The Bullying Phenomenon: Definition, Prevention, and Intervention

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A Thesis submitted to the Department of Child & Youth Study

in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (Child and Youth Study)

Spring, 2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank countless people for their support.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my husband Don

My children, Elizabeth, Madeline, and Alexander,

and my supervisor, Dr. Carmel French.

Without their encouragement, support, and patience,

this venture would not have been possible.

ABSTRACT

Bullying not only affects victims, but also perpetrators, bystanders, and society at large. Despite concentrated efforts from schools, community organizations, and governing bodies, not only has traditional bullying continued, but bullying has now carried over to cyberspace. Until a better understanding of the motivations behind bullying acts is identified, this phenomenon will continue. This study sought to enhance current knowledge regarding bullying, specifically participant's understanding of bullying and cyberbullying, and their reaction to being involved in or witnessing bullying incidents.

One hundred and eighty-one first and second year students at Mount Saint Vincent University who were enrolled full-time in an arts, science or professional program completed a researcher designed questionnaire. The majority of the participants were female (76.9%) between the ages of 18 and 20. Qualitative analysis, using a modified grounded theory approach, was used to analysis participants' responses to open ended questions. Quantitative data analysis of dichotomous items was limited to the calculation of means, ranges, and percentages. As the number of participants in the gender, age, university program, and ethnic groups were so skewed, statistical comparisons were not feasible. Participants were divided fairly evenly by geographic region, but Chi square calculations revealed no statistically significant differences between the two groups.

The majority of participants (63.9%) reported being bullied, 26.7% reported bullying others and 82.2% reported witnessing bullying incidents. They also had a good understanding of what constitutes bullying, noting that it went beyond physical harm,

typically occurred more than once, and was usually intentional. Interventions, unfortunately, only took place 20.5% of the time and of these, slightly over half were viewed as effective in stopping bullying acts.

Many reasons for both bullying and stopping bullying behaviours revolved around peer influence; bullies sought peer acceptance via bullying others, and ceased behaviours when peers did not provide the desired attention. Another explanation given for bullying was the bully seeking an increase in self worth and to feel better about themselves by making others feel worse.

These results suggest that increasing peer intervention and decreasing peer approval may be an effective method to aid in the discontinuation of bullying behaviours. The results of this study also suggest that an effective preventative approach may be to find other means of increasing potential perpetrator's self esteem and confidence.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Bullies and bullying acts have been around for centuries. Most parents and

grandparents can relay stories of their own childhood experiences with bullying

behaviours. They have been written about in some classic children's literature, such as

The Queen of Hearts in *Alice in Wonderland*, Josie Pye in *Anne of Green Gables*,

Drizella and Anastasia Tremaine in *Cinderella*, Bill Sykes in *Oliver Twist*, and Gaston in

Beauty and the Beast. The difference between fictional antagonists and the dynamic

between real bullies and their victims is that the 'good guy' does not always win. Victims

of bullying, when compared to uninvolved peers, are at a greater risk of experiencing low

self-esteem, depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, psychosomatic symptoms (such as

headaches, abdominal pains, and sleep disturbances) and are also more likely to exhibit

violent behaviours (American Medical Association (AMA), 2010; Ball, Arseneault,

Taylor, Maughan, Caspi, & Moffitt, 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010b; Gini & Pozzoli,

2009; Brown, Jackson, & Cassidy, 2006).

Not only does bullying negatively affect victims, it also affects the outcomes for

many bullies. Children who bully are four times more likely to be convicted of a serious

crime by the age of 24 than are those who do not bully (AMA, 2010; Center for the Study

and Prevention of Violence, 2007, as cited in Piotrowski & Hoot, 2008). In addition,

children and youth who bully others have been found to have more suicidal thoughts than

uninvolved peers (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010b). Like victims, bullies are more likely to

suffer from social isolation, depression, and psychosomatic symptoms (AMA, 2010; Gini

& Pozzoli, 2009). Children and youth who bully are also at greater risk for alcoholism

and antisocial personality disorders as adults (AMA, 2010). Perhaps one of the most

concerning effects of being a bully is that, without help developing pro-social problem solving skills, these children and youth are very likely to grow up to bully their girlfriends/boyfriends, spouses, and children (Ma, 2001; Vitaro, Brendgen, & Barker, 2006). All children and youth involved in bullying are at a greater risk of emotional, social, and psychiatric problems that may persist into adulthood (Gini & Pozzoli, 2009; Mishna, 2004).

Typically, bullying takes place at or after school, in community based programs and, increasingly, in cyberspace (via the internet and cellular phones). It may take the form of physical abuse, verbal abuse, intimidation, humiliation, or exclusion. The actual rates of bullying are hard to determine due to difficulties in identifying bullying and a suspected lack of reporting (Ma, 2001; Peterson & Ray, 2006). In the case of cyberbullying, rates do vary considerably, however the reported rates are steadily increasing. According to Public Safety Canada (2010), studies have found that approximately six percent of 12 to 19 year old students have admitted to bullying others on a weekly basis, eight percent disclose being bullied weekly, and one percent find themselves as both a victim and a bully on a weekly basis.

Given what is known of immediate and long-term effects of bullying, for all parties, it is imperative that effective programs and practices are put into place to minimize damage and prevent further victimization. Stakeholders involved in the lives of children and youth have been attempting to do just this for years. Parents are becoming more aware of bullying, and advocating for the safety of their children. Most school boards across North America, and worldwide, are implementing peaceful policies and programs in their schools, daycares and preschools. Before and after school staff are also

more aware of bullying and anti-social behaviours, and are attempting to quell these behaviours and model more pro-social solutions to adversity among children and youth.

With all of these measures in place, with all of the research and knowledge that is now available, why is bullying still so ubiquitous? Not only is it prevalent, but it is evolving and expanding into new forums as advances in technology take place. Child and youth professionals should question why tormenting others is so satisfying. What is the gain that supersedes the working moral code? If bullying in society is to be eliminated, or at least significantly minimized, these positive reinforcers must be realized. Once the motivation to humiliate, degrade, and cause suffering to others is better understood, then perhaps professionals and stakeholders will be more successful. Conceivably, children, youth, and adults can be taught pro-social behaviours and activities to fill the existing void and satiate whatever this need may be.

With this goal in mind, the purpose of the present study is to build upon current knowledge regarding why bullying occurs, its impact, and why bullies victimize others. By understanding the needs that bullying behaviours satisfy, we can begin to develop, and implement, effective *preventative* programs. Introducing pro-social programs should render the desire to bully ineffective.

Definition of Terms

Bullying - Bullying is a repeated act carried out with the intent to harm another. It causes an imbalance of power, either real or perceived, between the perpetrator and the victim. Bullying behaviours and actions may include verbal abuse, physical abuse, and/or the use of threatening non-verbal body language. This may include such things as name calling,

threats, intimidation, exclusion, spreading gossip, hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting, and taking or damaging others' property.

Cyberbullying - Cyberbullying is a relatively new form of verbal and/or written bullying that takes place via the internet and cellular phones. Some examples of cyberbullying include sending embarrassing photos by way of cellular phones or photo sharing websites, repeatedly sending threatening or rude messages by text, email, instant messaging, or other online forms of communication, posting defamatory comments on social networks, and excluding others from message boards, chat rooms, online games, and other areas of the internet.

Bully - The perpetrator of a bullying act towards a weaker person.

Victim - The target of a bullying act.

Intervention – An act in which another party becomes involved in order to change a current situation. For the purpose of this study, intervention means that either a person or persons have taken action to stop an active bullying incident, or specific programs have been put into place to change current bullying behaviours, giving both bullies and victims alternate, pro-social methods with which to interact appropriately in society.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Bullying is a worldwide phenomenon that has devastating effects on victims, bullies, families, schools, communities, and society at large (Malete, 2007). By the age of 24, children who bully are four times more likely to have been convicted of a serious crime than those who did not bully others (Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 2007, as cited in Piotrowski & Hoot, 2008). The actual rates of bullying have been difficult to determine due to a lack of understanding as to what is, and is not, bullying (Ma, 2001). There is also evidence that bullying may still be largely unreported due to fear of making the bullying worse, embarrassment, and feelings that reporting will not help (Peterson & Ray, 2006).

Traditional Bullying

Bullying, in the traditional sense of mainly physical and verbal intimidation, aggression, or assault, has plagued school yards and playgrounds for decades. As previously mentioned, it has been difficult to determine consistent rates related to traditional bullying. However, in a cross-national study, consisting of 202,056 adolescents from 40 countries, Craig, et al. (2009) found that 26% of their participants admitted to being involved in bullying: 10.7% reported being perpetrators, 12.6% reported being victims, and 3.6% reported being both a victim and a bully. As consistent with other research, Craig, et al.'s study also reported an overall decline in prevalence rates between the ages of 11 and 15.

Both male and female bullies from various age groups around the world exhibit signs of an inability to express emotions, a lack of empathy, a poor self-image, jealousy, depression, anxiety, academic problems, poor school adjustment, drug and alcohol abuse, isolation, delinquent behaviour, and/or conduct disorders (Connolly & O'Moore, 2002; Gini & Pozzoli, 2009; Lee, 2010; Ma, 2001; Piotrowski & Hoot, 2008; Vitaro, et al., 2006). In a qualitative study conducted by Carlisle and Rofes (2007), adult victims of childhood bullying reported feelings of vulnerability, fear, anxiety, anger, depression, suicidal ideation, and the development of psychosomatic symptoms such as bed-wetting. All children and youth involved in bullying are at a greater risk of emotional, social, and psychiatric problems that may persist into adulthood (Gini & Pozzoli, 2009; Mishna, 2004). The findings from Carlisle and Rofes (2007) regarding the long-term effects for the victims of bullying are also consistent with those reported in a study carried out by Olweus in 1993. Similar to Olweus, participants in Carlisle and Rofes (2007) study reported ongoing symptoms of isolation, shame, anxiety, thoughts of revenge, and difficulties in developing adult relationships. Despite the increased knowledge of incidents of bullying and its overall impact on development, traditional bullying is still prevalent in society today. In addition, there is a new generation of bullies joining the phenomenon; namely, the cyberbully.

Cyberbullying on the Technological Playground

Advances in computerized technology and internet access, however, have occasioned a new form and avenue of bullying, namely "cyberbullying" (Marden, 2010). Giles (2004) estimated that approximately 12 % of six to nine year olds, 49% of 10 to 14 year olds, and 80% of 15 to 17 year olds in Australia used text messaging at least once a

day (as cited in Brown, Jackson, & Cassidy, 2006). David-Ferdon & Feldman (2007) state that over 80% of adolescents owned at least one media communication tool, such as a cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), or computer with internet access. The authors note that youth use these technologies primarily for texting, instant messaging, emailing, blogging, and accessing social networking sites, in order to talk to people worldwide, communicate more easily with friends and family members, and quickly access information to increase their knowledge. Calvert (2002, as cited in Brown, et al., 2006), and David-Ferdon & Feldman (2007) suggest that such technology also provides an unique opportunity for youth who have difficulty developing face-to-face friendships to socialize in an online world.

Unfortunately, with an increase in the use of computerized technology has come an increase in cyberbullying (Qing, 2006). As Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor (2007) point out, the internet provides an ideal forum for verbal and written bullying, which may include hurtful threats, rumors, and gossip. The main differences between traditional bullying, which continues to be a concern for many, and more recent cyberbullying, are that cyberbullying can now occur anywhere at any time (including the safety of one's home), the victims often do not know who is targeting them, and malicious material can be distributed rapidly, widely, and without fear of erasure, thus giving a cyberbully an unique sense of power and control (Brown et al., 2006; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010a; Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Qing, 2006). Regarding the latter, Marden (2010) and Willard (2005), have both identified two types of perpetrators as the most common, namely social climbers and those who are retaliating against their own victimization.

Although definitions of cyberbullying vary, essential characteristics are provided in Willard's (2005) description: "cyberbullying is disseminating harmful or cruel speech or engaging in other forms of social cruelty using the internet or other information communication technologies" (p. 1). Comparable to psychological and indirect forms of traditional bullying, the intention of cyberbullying is to "harass, intimidate, threaten, or otherwise harm others" (Patchin & Hinduja, in press; p. 4). Cyberbullying may take the form of name calling, spreading rumors and gossip, threatening, intentionally embarrassing, teasing, telling lies, or excluding (David-Ferdon & Feldman, 2007; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010a; Marden, 2010; Patchin & Hinduja, in press; Wolak et al., 2007). To this point, Willard (2005) has offered seven terms, subsequently incorporated by other researchers (Brown et al., 2006; Marden, 2010; Qing, 2006), to denote different types of cyberbullying (italics inserted by writer): "*Flaming* - Sending angry, rude, vulgar messages; *Harassment* – Repeatedly sending offensive messages; *Cyberstalking* – Repeatedly sending threats of harm or highly intimidating messages; *Denigration (put-downs)* – Posting untrue or cruel statements; *Impersonation* – Pretending to be someone else to make that person look bad or place in danger; *Outing and Trickery* – Posting material that contains sensitive, private information about another person or forwarding private messages, engaging in tricks to solicit embarrassing information that is then made public; *Exclusion* – Intentionally excluding a person from online group" (p. 1).

