness of wide-ranging programs can in fact decrease

incidents of peer victimization (Leadbeater & Sukhawathanakul, 2011). A third study done by Hoglund, Hosan and Leadbeater (2012) tracked a group of 432 students in grades 1 through 3 over a period of 6 years. They found that using the WITS materials and activities once a month led to a decrease in peer victimization through both physical and relational means in comparison to the control group, with effect sizes of .17 and .20 respectively (Hoglund, Hosan, & Leadbeater, 2012). The authors do caution that bullying prevention in elementary schools may not be enough to stop victimization in the future (Hoglund, Hosan, & Leadbeater, 2012).

Steps to Respect: A Bullying Prevention Program

Steps to Respect: A Bullying Prevention Program, an American created school wide bullying prevention program, was set up to decrease issues that arise from school bullying. This program was exclusively designed for elementary students in grades 3 - 6 (Hirschstein, Van Schoiak Edstrom, Frey, Snell, & MacKenzie , 2007). In order to accomplish a reduction in bullying, the three areas that were identified are (1) an increase in staff cognizance and observation of bullying behavior, (2) introduce students to concept of being socially aware and responsible and (3) teach both social and emotional skills that can stop bullying and advocate for positive relationships amongst peers (Frey, et al., 2005). Ultimately, the goal of the program is to change students' attitudes about the permissibility of bully behavior, have students increase empathy towards their bullied peers and for students to understand their role and responsibility as bystanders (Brown, Low, Smith, & Haggerty, 2011). The overall themes of the program are based on the theory that the attitudes of students, and their norms and behaviors are connected to the amount of bullying incidents that occur (Brown, Low, Smith, & Haggerty, 2011).

Steps to Respect is balanced around three core elements, staff training, classroom curriculum, and parent engagement (Frey, et al., 2005). All schools that decide to implement the

bullying prevention program are provided with training for all school staff; typical training sessions are between three and six hours which include a presentation about the goals and significant aspects of the program (Brown, Low, Smith, & Haggerty, 2011; Frey, et al., 2005). Administrators, school counselors and teachers receive two additional training sessions that touch on techniques that can be used to help students who have been involved in a bullying incident, and teachers are oriented to the lessons and given tips and strategies on how to present them to their classes (Frey, et al., 2005; Hirschstein, Van Schoiak , Frey, Snell, & MacKenzie , 2007; Brown, Low, Smith, & Haggerty, 2011).

In terms of the classroom curriculum, there are three distinct levels. Level 1 is for either grade 3 or 4, Level 2 is for grade 4 or 5 and Level 3 for grade 5 or 6 (Frey, et al., 2005). A total of ten to eleven lessons, which have been somewhat drafted for instructors, concentrate on social-emotional skills that facilitate healthy peer relationships, emotion management, and being able to distinguish, decline and report any bullying behavior (Frey, et al., 2005; Hirschstein, Van Schoiak , Frey, Snell, & MacKenzie , 2007; Low, Frey, & Brockman, 2010). Varied topics consist of joining a group, the difference between a tattle and a report of bully behavior, and how to become a conscientious peer and spectator (Frey, et al., 2005). Teachers are encouraged to use a mixed methods approach such as whole classroom instruction, large and small group discussions, games and skills practice (Brown, Low, Smith, & Haggerty, 2011). To further impress upon students the importance of the lessons, teachers use grade appropriate children's books to bolster what they have been taught (Frey, et al., 2005).

The final area of the program is hinged upon parental engagement. School administration notify parents about the Steps to Respect program and inform parents of school policies, rules and procedures in regards to bullying; additionally an informational packet is shared with parents

that provides basic information about the program (Frey, et al., 2005). Letters are frequently sent home during the course of the lessons that specify the exact nature of the lessons, main ideas and skills and actions that can be done at home to reinforce what has been learned at school (Brown, Low, Smith, & Haggerty, 2011).

There have been very few studies conducted on the Steps to Respect program, therefore most of the research comes from the same data. Six elementary schools from the Pacific Northwest were randomly assigned to either the school-wide bully prevention program or to the control group and students in grades 3 – 6 participated in a year long study (Frey, et al., 2005). The initial research, done by Frey, et al., looked at the effect of the Steps to Respect program on playground bullying and supportive beliefs (2005). Using data collected from student surveys, (done once in fall and again in spring), playground observations (October through December and April through June) and teacher rating done on the Peer-Preferred Social Behavior scale, they found that bullying behavior decreased in the interveniotn group, but did discover that 77.0% of students had in fact bullied another student or encouraged the bully (Frey, et al., 2005). Additonally, Frey, et.al., (2005) discovered during the study that students in the control group became more accepting of both bullying and aggression. Overall, a decrease in the bullying behavior and supportive attitudes can be attributed to the program.