From a bully's perspective, cyberspace has many advantages, the most prevalent being that the internet allows the cyberbully anonymity (David-Ferdon & Feldman, 2007; Marden, 2010; Patchin & Hinduja, in press; Qing, 2006). Kowalski & Limber (2007) found that approximately half of cyberbully victims did not know who the perpetrators

were. Brown et al. (2006) purport that anonymity gives youth that are disempowered in the real world a sense of power. With anonymity come disinhibition and a lack of social responsibility (Brown et al., 2006; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010a; Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Qing, 2006). Since perpetrators are physically distant, they do not see the immediate emotional response of their victims, thus making it easier to be cruel and malicious (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010a; Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Patchin & Hinduja, in press). Other features of the internet that may be seen as advantageous for a cyberbully are the vast audience that one can reach, and the speed with which devastating information can be dispersed (Marden, 2010).

Cyberbullying rates and perpetrator characteristics. Statistics related to cyberbullying vary considerably, in part due to the lack of a single, accepted definition of the behaviour. Variation in recorded rates may also be due to the age groups under study. For example, Wolak, et al. (2007) found that 89% of youth being harassed online were between the ages of 13 and 17, suggesting that cyberbullying happens at a later age than traditional bullying. These researchers also noted a 50% increase in online victimology between 2000 and 2005. In a 2002 study by National Children's Home (Brown et al., 2006), approximately 16% of children and adolescents were victims of cyberbullying via text messages and the internet. In 2006, Gillis (as cited in Brown et al., 2006) found that one quarter of Albertan seventh graders reported being bullied online. In reporting their current research, citing victim rates as high as 43%, Wolak, et al. (2007) reference findings of their earlier research (2006) which identified highly significant, yet considerably lower, rates of victimization (29%). In 2008, Web Wise Kids (as cited in Marden, 2010) similarly found rates of 43% for teen victims of cyberbullying.

Interestingly, Ybarra, et al. (2007, as cited in David-Ferdon & Feldman, 2007) found that over two-thirds of youth who were victims of cyberbullying were not victims of face-to-face bullying.

Regarding youth who admit to bullying others online, Ybarra and Mitchell (2004, as cited in Brown et al., 2006) found that 15% of their sample admitted to cyberbullying others, while Qing (2006) found that 17% of their sample had cyberbullied other youth. Although reported rates of cyberbullying differ considerably, Wolak, et al.'s research (2007, 2006), which reports incidences of cyberbullying behaviour, indicates a highly concerning increase from 1% to 9% in the proportion of youth who were victims of cyberbullying between 2000 and 2005.

While Willard (2005) and Kowalski & Limber (2007) contend that cyberbullying is more prevalent in girls than boys, other researchers do not, including Marden (2010) who found that girls and boys were equally likely to participate in cyberbullying, and Qing (2006) who found "over 22% of males and close to 12% of females were cyberbullies" (p. 7).

There are numerous forums or modalities through which cyberbullying may occur, including cell phones (with text messages or photos), PDAs, email, and the internet (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010a; Willard, 2005). Within these forums, youth have been found to cyberbully others via instant messaging, chat rooms, message boards, blogs, discussion groups, online journals, social gaming sites, video sharing websites (e.g., YouTube), creating websites for the purpose of targeting another, and social networking sites (such as Facebook and MySpace) (Brown, et al., 2006; David-Ferdon &

Feldman, 2007; Marden, 2010; Patchin & Hinduja, in press; Qing, 2006; Wolak, et al., 2007).

Social networking sites can be defined as "web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 211). SixDegrees was the first social network site, launched in 1997, and youth began flocking to MySpace in 2004 (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Boyd (2007) purports that the use of social network sites facilitates youths' formation of identity, negotiation of status, and sociality with peers. As such, this form of interaction is an important element of teen social life. Boyd further points to four properties of social network sites that are not typically present in face-to-face interactions: persistence, searchability, replicability, and an invisible audience. There are currently over 200 social networking sites, with Facebook, with 400 million worldwide users, and MySpace, with 100 million worldwide users, are the most popular (Marden, 2010). For a more extensive sampling of social networking sites, see Appendix A. According to Boyd (2007), at least 55% of American teens between the ages of 12 and 17 have profiles on social network sites, and a minimum of 64% from 15 to 17 years old. In 2007, Lenhart and Madden (as cited in Boyd & Ellison, 2007) stated that 91% of the youth in the United States, who had social network profiles, used the sites to connect with existing friends.

The three most prevalent components of a social network site are: a profile, a space for 'comments' (by both the individual and their friends), and a list of friends that can be seen by anyone with a profile on the site (Boyd, 2007; Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Boyd (2007) also describes some other common, but not universal, components of social network sites: private messaging/webmail, photo and video uploading ability, built-in blogging, and instant messaging.

Boyd (2007) notes the alluring nature of such sites to adolescents seeking social contact, friendships, and mediums for shared expression. Boyd cautions, however, that these same sites are becoming mediums for bullying and victimization of others, with every indication that their use for such nefarious purposes will only increase overtime.

Correlations Between Traditional Bullying and Cyberbullying

According to Beran and Qing (2007) the rate of cyberbullying is comparable to that of traditional face-to-face bullying with both types of bullying occur 'at least sometimes' for approximately one quarter of students. Results from both the Beran and Qing and Ybarra, Diener-West, and Leaf (2007) studies yielded similar results regarding the rate of youth who are bullied both at school and online. Approximately 37% of those who report being harassed online also reported being bullied, at least occasionally, at school. Interestingly, Ybarra et al. found that the rate of online bullying did not differ significantly based on whether the youth were home-schooled or attended public/private school. This result suggests that youth involved in traditional bullying are not necessarily continuing the same dynamic, with the same people, online. Cyberbullying is happening independent of traditional bullying. Beran and Qing (2007) also found that "children who were bullied both in cyberspace and at school were likely to bully others in cyberspace" (p. 22).

Youth who report being harassed online are more likely to be absent from school, obtain lower grades, have decreased concentration, are more likely to receive detentions

and suspensions, and are eight times more likely to carry a weapon to school than those who are not bullied online (Beran & Qing, 2007; Ybarra, et al., 2007). Beran and Qing (2007) also found that perpetrators of online bullying had poorer concentration in school.

Canadian Statutes and Legislation

Federal laws. While there are laws associated with cyberbullying under the Criminal Code of Canada, they are not specifically directed toward bullying activities. The *defamatory libel* law states that it is illegal to publish information (on a web page or newsgroup) known to be false and harmful to a person, and that may encourage others to ridicule or continue to spread these untruths (Humble, 2008). Under the law, *harassment* includes repeated contact in one (or more) of several ways: emails or text messages that are obscene or threatening, sending the individual copious amounts of junk mail (spamming), conversations that are insulting in chat rooms (flaming), sending electronic viruses, leaving messages on message boards or in guest books that are offensive or inappropriate, and electronic identity theft. These harassing activities are punishable under federal law (Humble, 2010). Victims of *hate or discrimination* are also protected under the Canadian Human Rights Act. This is defined as being targeted due to physical size, age, ethnicity, national or racial origins, color, disability, and/or sexual preference (Humble, 2008). Even then, enforcement may not be feasible due to anonymity and the reluctance of the government to pursue a costly and time consuming effort with little chance of prosecution (Bamford, 2004).

Currently, BullyingCanada.ca and Minister of Parliament Mike Allen, of Tobique-Mactaquac, New Brunswick, are disseminating copies of their 'Anti-Bullying

Legislation Petition' aimed at having the Federal Government of Canada introduce a law against bullying (Bullying Canada, 2010).

Nova Scotia and Halifax Regional Municipal laws and regulations. There do not appear to be any Provincial laws currently in place in Nova Scotia protecting children and youth from acts of bullying. Although there are no laws specific to bullying incidents in the Halifax Regional Municipality, the Halifax Regional Police Department does have a bully hotline that can be accessed via phone, text, and email (Halifax Regional Municipality, 2009).

Halifax Regional School Board Polices. The Halifax Regional Code of Conduct states that "[i]t is the duty of all principals to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to create and maintain a safe, orderly, positive and effective learning environment" (Halifax Regional School Board, 2006). Within the Halifax Regional School Board, each school develops its own Code of Conduct based on the school environment and community, following the guidelines and procedures outlined in section 4 of the Provincial Code of Conduct (Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2008). Under the Ministerial Education Act Regulations, bullying is classified under 'severely disruptive behaviour', which is defined as "behaviour that significantly disrupts the learning climate of the school, endangers the well-being of others or damages school property" (Education Act, 2010, n.p.). Also classified under this heading is such behaviour as vandalism, disruptions in school operations, verbal, sexual and physical abuse, racial and/or discriminatory conduct, sexual harassment/assault, physical violence, use or possession of weapons, and illegal activity (Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2008). Under the Provincial Code of Conduct, schools are directed to share their individualized Code of Conduct with the

school community, design a professional development plan for staff members in

providing peaceful learning environments, offer information sessions to students and

parents/guardians, and document, track, report, and monitor any behavioural incidents as

needed (Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2008). No data is available on the extent

of the implementation of these policies.

Current Trends and Issues in Cyberbullying Research

There is a notable absence of research pertaining to cyberbullying prior to the 21st

century (Berson, 2000; Berson, et al., 2002). Between 2000 and 2004, a small number of

studies emerged that discuss cyberbullying within the broader context of cyber-safety for

children and youth. These early studies concentrated on safety from others and making

wise choices on the internet. As Willard (2000) comments, such research and public

concern is related to the "darkside" of the internet:

> [Darkside] sites contain pornography and other profane and
>
> obscene materials, hate material and violent games, and information about
>
> dangerous or unhealthy activities. The material on "darkside" sites reflects
>
> a negative side of human nature. These sites promote violence and hatred.
>
> They foster sexual and racial harassment and disregard for the rights of
>
> others. They encourage crude attitudes (p. 1).

While not initially addressing cyberbullying, earlier research on the opportunities and

perils of the internet did provide a valuable foundation for understanding the cyberworld

and how children and youth interact with, and within, this environment. Aftab (2000, as

cited in Berson, 2000) expressed concern regarding the effects that cyberspace may have

on children and youth's socio-emotional functioning. This notion is supported by Berson

(2000), who suggests that cyberspace "may transform the very nature of social interactions among youth" (p. 158). As one of Berson's research participants commented, "On the net I am a whole new, worse, person because when you're on the net, it's like a pretend world" (p. 159).

Berson (2000) found that less than 4% of children and youth always discussed their online activities with a parent, caregiver, or teacher, while 26% occasionally did, about 38% rarely did, and 31% never did. Given aforementioned concerns related to the dangers of the internet, Berson (2000), Berson, et al. (2002), and Willard (2000), each asserted that parents/caregivers and teachers were essential to educating children and monitoring their online activities. These researchers also agreed that online filters (such as netnanny) were not successful in protecting youth from the 'darkside', since filters do not block everything and sometimes prevented access to beneficial sites, such as those providing health information and support. Some prevention and intervention methods of the time, suggested by these authors, included Acceptable Use Policies, family guidelines, and supervision (Berson, et al., 2002; Willard, 2000), the most prominent being educating children and youth about awareness, ethical and moral online conduct, accountability, responsibility, tolerance, and respect; thus putting the onus on children and youth to 'do the right thing' (Berson, et al., 2002; Berson, 2000).

Berson, et al. (2002) found that youth involved in this research spent the majority of their online time using email and talking in chatrooms, primarily exchanging insults, sexually suggestive quips, and attacking others' opinions. As previously mentioned, online anonymity and lack of consequences for inappropriate behaviour are serious issues

related to cyberbullying, as identified early in this century by researchers such as Berson, et al. (2002), Berson (2000), and Willard (2000, as cited in Berson, et al., 2002).

In 2004, Bamford stated, "[t]he Web and mobile phones are where adolescents go to talk and catch up with friends. Cyberbullying is a growing phenomenon in virtual communication environments and there appears to be very little that the law, technology, schools or parents can do to stop it" (p.1). According to Spears, Slee, Owens, and Johnson (2009), a dramatic increase in research specific to cyberbullying occurred around 2004. This increase may be due, in part, to the rise in popularity of various media tools used by youth in the earlier part of the century. Topics most commonly addressed in research since 2004 involve: defining cyberbullying, prevalence, anonymity, types of cyber forums (e.g., text messaging, chatrooms, social networking sites), demographics (e.g., age, gender, race) and predictors (e.g., social popularity, bullying behaviour, self-concept, parent-child relationship, substance abuse) for both perpetrators and victims. Within these studies, most researchers offer suggestions for prevention and intervention strategies (Bamford, 2004; Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Katzer, Fetchenhauer, & Belschak, 2009; Menesini & Nocentini, 2009; Rivers & Noret, 2010; Sevcikova & Smahel, 2009). Researchers are also analyzing correlations between traditional bullying and cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Katzer, et al., 2009; Rivers & Noret, 2010; Spears, et al., 2009), the correlation between cyberbullying and technology sales (Rivers & Noret, 2010), and what forms cyberbullying assumes (e.g., rude comments, rumor spreading, threats) (Katzer, et al., 2009; Menesini, Calussi, & Nocentini, 2008; Ybarra, et al., 2007, as cited in Menesini & Nocentini, 2009). While research into cyberbullying has significantly increased, the phenomenon of cyberbullying remains difficult to study due

to its intangible and non-corporeal nature (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). Stemming from such concerns, more recent research has inquired into issues of instrumentation and data collection (including matters of access and reliability) (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010b; Menesini & Nocentini, 2009).

The most common method of data collection in cyberbullying research is via self-report questionnaires with key global questions (Menesini & Nocentini, 2009). The questionnaires may be conducted on the internet (e.g., Hinduja & Patchin, 2008), within a school setting (e.g., Hinduja & Patchin, 2010b; Katzer, et al., 2009; Rivers & Noret, 2010), or by way of a structured interview format (e.g., Sevcikova & Smahel, 2009). Spears, et al. (2009) conducted a longitudinal qualitative (self-report) study in which the participants told their stories relating to cyberbullying. For more examples of methodology and focus in research, see Table 1 in Rivers & Noret (2010, p.647-648). The most profound limitation in self-report data collection is the reluctance for participants to admit involvement in cyberbullying, either as a perpetrator or as a victim (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010b; Menesini & Nocentini, 2009; Sevcikova & Smahel, 2009). Controversy also exists regarding the use of key global questions. Menesini & Nocentini (2009) point out that culture, language, and age may cause different interpretations of the questions. Lastly, Spears, et al. (2009) express the concerns of many when stating, "there is no clear and consistent definition [of cyberbullying] ... as new technologies emerge and Web 3.0 evolves, the definition of cyberbullying will need to be continually revisited" (p. 190).

Cyberbullying and the Media

Media forums

Popular media forums have been addressing the issue of cyberbullying. For example, CBC News Online posted *Cyber-bullying*, the story of victim David Knight, in March of 2005; in November of 2007, Katie Couric ran a story about Megan Meier, a young girl who committed suicide after being bullied online; the Chronicle Herald published *Cyber-harassment: Teens can't escape torment* on June 3, 2010; CBS News ran the story *Detecting, Fighting Cyberbullying of Kids, Teens* in August of 2010; People Magazine published at least two featured stories about cyberbullying in 2010 (*Suicide in South Hadley: Bullied to death?* in February, and *Tormented to death?* in October). Additionally, talk show hosts, such as Dr. Phil (2008), Tyra Banks (2008), Oprah Winfrey (2009), and Ellen DeGeneres (2010), provide examples of celebrities attempting to make public a very serious, and too often privately experienced, problem. Tragically, most of the stories of cyberbullying that reach the media are incidences that have resulted in suicide, a phenomenon now coined c*yberbullicide*.

Cyberbullicide

"*[C]yberbullicide* – suicide indirectly or directly influenced by experiences with online aggression" (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010b, p. 207). To date, few research studies have investigated a correlation between cyberbullying and suicide in children and youth. Hinduja and Patchin (2010b) found that all forms of bullying (traditional or cyber, victim or offender) were significantly associated with suicidal thoughts and behaviours. In fact, "bullying and cyberbullying victims and offenders were almost twice as likely to have reported that they attempted suicide as youth who were not victims or bullies" (Hinduja

& Patchin, 2010b, p. 216). Hinduja and Patchin (2010b) also found that being a victim

was a stronger predictor than being an offender, however, this was not found in all

studies related to traditional bullying and suicide (e.g., Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpelä,

Marttunen, Rimpelä, & Rantanen, 1999, as cited in Hinduja & Patchin, 2010b; Roland,

2002, as cited in Hinduja & Patchin, 2010b). Hinduja and Patchin (2010b) contend that

experience with cyberbullying alone is unlikely to lead to suicide, but in combination

with other life stressors, such as low self-esteem, clinical depression, traditional bullying,

or lack of a support structure, the effects of cyberbullying become exacerbated, and may

lead to suicidal ideations or attempts. Due to the heightened media reportage of

cyberbullicide, and growing public awareness of the dangers that cyberbullying presents,

an increase in research in this area is critically needed.

Future Research, Policy Development, and Practise.

Research. Current literature indicates a critical need for further research in all

areas pertaining to cyberbullying, with several issues warranting particular attention. As

previously mentioned (see Methodological limitations), more efficient and effective

research methods and data measures are necessary in order to reduce limitations

associated with self-reporting (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010b; Menesini & Nocentini, 2009).

With regard to data measures, a clearer, universal definition of cyberbullying must be

developed in order to facilitate the comparison of results in research (Spears, et al.,

2009). More studies need to be conducted that analyze the conditioning variables

moderating the connection between cyberbullying and suicide risk (Hinduja & Patchin,

2010b). Finally, there is a significant paucity of research pertaining to understanding

cyberbullying from the perspective of the bully (Rivers & Noret, 2010). While several

intervention programs exist that assist victims of cyberbullying, the need to understand the reasons behind bullying behaviour remains central to any effective *prevention* programming.

Practise. Researchers seem in general agreement that protecting children and youth from cyberbullying needs to be of shared concern for researchers, parents and guardians, teachers, counsellors, administrators, policy makers, and law enforcement personnel (Bamford, 2004; Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Rivers & Noret, 2010; Spears, et al., 2009). When youth were asked what type of supports they would like, Hinduja & Patchin (2008) found that 23% would like to speak to a bullying expert, 15% would like to speak to a school staff member, and 13% would like to go to a website for advice. Katzer, et al. (2009) also suggest the use of online resources for victims, of which there are currently several (e.g., cyberbullying.com). Bamford (2004), Hinduja & Patchin (2008), and Rivers & Noret (2010) advocate, among other things, stricter monitoring and supervision of youth on the internet. Rivers & Noret (2010) found that "receipt [among girls] of nasty or threatening text and email messages was significantly and positively related to the pattern of household internet connectivity, and household mobile phone ownership" (p. 656). Education, supervision, and monitoring are critical in the development of appropriate online behaviour (Bamford, 2004; Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). Bamford (2004) offers suggestions for parents and teachers, including searching the internet with youth, appropriate modelling, placing computers in visible, open areas, and having open discussions about the 'good' and the 'bad' information that exists on the internet. In order to effectively implement these strategies, parents, teachers, and administrators need to be educated with regard to issues of cyber-safety and ethical use of

the internet (Bamford, 2004). Katzer, et al. (2009) suggest a specific strategy that would empower the students themselves, this being the establishing of school 'cyberpolice', comprised of students, who would supervise popular sites and chatrooms, making themselves available as support for cyberbully victims. Finally, Bamford (2004) discusses the importance of educating youth, particularly toward developing effective decision-making strategies, and a sense of right and wrong independent of external punishments. In this regard, Katzer, et al. (2009) recommend incorporating cyberbullying into the effective, established, violence prevention programs within schools, thereby "promoting cooperative behaviour between adolescents ... and encouraging the development of empathy on the part of the bully" (p. 33).

Canadian Anti-bullying Initiatives

National Resources, Services, and Programs

Canadian based websites. There are numerous online sources of information about bullying that broadly form three groups, depending on their intended audience. The first are sites, such as The Canadian Children's Rights Council and mypolice.ca, that are directed toward *adults*. These websites generally discuss different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), signs to look for in both victims and bullies, how to help your child in both instances, and links to other bullying-related resources (Canadian Children's Rights Council, 2010; myPolice, 2010). The second group is designed for both *adolescents and adults*. The Canadian Red Cross website, as one example, provides a definition of bullying, personal testimonials, information about cyberbullying, and tips for bystanders, parents, and schools. In addition, the website supplies further links to resources and crisis support services (e.g., anti-bullying hotlines) (Canadian Red Cross,

2010). The third group of websites is directed toward *children and youth*. Alberta-based Bullying.org provides users with facts about bullying and cyberbullying, resources, support groups, an area to share stories and events, games, and online courses and webinars for educators (bullying.org, n.d.). Kidshelpphone.ca, based in Toronto, has separate areas for 'kids' and 'teens'. This site provides definitions of bullying, including cyberbullying, information for victims, bystanders, and bullies, forums, and quiz games (Kids Help Phone, 2010). Both sites post links to more bullying information. In addition to definitions, links to current bullying related articles, and discussion forums, stopabully.ca, from British Columbia, offers a national bully reporting system and is designed to assist schools in coping with bullying (Stop A Bully, n.d.).

  Roots of Empathy. Roots of Empathy is an anti-violence program that originated in Toronto in 1996. Nova Scotia adopted the program in 2003, and it has been used internationally since 2007 (Roots of Empathy, 2010). This classroom based program is designed to reduce levels of aggression by raising social/emotional competence and increasing empathy in children (Roots of Empathy, 2010). The program involves all children within the classroom rather than targeting solely those involved in, or victims of, acts of bullying. Approximately every three weeks throughout the school year, an infant and mother visit the classroom with a Roots of Empathy instructor. The children are encouraged to observe the baby's development and identify the feelings of both the baby and themselves (Roots of Empathy, 2010). The goals of these activities are to facilitate the development of empathy and emotional literacy, to increase understanding of human development, learning, and infant safety, to reduce the prevalence of bullying, aggression, and violence, to promote pro-social behaviour, and achieve the long-term

goals of preparing children for responsible citizenship and responsive parenting (Roots of Empathy, 2010). Research into the efficacy of this program has consistently shown positive results (Roots of Empathy, 2010).

Bullying awareness events in Canada. Bully Awareness Week is nationally celebrated in November, during which time each day is devoted to a specific bullying topic (bullying.org Canada, n.d.). These topics, in addition to planning ideas for schools or youth groups, and action plans for individuals can be located at http://www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/. Pink Shirt Day is another nationwide anti-bullying celebration. On this day, Canadians are encouraged to wear pink as a statement against bullying, a grass roots action particularly emphasized in schools (PinkShirtDay, 2010). This event originated in Nova Scotia when two youth at Central Kings Rural High School, in Cambridge, stood up for a new student. Pink Shirt Day is not only recognized in Canada, but also in some areas of New Zealand and the United States (PinkShirtDay, 2010).

Provincial and Municipal Resources, Services, and Programs

Provincial. Peaceful Schools International (2005) is an organization that was founded in Nova Scotia in 2001, and currently supports schools in 15 countries worldwide. This organization provides information and education sessions for parents and teachers, as well as personal development workshops focusing on conflict resolution, addressing aggressive behaviours and disruptive students, and preventing and responding to bullying. Peaceful Schools International also assists schools in developing their own conflict resolution programs and discipline policies.

Leave Out Violence (LOVE) (n.d.) is a nationwide organization with a chapter in Nova Scotia. This non-profit youth organization, which began in 1993, teaches youth to identify violence and develop concrete solutions to end its recurrence. With the use of a multimedia program (including photography, videography, radio broadcasting, and journalism) and leadership training programs, youth develop the needed skills to make presentations in their communities and schools, for both youth and adults, to educate and advocate for an anti-violent community.

The League of Peaceful Schools (Nova Scotia Department of Education, n.d.a), registered in 1998, is part of the Nova Scotia Department of Education, however, the use of this resource is expanding throughout Canada. The Department provides schools with resources and support, assisting in the creation of their own individualized programs to 'improve school climate'.

The Nova Scotia Canada website has a webpage devoted to bullying. It includes a re-enactment video of approximately four minutes, and reassurance for bully victims, imploring them to seek help (Province of Nova Scotia, 2010). Also under the Nova Scotia Canada website, specifically the Education Department (Nova Scotia Department of Education, n.d.b), can be found a catalogue of purchasable videos addressing bullying behaviour.

Municipal. The Halifax Regional Police Department's website provides information for parents of victims and bullies, gives some explanation as to why some youth become bullies, and offers tips on how to cope with bullying (Halifax Regional Municipality, 2009). The Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) created the Safe School division of School Administration in order to facilitate the ongoing development

of peaceful learning environments in their schools (Halifax Regional School Board, 2010a). This is done "[t]hrough presentations to staff and parents on issues relating to student personal safety; [t]hrough workshops for students and staff on Peer Mediation and conflict intervention techniques; [b]y researching resources for schools and conducting teacher professional development around promoting positive school climates and other safe school issues" (Halifax Regional School Board, 2010a, n.p.). As part of this initiative, the HRSB has implemented a Positive Effective Behaviour Supports (PEBS) approach in all schools. PEBS is not a program, nor does it have a specific curriculum. PEBS is an approach "compiled from a broad range of effective practices and interventions based on research validated practices and behavioural science which emphasizes strategies for achieving important social and academic outcomes while preventing problem behaviour" (Halifax Regional School Board, n.d., p. 1). Schools design their individual PEBS program to meet the needs of their own communities. Some strategy examples are Gotchas (a written recognition of a good deed which is entered into a weekly or monthly draw), Busy Buddy Awards (recognition of a good deed by PA announcement and special t-shirt for the day), Fantastic Friday Phone Calls (recommended by teachers and made by the principal), monthly assemblies, and PEBS Patrols (comprised of grade five and six students) (Brookhouse Elementary, 2010). At least one elementary school in the Municipality discusses cyberbullying in the later grades, and divides their students by gender in order to talk more specifically about types of bullying they may be involved in (A. Sinclair, personal communication, October 24, 2010). The Halifax Regional School Board also has its own webpage devoted to bullying information, including cyberbullying. The page is directed toward parents, providing

suggestions for parents related to bullying behaviours, descriptions of school roles and responsibilities, and links to further information (Halifax Regional School Board, 2010b).

Anti-bullying Within the Scope of Child and Youth Care Work

Mills and Carwile (2009) note that the safety and protection of children and youth is a shared responsibility among key stakeholders: "Each of us as a parent, researcher, and/or educator has an obligation to protect our children and our students from psychological or physical harm inflicted by cruel peers" (p. 296). According to Radmilovic (2005), citing Bowlby (1988), the role of child and youth care workers (CYCW) is to provide a 'secure base' for children and youth. That is accomplished, as Mahoney (1991, as cited in Radmilovic, 2005) suggests, through creating a healthy environment and relationship founded on security, trust, emotional support, and respect. Within such conditions, children and youth come to understand that they matter to others and are able to build stronger senses of self, competence, positive identity, and feelings of belonging (VanderVen & Torre, 1999). With knowledge and experience, CYCW are able to foster children's resilience and facilitate the development of skills that give children and youth the confidence and tools needed to stop their own, or others', bullying tendencies and behaviours (France, 2007). In this regard, CYCW hold the significant responsibility of modeling pro-social behaviours and facilitating the development of these behaviours and pro-social relationships among the children and youth with whom they work (VanderVen & Torre, 1999).