Researchers Hirschstein, Van Shoiack Edstrom, Frey, Snell and MacKenzie (2007) viewed the relationships between teacher application of the Steps to Respect program and student outcomes and results. They determined that schoolroom execution, specifically the adherence of the teachers to the program, related to an observed positive change in aggressive behavior, victimization and bystander action on the playground (Hirschstein, Van Schoiak Edstrom, Frey, Snell, & MacKenzie , 2007). The program also appeared to be quite beneficial for

the older elementary (grade 5 and 6) students (Hirschstein, Van Schoiak Edstrom, Frey, Snell, & MacKenzie , 2007). Low, Frey and Brockman (2010) chose to examine relational aggression, like gossip and social exclusion, and the effectiveness of the Steps to Respect program. Again, the use of above mentioned study was used to do this. Female students were more likely to be involved in gossip, as either the gossiper or the victim of gossip, than male students (Low, Frey, & Brockman, 2010). The program did prove to be successful as there were roughly 234 less incidents of gossip during the spring and 270 less victimization due to gossip occurrences (Low, Frey, & Brockman, 2010).

A study of 33 northern Californian elementary schools took place during the 2008 – 2009 school year, and was conducted by Brown, Low, Smith, and Haggerty (2011). Schools were randomly assigned to either the intervention or control groups. Brown, Low, Smith, and Haggerty (2011) report that a total of 3,119 students participated in the study. The program was discovered to have a statistically significant effect on student climate, lessened physical bullying, and fewer school problems related to bullying (Brown, Low, Smith, & Haggerty, 2011).

As a whole, Steps to Respect has very little research on the effectiveness of the program. Some of the studies that have been conducted have indicated that rates of bullying, students perceptions and attitudes have decreased, yet it may be difficult to attribute it solely to the program. It is important for more research to be conducted on the reliability of the program.

Discussion

Data and numbers collected about bullying clearly indicate that it, especially that of school bullying, is an issue that affects a great number of children. Due to the nature of school bullying and its implications for the students involved and the school community, school-wide bullying prevention programs appear to be one of the best strategies to utilize as it is far reaching. Olweus' research and program started a movement that has swept the field of bullying research and changed how bullying is researched and how programs are created and implemented. Four different bullying prevention programs were presented briefly, yet it is important to do more research before choosing one to use in a school.

Implications for School Counselors

The American School Counselor Association national model (2003) states that school counselors are to work to reduce bullying through classroom guidance, individual and group counseling, responsive services and system support. (American School Counselor Association, 2003). In this way, school counselors are critical to the implementation of school-wide bullying prevention programs, as most programs utilize individual and/or small groups counseling for both victims and bullies which are services that counselors already employ on a regular basis (Bauman, 2008).

School counselors, although not the final decision makers in regards to implementing a school-wide bullying prevention program, are able to offer advice and suggestions about which program may be most appropriate for his/her school. A school counselor can educate administrators, teachers, staff, parents and students about bullying in terms of what constitutes bullying, what causes bullying behavior, the effects of bullying as well as preventive strategies

and interventions (O'Moore, 2000). It is school counselors who are the most well-equipped to advocate for bullying prevention programs, and they should be leaders in the implementation, delivery and evaluation of the programs (O'Moore, 2000).

Limitations

Although there are quite a few school-wide bullying prevention programs that exist, not all have as much research to support their claims of effectiveness. Of the four programs that were presented, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is the most researched, which may lead one to believe that it is the best program. The Olweus program has had a significant amount of research done in the United States, as well as the initial evaluation in Norway, yet it is still difficult to generalize the results to students of all races and ethnicities in countries across the world. Unlike the Olweus program, KiVa program has only been evaluated in Finland, a primarily Caucasian country, and again it is tricky to make broad statements about the effectiveness for all students. Another factor to consider would be socioeconomic status, which again, was not examined closely for any of the programs. Schools that are considering implementing a program should carefully look at all aspects of a program and then decide if it would be the best fit for their school population. Further research must be conducted so that schools are better able to make more informed decisions about which program would appropriately meet the needs of their students and school.

Author's Note

I have always believed that school bullying is an important issue that must be taken seriously. Entering into middle school, I soon learned the harsh realities of bullying as I found myself becoming a victim. Since then, I have been very passionate about the prevention of bullying behavior and hoped to one day be in a position to assist children. Working as a school counselor will allow me to be in the trenches and be an advocate and ally for all students.

Through my research I was not surprised to discover that the middle school years are a time during which bullying behavior is most prevalent. I came to understand that a student's elementary school years are an excellent time to not only educate students about bullying, but also learn strategies to prevent it. Additionally, I was fortunate to be in an elementary school during my practicum experience and it was there that I had the opportunity to see the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program at work. I have been fascinated by the information that I uncovered about all of the prevention programs, and look forward to being a part of the process as a school counselor.

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