CYCW are involved in numerous areas in the lives of children and youth. For example, CYCW are employed in daycares, school-aged childcare programs, schools, hospitals, group homes, residential facilities, mental health programs, and as early

interventionists, visiting families' homes (France, 2007; VanderVen & Torre, 1999).

CYCW may even be consultants at toy factories, assisting in the development of age

appropriate, non-violent toys, or as writers creating awareness regarding child and youth

related topics and current issues (VanderVen & Torre, 1999). Due to the array of roles

and contexts in professional child and youth care, CYCW are in an optimal position to

work with all principals in the lives of children and youth to prevent bullying.

As the American Medical Association (AMA) (2010) asserts, the high prevalence

rates of bullying govern the need for effective prevention and intervention methods in all

areas of a child's life. In order to implement effectual strategies, the Association contends

that caring adults and helping professionals must fully understand the severity and

repercussions of bullying and be adept at identifying bullies as well as victims. According

to Mills and Carwile (2009), helping professionals must be able to identify, and

differentiate, between bullying and pro-social teasing. The U.S. Department of Health

and Human Services (n.d.b.) further notes that these professionals should have a clear

understanding of strategies that work and inadequate strategies that may exacerbate the

issue. In the view of Ma (2001), these requirements necessitate the need for up-to-date

and ongoing anti-bullying training for all professionals who work with children and

youth, training that can be done via local anti-bullying workshops or online workshops

and webinars (bullying.org, n.d.).

Anti-bullying Roles within Child and Youth Care Work

Modeling, educating, and promoting awareness. The AMA (2010) holds that

attitudes and actions of adults are critical in influencing children's behaviours by

"creating a normative climate that promotes peace, respect, and intolerance of bullying

and other aggressive behaviors [and by helping children] shift their behaviors into more productive and socially acceptable channels" (n.p.). In this regard, Maier (1999 as cited in Radmilovic, 2005) sets forth that CYCW represent 'carrier roles' for the development of life skills and values in the children and youth with whom they work. They have the opportunity to facilitate the development of pro-social behaviours by modeling respect and caring for everyone, since children and youth are likely to acquire these attributes through satisfying experiences with persons with whom they have close contact.

The AMA (2010) and other resource and support sources (France, 2007; Prevention Action, 2008) outline that CYCW can implement anti-bullying education in daily programming and routines. More particularly, the AMA suggests that, by openly discussing bullying in group settings, educators and school support staff can make clear what is, and what is not, acceptable behaviour. The AMA holds that with such discussion and support, children may feel more confident to stand up to a bully or report bullying acts to adults. Empowered in this way, children and youth, as bystanders, may be more apt to act on behalf of the victim rather than encourage the bully. The AMA contends, however, that prevention cannot occur with only half of the information. It is not enough to explain what not to do. Children and youth need concrete problem solving skills and pro-social options for dealing with frustrations and emotions. According to France (2007), these strategies can be taught in a variety of ways, including modeling, discussion, and role-playing. Hymel, Rocke-Henderson, and Bonanno (2005) stated in their research that bullies often lack a true sense of empathy for their victims. These researchers go on to suggest that successful intervention approaches may include the

development of empathy and an understanding of how victims feel, both on the part of bullies and bystanders.

Research and advocacy. CYCW may make helpful contributions to research related to bullying (Rickinson, et al., 2009) and play vital roles in applying evidence based bullying research in their daily practices with children and youth (Atrium Society, 2007). Further, VanderVen and Torre (1999) suggest that CYCW may operate as important advocates in community and political contexts to support anti-bullying initiatives on behalf of children and youth.

Families and intervention. The AMA (2010) is supported by considerable research (Lake, 2004; Ma, 2001; Malete, 2007; Peterson & Ray, 2006; Rigby, 2005; Vitaro, et al., 2006) in its statement that "[b]ullying may be an imitation of aggression experienced at home … [m]any childhood bullies are abused by a parent or witness parental abuse of a spouse or siblings. Some also are bullied by their siblings" (n.p.). The critical influence of the family underlines the need for working closely with families in order to increase parental awareness of bullying, clarify what bullying is, and teach parents necessary skills, such as conflict resolution, problem solving, stress management, appropriate discipline strategies, and the modeling of positive social behaviours (AMA, 2010; Lake, 2004; Ma, 2001; Malete, 2007; Peterson & Ray, 2006; VanderVen & Torre, 1999; Vitaro, et al., 2006). As VanderVen and Torre (1999) outline, many CYCW are employed in prevention and early intervention programs, placing them in an ideal position to observe family interactions and relationships, as well as being a liaison between homes and schools or daycares. In this regard, Radmilovic (2005) suggests that once healthy, respectful relationships with families are established, families will be more

accepting of such interventions as weekly family therapy, parent support groups, and training programs (e.g., parenting classes).

Prevention and intervention. As CYCW typically work in conjunction with related and complimentary helping professionals, such as counsellors, therapists, mental health workers, social workers, and probation officers, among others, they ordinarily and appropriately are more involved in prevention and early intervention anti-bullying programming for children and youth (Bertolino & Thompson, 1999). CYCW in daycare settings have the opportunity to implement preventative programming that prepares children to participate in the world in a pro-social manner (France, 2007; Radmilovic, 2005). In this regard, early, developmentally appropriate, social and cognitive skill training, involving problem solving, and anger management strategies can, according to the AMA (2010), be highly beneficial in stemming later antisocial and bullying behaviours that may develop into "generally antisocial and rule-breaking behavior pattern that can extend into adulthood" (n.p.).

Supporting victims. Notwithstanding efforts toward prevention and intervention, CYCW often face the daunting task of undoing the damage that has been done to children and youth who are victims of bullying (Blank, 2005; Education Development Center, 2008). As earlier outlined (see Canadian Anti-bullying section), a number of useful intervention strategies may be implemented to assist victims of bullying. However, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (n.d.b) indicates that mediation is not among these. The assumption in mediation-based strategies is that wrongs have been done by both parties involved. Although this may be effective in an isolated dispute, it is not appropriate in the case of bullying. In cases of bullying situations, mediation may

solidify the power differential between the bully and the victim, resulting in an increase in the aggressive behaviours (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.a; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.b). According to the AMA (2010), when helping adults suspect that a child is being bullied, there are key questions that can be asked, including 'At recess, do you usually play with other children or by yourself?', 'Have you ever been teased at school?', 'How long has this been going on?', 'Have you ever told your teacher about the teasing?', 'If so, what happened?' (see AMA, 2010, Table 2 for additional questions).

When a helping adult is approached by a victim of bullying, it is important to praise the child or youth for their courage in coming forward, and to listen, be supportive, and clear that the situation is not their fault (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.a). When aware of a bullying situation, it is additionally critical to protect the victim's identity, as possible, and to communicate with other adults who spend time with the child, in order to ensure that any interactions between victims and alleged bullies are closely monitored (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.a). According to Peterson & Ray (2006) and Rigby (2005), CYCW can empower victims by assisting in building healthy friendships, encouraging them to talk to their parents, providing opportunities to build social skills and confidence, and beginning the process of counselling or a mental health referral, if necessary.

Interventions for bullies. Some contexts in which CYCW work directly with bullies occur in after-school and community program settings (Blank, 2005; Education Development Center, 2008). Piotrowski & Hoot (2008) suggest that when working with youth it is necessary to teach appropriate alternatives to adverse behaviours rather than

simply punishing unacceptable behaviour. This approach begins with the process of identifying the roots and forms of aggressive behaviour before providing alternative strategies for managing given situations (Radmilovic, 2005; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.b). Such strategies may be taught through self-regulation techniques (e.g., impulse control and emotional regulation), social skills training (such as learning to identify social cues and attributional biases), anger management training, problem-solving and negotiation skills training, and empathy building programs (AMA, 2010; Lake, 2004; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.b; Vitaro et al., 2006). According to Radmilovic (2005), once pro-social skills have been taught, they need then to be transferred to the 'real world', supported by CYCW providing children and youth with opportunities to practice their new skills and celebrate their successes, both internally and externally. In keeping with the multidisciplinary involvements and their key role as referees to helping services, CYCW may, in more severe cases, need to make appropriate referrals, on behalf of children and youth, for behavioural and psychological assessment by qualified mental health professionals (AMA, 2010).

Summary

Well over half of American teens have profiles on social networking sites. As such technological communication has expanded, traditional bullying among children and adolescents has evolved to include electronic forums through which to conduct bullying behaviour. Despite the considerable variation in statistics, the rate of cyberbullying has steadily increased over the past ten years. The use of cyberspace allows a bully the sense of anonymity, disinhibition, and a lack of social responsibility, thus giving the perpetrator an unique position of power and control. The common types of cyberbullying are:

flaming, harassment, cyberstalking, denigration, impersonation, outing and trickery, and exclusion. These acts take place through various forms of online communication and text messaging via cellular phones.

Currently there are no statutes or legislation in Canada specific to bullying activities. Although there is a plethora of research on traditional forms of bullying among children and youth, there exists a critical need for improved definition and measurement related to the increased occurrence of cyberbullying. The reluctance of participants to admit involvement in such behaviours significantly limits the most common form of data collection; self-report questionnaires. More extensive research is needed to better understand the reasons behind bullying behaviours, thus paving the way for effective prevention programming. Paramount to the success of bullying prevention and intervention is awareness and education; not only for children and youth, but adults as well.

Popular media forums and nation-wide awareness programs are attempting to create an understanding of the seriousness of these issues. There are several organizations and online resources, services, and programs accessible to all persons seeking information regarding bullying activities. Schools are also taking an active stance against bullying by implementing programs such as P.E.B.S and Roots of Empathy. It is not enough to prohibit unacceptable behaviour; children, youth and adults must to be given tools, such as problem solving and stress management skills, before appropriate social behaviour can be expected. Anti-bullying prevention and intervention is the responsibility of all stakeholders involved in the lives of children and youth.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains a description of the participants in this study and the measures used. In addition, the research process is described as well as the data analysis process and ethical issues.

Participants

One hundred, eighty-one (181) first and second year students at Mount Saint Vincent University participated in this study. All participants were 18 years of age or older, and enrolled full-time in an arts, science or professional program.

Measure

A researcher-developed questionnaire was used to collect data regarding participants' bullying experiences in which participants were asked to complete all sections that applied to them. Section A included questions dealing with gender, age, and ethnicity. These demographics were used to situate the data collected in subsequent sections. Respondents were also asked to indicate whether they have been bullied, have bullied others, or have witnessed bullying incidences. Depending on their response(s), they were asked to complete all applicable corresponding section(s). If none of these categories applied, the survey was over for the participant. Depending on the number of sections filled out, the survey took between 5 and 30 minutes. Sections B, C, and D were comprised of dichotomous and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions related to issues such as: the types of bullying/cyberbullying experienced, reactions to those experiences, why someone was a target and/or a bully, and whether or not the incidences

were reported and intervention took place. The impact of bullying, and what, if any, satisfaction was derived from bullying was also examined.

Procedure

Following ethics approval at Mount Saint Vincent University, faculty members in various departments were contacted by phone for permission to distribute the survey in their classes. If permission was granted, a follow-up email was sent to the faculty member, confirming class time, number of students, and location. When permission had been granted I arrived at the classes, introduced myself, and explained what I was doing and why.

Students were assured that the information on their questionnaire was confidential and no identifying information was required. Only my supervisor and I had access to the surveys, which would be destroyed once the data was coded and entered on a password protected computer. Students were given an opportunity to ask questions. Surveys were then distributed and students given time to read the covering letter and clarify any concerns. Questionnaires were then completed and collected. Students were thanked for their co-operation and participation and reminded to keep the covering letter so that they could contact the researcher for a summary of the results.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The quantitative data included tabulating percentages for demographics and responses to yes/no questions.

After the data was collected, the researcher began the process of analyzing the data from the open-ended questions on the survey to find emerging themes through a process called coding (Jeanfreau & Jack, 2010). The researcher initially reviewed the

surveys, noting participants' responses. She then looked for similar ideas that appeared several times in responses to questions on the survey which captured the core of the social phenomenon being studied (Madill & Gough, 2008). Re-occurring themes were distinguished and coded in order to determine interconnectedness (Nolen & Talbert, 2011). Themes were also compared to previous literature to establish whether the themes were consistent with previous findings (Nolen & Talbert, 2011).

The researcher was also cautious not to enter the research process with preconceived assumptions and expectations (Hallberg, 2008). The researcher coded and analyzed the data with an open mind to make certain that results were not interpreted in a manner that reflected her point of view. In addition, a blind review of the responses to questions on the survey was also conducted to determine similarities and to calculate inter-rater reliability (97.2%). This process added credibility to the research results (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

Ethics

Confidentiality of participants was ensured both verbally and in written form. Questionnaires were numerically encoded and no personally identifying information was required. Only group data will be reported in the thesis and in future presentations or papers.

Students were not required to take part in this study, nor were they required to answer all of the questions put forth. This was made clear both verbally and in writing in the covering letter.

The potential for emotional harm in this study was low. However I was mindful that completing this questionnaire may have resurrected some traumatic memories for

some students. As I am a mature student who has had experience dealing with different situations, my contact information was provided for all participants. For situations beyond my scope of knowledge, arrangements have been made to refer any participant in distress to Mount Saint Vincent Student Services for counselling.

Limitations of the study

Questionnaires, by their nature, limit responses. Respondents may not answer some questions, be truthful, or provide detailed answers. However, participants were given adequate time to respond, in confidence. The fact that no identifying information was on the survey could encourage participants to be truthful. An interview would provide more depth on the topic, but from a small number of participants. By using a survey, I was able to access a greater number of students.

Due to the subject pool being accessed, there may be a distinct lack of diversity in gender, as the student body at Mount Saint Vincent University is approximately 75-80% female. In addition, participants vary from the typical population in background (e.g., socio-economic status, home environment, educational experience). While these factors may impact results, information obtained from participants provided insight into the issue of bullying. Future research can build on this data by gathering information from groups in different age, education, environmental, and ethnic groups.

Research Questions

1. How did participants respond to quantitative items on the questionnaire?

2. How did participants define bullying?

3. How did participants respond to questions regarding their knowledge of cyberbullying?

4. Why did participants think that some children/youth/adults are bullied?

5. Why did participants think some people bully others?

6. How did participants who have been bullied respond to relevant items on the questionnaire?

7. How did participants who have bullied others respond to relevant items on the questionnaire?

8. How did participants who have witnesses bullying acts respond to relevant items on the questionnaire?

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter is a summary of the quantitative and qualitative analysis of data

obtained from the participants. Demographic data was analyzed to determine

characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, community, and degree in which the student

was enrolled. Percents and ranges were calculated. When appropriate, chi square was

calculated to determine whether there were significant differences between or among

groups. Due to the fact that not all participants answered every question posed, some

percentages to not add up to a full 100%. Open ended responses were analyzed and

common themes were extracted using three levels of qualitative analysis. A second reader

also analyzed a percentage of the surveys and inter-rater reliability was calculated to be

97%. There were no significant differences in qualitative responses by gender,

geographic environment, or degree programs in which participants were enrolled. Given

this, the responses have been grouped together and discussed as a whole.

Quantitative Analysis

Participants

One hundred and eighty one questionnaires were passed into the researcher;

however one had to be discarded as only the demographic section was completed. This

left a total of 180 participants, 76.7% of participants were female and 23.3% were male.

Almost 80% of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 20. Eighty-three percent

were Caucasian, and 91.1% Canadian citizens. Fifty percent of the participants were

enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts degree, while 35% were enrolled in a Professional degree

and 14.4% in a Bachelor of Science. The geographic environment was fairly evenly

divided with 46.1% urban, 47.8% rural, and 3.9% of participants indicated they had lived in both urban and rural areas growing up. (See Table 1). Given the unequal numbers in each category, except geographic location, statistical analysis was not conducted to determine whether significant differences existed between or among groups on the variables by age, degree, ethnicity, or gender. No significant differences were found between groups based on geographic location.

Question 1: How did participants respond to quantitative items on the questionnaire?

1a: Percent of participants who reported having been bullied, bullying others, and/or witnessing bullying incidences

Eighty-eight percent of participants felt that cyberbullying has become more prevalent. Almost 64% reported having been bullied, 26.7% having bullied others, and 82.2% reported witnessing bullying incidences. (See Table 2).

1b: How participants who reported being bullied responded to questions regarding their experience

Sixty-two point six percent of the participants who reported being bullied experienced these incidences in elementary school, 24.3% in junior high school, and 4.7% in both high school and university.

Eighty-three percent of these participants reported bullying as being continuous, with 52.3% being bullied by both males and females. Twenty-four percent reported only male bullies, and 23% only female bullies. When asked whether the bullies were the same or different over time, 56.1% reported them as being the same, 29% as being different, and 12.1% as both. Of the 115 participants who stated that they had been

bullied, only 43, or 40.2%, reported the bullying. Of these 43 participants, 25 (58%) of them experienced an intervention, and only six (24%) reported that the intervention was effective. (See Table 3).

Table 1

Summary of Demographic Information on Participants

Variable	Number	Percent
Gender		
Female	138	76.7
Male	42	23.3
Age		
18-20	143	79.4
21-24	23	12.8
24-29	7	3.9
>30	6	3.3
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	150	83.3
African Nova Scotian	3	1.7
First Nations	1	.6
Other	20	11.1
Citizenship		
Canadian	164	91.1
International	14	7.8
Degree Program		
Bachelor of Arts	91	50.6
Bachelor of Science	26	14.4
Professional Degree	63	35.0
Geographic Environment		
Urban	83	46.1
Rural	86	47.8
Both	7	3.9

Table 2

Participants responses to questions on survey regarding bullying

Statement	Number	Percent
Participants who feel that cyberbullying has become more prevalent		
Yes	159	88.3
No	12	6.7
Don't know	1	.6
Participants who reported being bullied		
Yes	115	63.9
No	65	36.1
Participants who reported bullying others		
Yes	48	26.7
No	132	73.3
Participants who witnessed bullying		
Yes	148	82.2
No	32	17.8

1c: How participants who reported bullying others responded to questions regarding their experience

When asked at what age participants first started bullying others, 55.3% stated that they started in elementary school, 34.2% in junior high school, 7.9% in high school, and 2.6% in university. Almost 74% were not reported for their bullying behaviours, and 94.7% were not recognized as bullies by others. In 84.2% of the cases no intervention occurred. When intervention did occur, it was reported as being effective in all cases. Ninety-two percent of the participants no longer consider themselves bullies, one

participant still does, and another stated that sometimes they still bully others. (See table

4).

Table 3

Summary of responses on survey items from participants who reported being bullied

Variable	Number	Percent
Age bullying began		
Elementary school	67	62.6
Junior high school	26	24.3
High school	5	4.7
Elementary – high school	3	2.8
Elementary – present	1	.9
University (present)	5	4.7
Frequency of bullying		
Once	16	15.0
Continuous	89	83.2
Gender of bully/bullies		
Female	25	23.4
Male	26	24.3
Both	56	52.3
Same or different bullies		
Same	60	56.1
Different	31	29.0
Both	13	12.1
Bullying was reported	43	40.2
Intervention occurred		
Yes	25	23.4
No	79	73.8
Intervention was effective		
Yes	6	26.1
No	12	52.2
Both	5	21.7

Table 4

Summary or responses on survey items from participants who reported bullying others

Variable	Number	Percent
Age when first started to bully others		
Elementary	21	55.3
Junior high	13	34.2
High school	3	7.9
University	1	2.6
Participant was reported for bullying		
Yes	9	23.7
No	28	73.7
Sometimes	1	2.6
Participant was recognized as a bully by others		
Yes	2	5.3
No	36	94.7
Intervention occurred		
Yes	5	13.2
No	32	84.2
Intervention was effective		
Yes	5	100.0
Participant still considers him/herself a bully		
Yes	1	2.6
No	35	92.1
Sometimes	1	2.6

1d: How participants who reported witnessing bullying incidents responded to questions regarding their experience

The age ranges varied a great deal in this section as to when incidences occurred; the three most common age ranges were high school, 27.2%, elementary school, 19.1%, and elementary to university/present, 15.4%. Fifty percent of participants stated that they

were not in a position to intervene and 48.5% reported that they were in a position to

intervene however that did not necessarily mean that they did. To the best of the

participants' knowledge, intervention occurred only 25% of the time.

Table 5

Summary of responses on survey items from participants who reported witnessing bullying incidences

Variable	Number	Percent
Participant's age at time of incidences		
Elementary school	26	19.1
Junior high	19	14.0
High school	37	27.2
Elementary – high school	16	11.8
Elementary – present	21	15.4
Junior high – high school	8	5.9
Junior high – present	8	5.9
High school – present	1	.7
Participant was in a position to intervene		
Yes	66	48.5
No	68	50.0
Sometimes	2	1.5
Intervention occurred		
Yes	34	25.0
No	99	72.8
Intervention was effective		
Yes	14	41.2
No	16	47.0
Yes and no	4	11.8

Of the 34 interventions, only 14 (41.2%) were viewed as effective. Forty-seven percent were not effective, and 11.8% were effective for a while (scored as both yes and no). (See Table 5).

Qualitative Analysis

Section A: Participants' understanding of bullying and cyberbullying

Question 2: How did participants define bullying?

When asked to define bullying, participants' responses fell into a number of categories. While it was most often described as causing emotional and/or physical harm, participants also qualified that it was intentional and motivated by power. Participants clearly reported that bullying went beyond simply hitting or pushing another child or youth, especially noting the emotional impact. Phrases, such as the following, were used:

"Emotional/physical abuse with undoable trauma"

"Physical or emotional harm put upon a unwilling victim"

"The disrespecting of another person physically or emotionally. It is harassment of pride and emotion, and a crime"

"Feeling put down mentally and physically"

Several participants also stated that bullying was intentional.

"Verbal, mental and physical abuse against an individual with intent to harm"

"Actions toward others to purposely upset them or make them feel uncomfortable"

"Purposely hurting others (emotionally or physically) or putting them
down to make yourself look or feel better"

"Intentionally causing emotional or physical distress upon others"

Other definitions included the notions that bullying is directed towards people based on their differences, that it is motivated by the desire for power, or to enable the perpetrator to feel better about his or her self.

"Bullying would be when someone picks on someone and decides that he
or she is higher class then that person and feels good after seeing the glum
faces on the 'victims'"

"Harming (whether mentally or physically) another person for being
'different' or 'inferior' to you"

"Bullying is when one person is hurting another for personal gain"

"People who pick on others to make themselves feel stronger and
superior"

The most common examples of bullying given by both male and female participants was verbal abuse, most specifically, name calling, rumors and gossip, and threats. The second most frequent example was physical abuse.

"Name calling, gossiping, hitting/pushing"

"Name calling, physical contact, targeting someone in a negative
way, threats"

"Name calling, pushing/shoving, making fun of
clothes/hair/family etc"

"Name calling, teasing, making fun of sexuality/gender/race, any
physical harm, hate crimes, talking about a person or their family
in a bad way"

Although verbal and physical abuse were the most noted types of bullying, other common

examples were, exclusion and isolation, emotional or mental harm, and cyberbullying.

"Leaving someone out"

"Excluding"

"Ignoring someone from a group"

"Emotional abuse (feeling like worth nothing)"

"Emotional abuse"

"Facebook or other sites bullying"

"Cyber attacking"

After analyzing the definitions and examples of bullying given, it is clear that

these participants understanding of what bullying acts encompass is in line with those

presented in the literature. Although bullying has always involved more than a just

physical aspect, specific acts were not always identified as bullying unless aggressive

physical behaviours were present. It is apparent that these participants realize that

bullying involves a strong emotional and psychological element.

Question 3: How did participants respond to questions regarding their knowledge of cyberbullying?

Virtually all participants agreed that cyberbullying appears to be more prevalent now than in the past. When asked why, the most common reason given for the increase in cyberbullying, by approximately 83% of the respondents, was the accessibility and popularity of the internet for youth.

> "More children and youth are using the internet and it is expanding everyday"
>
> "Because teenagers have more access to technology"
>
> "Because younger generations are born into an online environment"
>
> "Because the internet is more popular and there are many opportunities to bully"

The second most frequently given response for the increase in cyberbullying related to the anonymity of the internet, providing an easier venue for bullying which results in fewer consequences.

> "Because people think that it is easier to bully and be mean to someone online, and they won't get caught for it because they can send things anonymously on some sites"
>
> "Because the internet became more of a routine, and it's easier to say something to someone when they're not in front of you"
>
> "It's an easy way for kids (especially teens) to attack someone else without actual confrontation"
>
> "Social networking has made it very easy to hide your identity, giving people another avenue to bully someone"

The growth of social networking, specifically Facebook, was also a popular reason given

for the increase in the prevalence of cyberbullying.

> "Because there are more online social websites that people can find other
> people which makes it a lot easier"

> "You see it more and more often on social media"

> "Facebook. This is the main reason. Anonymity as well"

> "Constant growth of social networking as well as more troubled kids"

When asked to describe cyberbullying, participant's responses varied. Sometimes

respondents gave examples of venues, such as the internet, emails, and cellular phones,

with the internet being the most frequently given.

> "Threatening emails"

> "Sending insulting emails"

> "Bullying over the internet"

> "Using computers or cell phones to taunt, threaten, or gossip"

> "Texting, emailing, blogging, Facebook, MSN"

Some provided more specific places on the internet where cyberbullying might occur,

such as, most commonly, social networking sites (i.e. Facebook, MySpace, Twitter,

Formspring), Skype, instant messaging, custom websites, chatrooms, blogs, YouTube,

and online games.

"Cyberbullying can occur in chatrooms or even Facebook, with pictures, comments"

"Facebook, emails"

"Consistent harassment via a social networking site or an instant messenger"

"... creating nasty webpages, blogs, twitter feeds, Facebook statuses, pictures, or videos, and the comments to these nasty actions"

"MSN, Facebook, MySpace"

Others offered examples of the type of harm that may be caused by cyberbullying, emotional, verbal, and sexual.

"Verbal abuse without the facial recognition"

"The use of social media/internet communication to verbally bully someone"

"An individual who emotionally and mentally abuse another individual using name calling and other profanity"

"Cyberbullying is definitely emotional bullying but it can still have the same effect of traditional bullying"

The participants, who gave specific examples of what cyberbullying might look like, used terms such as: pictures or videos (which could be comments, someone else posting an unwanted photo, or editing a photo to hurt someone else), threats, name calling, status comments, making fun of others, rumors and gossip. Less popular, but mentioned, was harassment, insults, stealing information and reposting it, damaging someone's reputation, stalking and impersonating.

"Posting pictures someone didn't want up, threatening someone, posting statuses about them"

"Telling someone off, threatening, making fun of another person, sexual interpretations"

"Sending embarrassing pictures of a person to a group of people. Making a Facebook group where people say mean things about a person"

"Setting up a 'hate page' on places like Facebook, sending threatening emails, posting something anonymously"

The term 'anonymous', and the notion that the bully would not treat others that way in person was also a common theme, mentioned by approximately 12% of participants.

"Harassing other individuals via the internet, because it's much easier to do this behind a screen"

"Hiding behind a screen name because you are either insecure or shy to confront the person in person"

"Anonymous comments"

"Using the internet to hide your identity to pursue behaviours of bullying"

"Harassment through anonymity in any form of threat or emotional abuse"

Interestingly, the word "cowardly" was used numerous times (in more than 5% of the surveys), often standing alone as the description of cyberbullying.

"Cowardly, unnecessary, dramatic"

"I would describe this as cowardly and pathetic"

"Cowardly"

Again, participants appear to have a very clear understanding of what cyberbullying is and how it may be implemented. Given the information provided by the participants, it would seem that they perceived an increase in cyberbullying due to the ease of access to the internet to carry out these acts. Participants also commented on the cowardly nature of cyberbullying which allows bullies to harass and torment victims anonymously and on a large scale.

Question 4: Why did participants think that some children/youth/adults are bullied?

When asked why some people were bullied, the overwhelming response from participants was that bullying occurred because the victim was different. The list of examples of "different" is extensive, but all inferred that victims of bullying stood out from the North American 'norm'.

"Because they belong to a minority"

"'Failure' to comply with social norms"

"These people are bullied because they look, act or think different ways then the bully"

"Perhaps, they are different, maybe learning styles, the way they dress"

"Race, gender, the way they dress, their physical appearance, the way they do their hair, make-up, etc."

Another common response revolved around the premise that bullying other people would make the perpetrators feel better about themselves. The reasons given for the bully's behaviour varied from low self-esteem, jealousy, and problems at home, to being a victim and retaliating. Examples provided include:

"Because the bullier uses this to make themselves feel good"

"Insecurity in the bully probably"

"Usually as a means to make themselves feel better about themselves. Or because the same acts were done to them"

"Insecurities of the bully; the need to feel dominant"

"Because others may be jealous or are unhappy with themselves, therefore they bully others to make themselves feel better"

Participants' responses also indicated that people become victims of bullying because they are "easy targets"; they may appear weak or inferior, or will not stand up for themselves.

"They don't stand up for themselves, they are viewed as weaker"

"Seem to be weak"

"They are easy targets. Bullies look for a way to release their own stress and take it out on those who don't fight back"

"I think you get bullied if you don't stand up for yourself"

Virtually all participants had some opinion as to why others became victims of bullying, the overwhelming response being that victims were seen as different. What character traits qualify a person as different varies a great deal, leaving many people susceptible to bullying.

Question 5: Why did participants think some people bully others?

The most common responses to the question of why some people choose to bully others were centred on the theme of the bullies trying to feel better about themselves.

This may have been due to their personal insecurities, lack of self-esteem, a troubled

home-life, or that they had been victims of bullying.

"I think bullies bully people because they have some deficiency and it makes them feel better to be mean to others"

"They're jealous, usually, or insecure about themselves"

"They themselves have low self-confidence and feel the need to put down someone else to make themselves feel superior"

"They (the bullies) are treating others how they themselves have been treated"

However, participants' also noted that bullies are often seeking power and control.

"They want to feel strong, clever, in control"

"To feel more powerful because they are insecure about themselves, they get the feeling that they are strong and powerful"

"They think it will make them feel more powerful"

"I think it makes them feel better about themselves and provides them with power over other people"

Other participants felt that people may choose to bully for social reasons. It was

expressed that bullies may be seeking popularity and acceptance from peers, that they

wanted to impress others and receive attention, that they thought they were being funny,

or perhaps were bullying others as a result of peer pressure.

"They think it makes them look better to others, as a joke may get attention from others"

"People want to be liked, respected, get laughs and sometimes the way they do that is by putting others down"

"People bully for attention"

"To me, bullying represents immaturity. The bully gets attention from his peers, or audience"

There were four other responses that were not widely expressed, but interesting and bare noting: revenge, immaturity, fear of becoming a victim, and a lack of realization that they are bullying. All responses given seem to point to bullies seeking some form of personal gain.

Section B: Participants who have been bullied

Question 6: How did participants who have been bullied respond to relevant items on the questionnaire?

6a: How participants described their bullying experiences and their reactions to these incidents

When participants were asked to describe the type of bullying they experienced, the main categories that emerged were verbal bullying, physical bullying, cyberbullying, exclusion, and theft or vandalism. The overwhelming response was verbal bullying, with the most common form being name calling. The second example most often given for verbal bullying was being teased and laughed at. Some of the other examples that appeared frequently were negative comments regarding the participant's appearance, having rumors and gossip spread about them, and being threatened. The following statements encompass the experiences of many of the participants who were bullied.

> "Name calling, making fun of my appearances, being picked last for assignments or sports, laughing at or looked at differently, sometimes ignored."

> "Saying hurtful things at school, making up rumors. Starting stuff between me and my friends"

> "Comments on my weight, my hair, my family, my clothes. Hurtful things"

> "Name calling, laughter and threats. They would make me feel hopeless and useless. Make fun of me and 'pretend' to care"

Many participants also experienced physical bullying. Some of the more specific examples included having things thrown at them, others picking fights with them, being pushed, hit, and tripped, being spit on, and being followed home. One female participant reported a bully cutting her hair.

> "Followed home, spit on, beat up"

> "Throw snowballs at me"

> "In grade seven a kid used to punch me in the gut"

> "Name calling, punching, pushing"

> "Pushing in the halls, tripping when I walked by"

> "They would throw rocks at me and my sister, call us names and make fun. Sometimes hit us or push us or trip us"

Cyberbullying was also frequently mentioned as a form of bullying. It is interesting to note that only female participants reported cyberbullying as one that they experienced; no

male participants who stated that they were victims gave this as an example. Most cyberbullying seemed to take place on social networking sites and via emails. Some other incidents were on instant messaging programs, such as MSN, and cellular phone texts.

"Facebook bullying and profile websites like Facebook"

"People wouldn't leave me alone on MSN telling me I was a bitch/whore/slut. I was in grade 7. And the rumor was *false*"

"I experienced cyber-bullying by emails, Facebook messages and text messages, all threatening messages"

"I was constantly attacked on MSN chat. Girls tried to pick fights with me, make fun of me or attack my disorder"

"Rude comments on photos"

Exclusion was the next most reported type of bullying. Although this response was not as common as verbal, physical, and cyberbullying, it was identified my both male and female participants. The actual word exclusion was most often used; however, phrases such as being ignored, not accepted, always being picked last, and "on-again off-again friends" were also used.

"shunning, being ditched"

"Exclusion"

"Team of girls excluded, kept out of the group with gossip/ignoring"

"A classmate bullied me all through elementary school by excluding me, trying to make others dislike me, and forming groups/clicks"

"Not including me in social events, purposely, and making sure I knew so I would feel left out"

Examples of theft and vandalism of property were also experienced by the participants.

> "Stolen lunches"
>
> "Messing around with me and my belongings on purpose"
>
> "They took my stuff, and called me names"
>
> "I have basically been bullied my whole life. People have called me names, threatened me and have even gone so far as to damage my home and vehicles"

Some examples were less specific, with participants stating that they were emotionally or mentally bullied. One female participant identified sexual harassment as her experience with bullying.

The reactions to these bullying incidents varied from doing nothing, to feelings of sadness, fighting back, or seeking help. The most common reaction among both male and female participants was to try to ignore it and walk away, or do nothing. Participans stated,

> "I DID NOTHING!! Kept it to myself"
>
> "I am strong, I held my head up and ignored it"
>
> "I ignored it or tried to"
>
> "I did nothing, would just walk away"
>
> "I just kept quiet about it. Nobody even knew that I was bullied, and no one knows now"

The next strongest reaction, one noted by females, was feeling sadness, or crying.

"Usually I cried when I was alone"

"I was upset"

"It made me sad and self conscious and I eventually told my mom"

"I was very upset, always complaining to my mom, coming home from school crying"

This was not true for the males, however. The second most popular reaction from males was to fight back, or stand up for themselves. This was the fourth most likely reaction from female participants.

"Fought back, was just as mean"

"Stood up for myself"

"I told my parents. I also responded to their messages trying to defend myself"

"Told them to stop"

"Unfortunately, I started defending myself"

The third reaction most often given, overall, was to tell someone, such as a teacher or parent.

"In high school I brought it to the school teachers with a group of friends"

"Talked to my mother"

"Very emotional ... sometimes talked to a counselor or parent or teacher"

"Told the teacher what was going on"

Other reactions given by two or more participants included: loss of confidence, becoming anti-social and isolating themselves, depression, not wanting to go to school, avoiding certain areas, as well as feelings of shame and fear.

"I didn't want to go to school and I cried a lot"

"It hurt, it made me antisocial and mistrustful of others"

"Closed myself off from others"

"Upset, low self esteem"

"I became extremely insecure, cried by myself a lot"

More than 61% of the bullying examples experienced by these participants were verbal in nature, whereas only 15% were physical. While bullying takes on many forms, clearly the most common exposure to bullying for these participants has been that of verbal bullying. Approximately 30% of the participants who reported having been bullied stated that they chose to try and ignore the bullying. Another 21%, almost all females, reportedly reacted with feelings of hurt, sadness, and frequent episodes of crying.

6b: Why participants felt that they were targeted for bullying

When asked why they felt they were targeted by bullies, participant's responses could be grouped into three main themes: the notion that they were different in some

way, the theory that it was not because of them, but rather something within the bully, and because they felt that they were easy targets.

Participants reported that they were seen as different from their peers, they did not conform to some arbitrary social norm. The reason given for being targeted varied, but the most common examples were weight, size, and appearance:

"Weight, sexuality"

"I was not as in shape as my classmates"

"I was an easy target. I was the only overweight fat kid"

"Because I wasn't the size I was supposed to be, I was something considered unattractive in North American society"

Being shy or quiet was an example of being different that was given at least seven times, and differences related to being a minority were provided by at least six participants.

"Because I was shy and quiet and a little weird"

"Because I was different, shy, and insecure"

"My outer appearance, my race/ethnicity, the things I valued"

"Because I was a minority"

"I was bullied because I lived a very different life than most people and spoke a different language"

Other examples were given three times or fewer, but do demonstrate the scope of what North American children and youth consider different: being new, appearing to be gay,

wearing glasses, liking unusual things, being too smart, 'weird', rich, having an unusual voice or name, acting differently, being nice, and being sensitive.

> "For wearing glasses, for liking bugs, for coming from out-of-town, for being sensitive, for having a different sexuality, for being a 'nerd'"
>
> "Because I was smarter than them and nicer"

At least 23% of the responses from the participants suggested that the reason for the bullying was due to issues on the part of the bully. The most common of these, only from the females however, was the theory that the bully was jealous of the participant.

> "Because the girl was jealous of her boyfriend and myself being friends"
>
> "Jealousy"
>
> "I think it was jealousy"
>
> "Jealousy/people who are unhappy with their own lives"

Other reasons included the bullies being bored and having nothing better to do, the bully being angry, or the bully not liking the participant.

> "Because they had nothing else to do and I was 'different'"
>
> "Some people have nothing better to do or to talk about"
>
> "Because she was upset/mad/frustrated"
>
> "She didn't like me"
>
> "I made enemies with the wrong girls"

> "I was bullied by 1 group of girls and guys in high school and junior high simply because they didn't like me"

Other, less common examples were that they were bullied for fun, so that the perpetrator would become more popular, and to make the bully feel better about him or herself.

> "The guy and girl thought they were being cool"
>
> "Because he was insecure with himself"
>
> "Because people are jealous insecure and ashamed of themselves"
>
> "To make the other person feel better"

The third theme that arose from participants' response to the question regarding why they felt that they had been bullied was that they were "easy targets". Sometimes this was as specific as the answer got. The more detailed responses were examples such as: not sticking up for themselves, having low self-esteem or confidence, being weak, or vulnerable.

> "Because I took it and didn't say anything back"
>
> "I was a smaller easy target"
>
> "I was an easy victim and always wanted to be liked"
>
> "I wasn't confident or sure of myself. I was weak in all ways"
>
> "I was obviously low self-esteem, easy to bully/ignore"

More than 46% of the respondents who have experienced bullying felt that they were targeted due to the perception of them being different from others. What classified as different was vast, and ranged from very notable visual differences to minor ones. Being different was, by far, the most commonly given reason for being targeted as a victim of bullying. Following this was the notion that the bullying actions were a result of issues within the bully and that the participants may have been easy targets. Although participants often provided these reasons independently, it is possible that all of these factors work together when a bully is choosing his or her target.

6c: Whether participants reported their bullying experiences and whether there was an effective intervention

Almost half of the participants who admitted to being bullied also stated that they did not report the bullying incidences to anyone, many of whom offered no reason as to why they did not seek help. Those who did share their reasons for not reporting the incidents expressed concerns such as a fear of the bullying getting worse (or retaliation), being too scared, not wanting to be a tattletale, being embarrassed, or feeling that it would not help.

"Was too scared to let my parents know I was having problems in school"

"It made no difference, usually made things worse"

"Because at the same time they were my friends"

"I was scared it would get worse"

"Fear of retaliation"

"I don't know why I didn't tell my parents – I guess I didn't think they
could help"

Another common response was that the participants did not think that the bullying was a big deal, that it was not anyone else's problem, or that they could handle the situation on their own.

"I knew I would get over it, it happens to everyone"

"I wanted to deal with it myself 'cause I knew it would get worse if someone else stepping in"

"It was my problem no one else's"

"Not necessary to continue with the problem, it would go away if I left it"

Of the participants who did report their bullying occurrences, almost half spoke to at least a family member (usually a parent), and sometimes they told more than one adult. Some examples of who participants told are:

"Not always, but sometimes told my mom"

"Yes, only to my parents and teachers. Police when there was physical damage"

"Parents mostly. As I got older, I didn't tell"

"To my mother and father"

The other common authority figures approached by these participants were members of school staff (principals, teachers, lunch monitors, or counselors). Some participant responses were:

"School nurse"

"School teachers"

"To my principal"

"To my teacher, but they didn't care"

Occasionally, the incidents were also reported to the police.

"Parents and then it eventually got so out of hand we contacted the principal of my school and the police officer at school"

"To my professors (who didn't care), to my parents (who did), to the police (who helped greatly)"

"Police and principals"

In 73.8% of the cases, no intervention occurred. Of the 25 interventions that did occur, only six were reported as being effective. These interventions included scenarios such as the bully and victim being separated during class and watched closely on the playground, a teacher stepping in to stop the incident, parental advice, the threat of police action, comments on a webpage being removed by the website owner, and all parties involved being spoken to by the principal and police.

"The principal spoke to me, my brother (they bullied my brother as well) and the bullies, the cop talked to all of us and our parents (separately)"

"My teacher separated us in class and duties on the playground paid close attention"

"On several occasions, I talked to my parents about the types of problems
I faced, and they gave me the best advice they had to give. I didn't listen
to them well, but over time, I learned how to stand up for myself"

"After my parents told the bullies they would call police, they stopped"

The intervention strategies that were not effective included scenarios like the school

'scolding' or talking to the bully, the bully being given detention, bullies made to write

apologies, victims and bullies being separated and being reported to the police, the bully

and victim talking together, friends (who were also victims) sticking up for each other,

parents contacting the school, parents confronting the bullies, and mediation classes

conducted by police.

"They gave them detention and asked them to apologize. It continued just
less noticeable. No apology"

"Girls still did nasty things"

"Talked about problem, our feelings ... it was [effective], but only for a
while"

"My Dad confronted the boys but that made it worse"

"The parents defended her actions as she had never acted out before and
she was 'expressing' her feelings"

"The school called my parents in and suggested that I leave the school
before something 'unfortunate' happened"

Only a nominal number of interventions actually took place for participants. As

previously noted, 115 participants reported being bullied but only 43 noted reporting it

and even fewer, 25, stated an intervention took place. Six of these interventions were

considered effective by the victims, less than 24% of the interventions that did occur. Some participants reported that their interventions were effective for a little while, but then the bullying would start again.

6d: The impact that being bullied had on the participants

When participants were asked to share the impact that bullying had on them, more than two-thirds responded with memories of negative impacts which, in some cases, have been long-lasting. The other third of the participants were able to learn from and gain strength from their bullying experiences. Approximately 67% expressed varying feelings of low self confidence, insecurity, and poor self-esteem; in many cases these effects are still present.

> "Makes me realize how other people's opinions can affect you for years later"

> "It made me lose confidence in myself. I fought with my family a lot and lost a lot of trust for people and will never forget it. I always worry it will happen again"

> "It has affected my self-esteem and confidence. It has forever made me scared people will not like me when they meet me"

> "Originally depleted confidence and self esteem. Now I just see it as a normal part of growing up"

> "I felt bad about myself for a long time and felt incredibly alone"

Some other examples of the negative impact that bullying has had on the participants are long term repercussions such as social anxiety disorders, depression, fear of new people or groups, lack of trust for others, and paranoia.

"Extreme low self esteem, social anxiety disorder, depression, low body image"

"Still lack social ability and trust"

"I now have depression"

"It impacted me so greatly that it has been years since, and I still wake up every night in tears and sweat, and still feel the need to have a guard up"

"I've never returned to the small town i grew up in; out of fear? Or hate? I'm always scared to meet new people and make sure to never allow anyone to see my different lifestyle"

Approximately 33% of participants reported that while their bullying experiences may have hurt or upset them at the time, they felt they had become better, stronger, people.

"It made me, for a time, feel worthless and just plain awful. But, in the end, it made me stronger. It made me realize how low people could go for a laugh or to show superiority. It made me realize I had to be stronger to overcome them"

"Realized how hurtful so wouldn't do it against anyone"

"Made me stronger and help others"

"Made me realize that it is wrong and never want to be a bully or assist in bullying in any way"

"It gave me respect for people who may be different; it's allowed me to accept people for who they are"

While some participants seemed to have gained inner strength and empathy from being bullied, the majority did not. Sixty-seven percent of these participants felt a negative impact from the bullying they experienced. Some of the participants still suffer from social anxieties, fear, lack of self-confidence, and even nightmares.

Section C: Participants who have bullied others

Question 7: How did participants who have bullied others respond to relevant items on the questionnaire?

7a: Types of bullying/cyberbullying that participants engaged in

Approximately 77% of the participants, who admitted to bullying others, reported engaging in various types of verbal bullying. Other, far less common, forms of bullying reported by these participants were exclusion and physical bullying. The most common form of verbal bullying was name calling, amounting to almost 30%. Also reported were verbal tactics such as making fun of others, teasing, laughing at someone with one's peers, spreading rumors and gossip, taunting, insulting, retaliating, mocking, putting down, harassment, telling others off, online hate messages, and threats.

"Name calling, joke about clothing or attitudes"

"I stopped being friends with a girl, and made fun of her in front of/with others"

"Making fun of/name calling"

"Taunting other children, and laughing along with the group at their misfortune"

"Calling names and threatening"

"I spread gossip about a girl I was jealous of"

Both males and females also reported taking part in exclusion and physical bullying, but these were both far less common (approximately 9% and 7% respectively) than verbal bullying.

"Name calling and pushing"

"Name calling/physical contact"

"Turning people against this person"

"Exclusion"

"Mostly physical and social. By making our grade exclude both people I didn't like from social and by fighting"

Although there were a few accounts of cyberbullying and vague reports of schoolyard bullying, the overwhelming responses from participants were descriptions of verbally bullying others.

7b: Whether participants were reported for their bullying behaviours and what effect the reporting had on them

Of the participants who responded to the question of whether or not they were reported for their bullying behaviours, approximately 74% noted they were not. Ten participants who answered this question were reported, at least sometimes. In approximately half of the cases, the victim of the bullying reported them to someone, other times it was a classmate, teacher, or other witness.

"Classmates"

"Children at school"

"Person I bullied"

"The girl getting bullied"

The people to whom these participants were reported were principals, teachers, the bully's parents, the victim's parents, or the police.

"The principal of the elementary school by a witness I imagine"

"The boy's parents"

"Teachers and parents"

"By the girl being bullied to her father"

"To the cops"

In seven of the ten cases, being "found out" caused the bully to stop these behaviours.

"I didn't bully anymore"

"I didn't realize I was doing it so I stopped"

"It made me feel bad and notice when others do it. So now I try to stand against it and stop bullying"

"Made me feel ashamed"

"I had already felt bad doing it so it pretty much ensured that it wasn't worth it"

For the other three participants, being reported had no effect on them.

"Almost zero"

"None"

Almost three quarters of the participants who admitted to bullying others were never reported for their bullying behaviours. Most times, when the behaviours were reported, it was done by the victim or a peer. Usually, according to the participants, having their bullying behaviour reported resulted in regret and ceasing the behaviour.

7c: Whether participants took part in an effective intervention

Five participants who stated that they had bullied others also reported participating in some type of intervention. Interestingly, all of these participants were females. Most interventions took the form of a conversation with parents, with parents and the victim, or at school with an adult and all who were involved.

> "We simply talked about what happened until we were okay"
>
> "After a while we were all called to a class room to discuss our problem and to make amends with one another"
>
> "The boys parents sat down with me and my parents and told them me and my friend were picking on their son"
>
> "She confronted me and we had a deep/intense conversation. I realized my fault, and apologized. We were no longer friends but remained civil"
>
> "Just a conversation with my mother"

In all cases, the bullies stated that the intervention had been effective.

> "We resolved everything"
>
> "I stopped"
>
> "We were all able to express how we felt and saw the effect we caused on each other"

Approximately 5% of participants who reported bullying others also experienced an intervention of some sort. All of these participants were females and all stated that the interventions were effective, resulting in the bullying behaviour stopping.

7d: How the bullying behaviour impacted the participants

When asked how their own bullying behaviours impacted them, approximately one-fifth of the participants stated that there was no impact. Conversely, four out of the thirty participants who responded, reported feeling better after having bullied someone. However, approximately two-thirds of the participants reported a negative impact. In most cases these negative feelings caused them to stop bullying others.

"I learned that if you bully people you won't have any friends, so I changed"

"I didn't want my little sister acting that way towards other children"

"It made me more caring cause I realize I was mean"

"I felt terrible, and learned my lesson to not do it again"

"I realized I hated being bullied myself so I stopped"

Some reports are more ambiguous, and suggest that even though the participant may have felt badly, they did not stop their behaviour, or may not have felt badly until a later date.

"I did feel bad for the person we constantly excluded and talked behind their backs without their knowing"

"I now feel badly about it, but again mostly regard it as a normal part of growing up"

"I realize it was stupid and looking back I just feel like an idiot"

"Eventually you feel bad, you bully because you were bullied"

"One of the biggest regrets of my life. I can see that it continued into adulthood. It's a huge source of remorse and regret in my life, it has impacted relationships and how I view myself and others. I was always bullying alongside others who seemed to lead. I have been challenged to be more independent."

Four of the participants admitted to feeling better after they had bullied others.

"It made me feel protected from the people who had bullied me so terribly. I started to get some power back."

"I thought I was on top of the world. I had control over not only the group I was in but the grade below and some of the grade above"

"At first I felt good, the popular kids began to spend time with me – or at least not bully me any times I came around"

"I only did it once, made me feel better than her"

Twenty out of the thirty participants who responded to this question did experience a negative impact, at least eventually. Six participants appeared not to be impacted by the incidents, while four indicated they experienced a positive impact immediately after the incidents.

7e: Whether the participants still considers themselves bullies today

Virtually all participants clearly stated that they no longer consider themselves bullies, however two participants did not. One stated that she was still a bully, but did not choose to elaborate, and the other did not answer the yes or no question, simply saying:

"I think we all do it sometimes"

The two most frequently expressed reasons for no longer bullying were that the participant grew up or that they had not realized that they were bullying, and stopped when they did.

"I grew up and as I got older it seemed pointless and wrong"

"I grew up"

"I don't have any desire to be mean to others, I was just immature at the time"

"I grew up and realized what's wrong and right"

"I never considered myself a bully, however the act was bully-related"

"The only bullying I ever did was make jokes, after the other person would laugh but a couple of times admitted to feeling bullied by me, at which point I stopped"

A few participants experienced being bullied after they had bullied others, at which point the victim's feelings became real.

"Myself being bullied, age, maturity level"

"I realized how much it hurt when it happened to me"

"I changed cause I know how it feels"

Some other interesting comments to this question were:

"I realized how terrible that it makes the world around me"

"The guilt of seeing others as unhappy as I was accustomed to being built up, I stopped. In high school I spent much time alone, hateful of those who bullied me and ashamed to try and befriend those I'd bullied"

"Because I realized real friends make me feel better about myself compared to putting others down"

"It's not something enjoyable, it's a stress and constant paranoia. It was a juvenile act of a small school and not having space from others"

Most of the participants who admitted to bullying others did, eventually, see the impact that their actions had on the victims. For some, the decision to stop bullying was immediate, for others it took maturity, awareness, or personal experience for a change in behaviour to occur.

7f: What satisfaction the participants hoped to gain from bullying others and whether the desire was fulfilled

Three common themes arose from participant responses regarding what satisfaction they hoped to gain through bullying others: social acceptance, protection, and some form of personal gain. Regarding social acceptance, the participants expressed desires such as gaining popularity, having fun and making others laugh, following a crowd, and feeling cool.

"Popularity"

"Acceptance from others who were bullying"

"I wanted to feel cool and liked by the other kids"

"I was following a crowd"

"Making a funny remark or witty pun at their expense"

The desire to protect was largely that of protecting themselves. Participants were striving to avoid being the target of bullying and seeking retribution for being bullied by others. In one case, the participant was attempting to protect her sister by bullying her perpetrators.

"I wouldn't be bullied next"

"I got bullied, so I could bully others maybe"

"I didn't want to be afraid anymore"

"Draw attention away from myself"

"My sister's well being"

The participants who sought a personal gain were most often looking to feel better about themselves; about who they were, to feel more confident, or superior.

"None, a little confidence"

"Better about self, didn't happen"

"To make myself feel better about who I was"

"That I was superior"

"I thought that hurting someone else's feelings would make me feel better"

Finally, there was a substantial group (almost 20%) of participants who did not know why they treated others badly, or felt that there was no reason why they bullied others.

Almost 38% of participants who bullied others felt that their desires were satisfied. They felt that they were strong and not as afraid, or that everyone liked them and laughed at their jokes.

"I didn't feel afraid anymore"

"Because I stopped letting people walk all over me"

"Everyone seemed to like me for a few minutes. (I wasn't very liked in school because I was different)"

"Yes it was, at the time, funny to me and others"

The same number of these participants (approximately 38%) felt that they did not achieve their desired outcome. Rather, they found that they felt worse about themselves, or that it did not produce the acceptance they were seeking.

"It didn't help anything, I just felt pressured to do it"

"Didn't make me feel good about myself"

"Just made me feel worse about myself"

"Initially I got laughs at my jokes, and in some cases I was accepted, but I was still constantly striving for acceptance"

"Being a bully lead to a great deal of self-loathing and personal shame – especially beyond the age of 12 or so"

Interestingly, one participant described the cycle as one might for an addiction:

"I had to keep doing it, didn't satisfy long"

The other 25% of these participants only felt that their desired need was met sometimes.

"Sometimes I felt better about the fact that I was bullied"

"Yes and no, in small ways, immediately, but did not address issues it was coming from"

The most common form of satisfaction that respondents were seeking was social acceptance (approximately 28%). The other two common desires were to protect themselves and to achieve some form of personal gain, such as to feel better about themselves. As to whether or not the behaviour satisfied the desire, the results were divided fairly equally. Approximately half of the participant who responded felt that their desires were met, at least sometimes, and the other half felt that they were not.

7g: How the participants felt after bullying someone

For the most part, participants expressed feelings of negative emotions both immediately after a bullying incident and after time had passed. There were some, approximately 22%, who admitted to feelings of happiness, power, and satisfaction.

"Fantastic, I'd made the popular crowd laugh at someone else's expense. It was as if I'd done something very right"

"Laughing and carrying on"

"Big"

"Powerful"

"I felt fine (happy)"

Most commonly, memories of guilt and regret were reported immediately after an incident and at a later time. Participants generally felt guilty, stupid, or badly for the victim.

"I felt bad immediately after making a joke that hurt someone"

"You do not feel good, you regret it"

"Very guilty and not myself. Like I was making a huge mistake"

"I felt crappy, worse than being bullied myself"

"I have not put the incidents behind, they help me be a better person realizing right and wrong"

"Scared, helpless, afraid"

Despite the many negative feelings that bullying others produced, approximately 41% of the participants who responded to this question had put the bullying incidents behind them after a period of time and were not bothered by their past behaviour.

"I honestly never thought twice about the very first time"

"I have put the incident behind me for the most part"

"I really never bothered with it"

"Already put it behind me"

Approximately 61% of the participants who reported bullying others felt remorse for their actions immediately afterwards. Fifty-eight percent of the participants expressed negative feelings at a later date, some of whom had not felt badly immediately after the bullying incident.

Section D: Participants who have witnessed bullying acts

Question 8: How did participants who have witnesses bullying acts respond to relevant items on the questionnaire?

8a: Types of bullying acts that participants have witnessed

When asked what types of bullying acts participants had witnessed, responses could generally be divided into three categories. While the most common examples of bullying witnessed were various types of verbal bullying, several examples of physical bullying and cyberbullying were also provided. Approximately 43% of the examples given by participants were forms of verbal bullying. More than one quarter of these was 'name calling'. Other common forms of verbal bullying included making fun of a person, taunting, teasing, laughing at, mocking, spreading rumors and gossiping, and discrimination due to race, beliefs, or size.

"Just name calling/physical abuse"

"Individuals being made fun of due to their size and their race"

"People being called offensive things, rumors, people being made fun of"

"Name calling, exclusion and gossip"

"Kids, name calling, fighting, excluding, saying mean things, playing tricks"

"Mainly girls making fun of another girl that took my bus to school, they laughed, made fun and upset her daily"

Participants also indicated that they had witnessed physical bullying and cyberbullying, with an equal percentage (22%) provided in each category. Regarding physical bullying, many participants simply stated 'physical' or 'violence', but of those who were more specific, a common response was beating up or fighting. Other examples included pushing, shoving, hitting, tripping, chasing, "dog piling", and one participant witnessed a girl having her hair burned.

"Fights – attacks on an individual by a group, group attacks online"

"Four boys beat one small boy"

"I've seen people being pushed, shoved, provoked, name called and provoked to the point of fighting"

"Mostly name calling, tripping, taking peoples stuff and scattering it everywhere (stuff along those lines)"

"Homophobes, unprovoked 'dog-piling' (swarmings)"

"I witnessed a lot of physical bullying in my grade school. From beatings to burning a girl's hair off"

The third category of bullying witnessed encompassed various forms of cyberbullying. More than 62% of the cyberbullying examples given had clearly taken place on social networking sites. These included messages, posts, comments on statuses or photos, and rumor spreading.

"A local girl's nude photos being posted online by her ex"

"People's Facebooks being bombarded with rude comments, threats, kids being constantly tormented because they are different, etc."

"Anonymous cyberbullying online such as using Formspring"

"Someone posting a picture online and people would write hateful comments on it. A fake Twitter account made and the creator made embarrassing and mean tweets"

Other examples that were not as clear with regards to where the bullying took place, albeit on the internet, were threats, name calling, hacking, and creating fake accounts. There were also a few examples of nasty emails and cell phone text messages, however these were far less common.

"People threatening others over the internet, people fighting each other"

"Fake accounts!"

"Online death threats, physical bullying, gossip type online bullying"

"Friends hacking other friend's email account and bullying another friend, making it think it was my other friend"

"A group of people that two of my best friends used to hang out with treated them horribly, through nasty messages on Facebook, nasty texts, harassing through the phone, and talking behind their back at school"

Almost 13% of the participant responses did not fit into verbal, physical, or cyberbullying. Some participants simply stated "all imaginable" or "everything". Other forms of bullying that were mentioned but not common, and should be noted, are exclusion, "schoolyard bullying", emotional and mental abuse, destruction of property, and sexual abuse or exploitation. Approximately 260 examples of bullying were obtained

from 148 participants who reported that they had witnessed bullying incidents, indicating a substantial amount of bullying occurs and is being seen by others.

8b: Whether participants felt that they were ever in a position to intervene

When participants responded to the question regarding whether or not they had felt they were in a position to intervene, an interesting scenario arose. While most (approximately 81%) of participants responded that they were in a position to intervene and did, almost 10% of the participants did not, even though they felt that they had been in a position to intervene. Often there was no reason given as to why participants chose not to intervene, despite the admission that it was possible. The reasons that were offered were the fear of becoming the next target, fear of getting into trouble, a lack of confidence, and not knowing how to help.

"I didn't do anything because most is on Facebook and I didn't want to get involved. If it were friends I would say something to them"

"I was nearly always in a position to intervene, but I did not"

"I could have helped most situations, but you don't want the 'bully' to target you"

"I didn't do anything, I didn't want to get in trouble"

"I could have helped, but at the time I didn't know how"

As mentioned, the majority of participants did intervene when they could. Approximately 71% of the participants who intervened chose to do something themselves. The most common forms of intervention by these participants were telling the bully to stop, standing up for the victim, or supporting the victim after the incident.

"On the bus I told the boy who was bullying to stop, and then sat with the victim"

"Told the attackers to leave him alone and let the principal know what happened"

"If someone is talking behind someone's back I do not join in, and I try to defend them ... but in a discrete way so the people talking will not talk about me next"

"I had a friend who got bullied almost every day in high school so when he told me, I started walking him to classes and eating lunch with him because it only happened when he was alone"

"I stepped in to break up the fight"

"I could have told someone, but I mostly just talked to them after, picked up their things, helped them etc. Honestly, the adults seen. They just didn't do anything"

Some other interesting approaches were attempts to simmer down gossip, facilitating a restorative justice session, and one participant simply stated "stopping myself."

The other 29% of the participants who felt that they were in a position to intervene, and did, chose to tell an adult. This was most often a school staff member or a parent, and in some cases it was the police.

"Let a supervisor on duty know"

"I told my parents, I stood up for my brother to the bullies"

"When in elementary school, you'd get a teacher and the fighting/bullying would stop. As you got older, you tried not to get involved in any way"

"Me and a friend got a teacher that we knew would do something"

"Reported them to police and the head of Facebook"

"I spotted a police car and ran over"

Approximately 7% of the participants who witnessed bullying incidents did not feel that they were in a position to intervene. In these cases they either did not want to get involved, were afraid of getting hurt themselves, or the victim did not want their help.

"Sometime I would help and sometimes I would wish I could"

"A person always 'wants' to intervene. I have on a couple of occasions but at times there's the concept of 'survival of the fittest' in your mind"

"Cause my brother didn't want his sister helping him, same with everyone else but I would have"

"When I was bullied others took care of it for me. When I witnessed I didn't want to be involved so I said nothing"

Of the 102 respondents to this question, 83 of the participant felt that they were in a position to do something, and did so. How they chose to help varied from stepping in, going to get help from an adult, or supporting the victim afterwards. Whatever their actions, they were able to identify an inappropriate behaviour and sought to defuse the situation.

8c: Whether the participants were aware of any effective interventions

In almost 73% of the cases where participants witnessed bullying incidents they were not aware of any type of formal intervention. Of the known interventions, almost half (approximately 48%) were not viewed as being successful. These interventions largely involved the schools in the form of discussions, detentions, and suspensions.

"The office did whatever they could to discipline those that were bullying my friends ... Our principal was spineless and never took effective measures to nip a problem in the bud"

"Not sure what happened. Just know that the bully was suspended and if it continued the bully would be threatened with police action ... don't know full story"

"Principal talked to them ... they still continued"

"Principal brought the bullies in and they confessed. They got suspended for 5 days ... They continued to do it but the school wouldn't do anymore about it. So we went to the police with it"

"The bullying was reported and the bully was suspended ... the online bullying continued away from school"

In some cases all of the individuals involved in the incident came together to discuss it, in others parents or police were involved, but the interventions were still not successful.

"Spoke to other parents ... they did not believe the bullying was happening"

"Cyber bullying – peers told them to stop, parents told them to stop, the school felt there was nothing they could do ... they kept bullying them"

"The police and principals had a meeting for everyone involved then continued to get the whole school involved with stopping cyberbullying ... the boys didn't really care. They still do it but don't include names as much"

"[Brother being bullied] Parent came to my mother to let her know what happened. My mother went to the hockey coach. The coach had a discussion with the team/bullies, I think ... they didn't do anything else drastic but kept saying mean things"

Approximately 14% of the interventions were reported as being temporarily successful. In these cases various approaches were taken, such as school assemblies, restorative justice, and a court hearing.

"A group interrogation by teachers asking how the fight broke out. I explained that there was bullying going on, the aggressors denied it, saying I'd simply attacked them [this participant became involved in a fight while trying to protect his friend] ... Words were had with parents, but the bullying proceeded a week or two later. This was always the case"

"It was talk groups called restorative justice ... I don't believe so, only effective for a short period of time"

"We all got talked to by the principal ... for a short time. But then the person becomes a 'snitch' and it all goes to hell"

"Everyone involved had to go to court and put him away with our tales of that night ... he went to jail, but he certainly came out with a vengeance"

Only 38% of interventions were deemed successful by participants who witnessed bullying incidents. In six out of the eleven cases, peers were involved in stopping the bullying.

"[I] just told the student to leave the other alone ... I was much older so I think I may have scared him a bit"

"I talked to the bullier and gave him strong words ... I had pull"

"Peer of two sides stopped the incident by talking to them ... nobody wanted to get serious but wanna pretend they were cool"

"A group of people stood together to face the bully ... power in numbers"

"School stepped in and suspended the bullied and peers stood up for the victim ... it stopped the bullying almost immediately"

Other successful tactics were having the bully and victim physically separated while at school, the threat of police action, forms of facilitated circles, and a school assembly.

"Facilitated circle ... VERY"

"The principal had to come forward and hold a meeting in the auditorium with all the students to talk about what had happened ... definitely, there were tears from both the older students (who felt bad) and the younger students being bullied"

"My sister and the girls who posted the comments are not allowed in the same class, or near each other. The students were told that they could be in trouble with the law if it happened again ... there is no longer conflict between them"

"Parents and 2 friends got together"

Of the participants who reported witnessing bullying acts, almost three quarters of them stated that no formal interventions took place. When interventions did occur, it was reported that only 38% resulted in long term success, with approximately 55% of these involving peer intercession.

8d: What the participants thought the bully was trying to achieve by bullying others

When participants were asked what they felt the bully was trying to achieve by targeting others, three common themes arose, social acceptance, an attempt to boost one's self-esteem or feel better about themselves, and the desire for power and control. In some cases participants mentioned whether or not the bully achieved this gain, but not all. Approximately 33% of the participants who witnessed bullying felt that the bullies were seeking peer attention, respect, and/or popularity by bullying others.

"Personal gain was always about power, increasing status or self worth"

"He wanted attention, and he got it"

"Not successful. Just wanted attention from his peers"

"To try and be fun so others think they were cool and they did achieve this"

"They were trying to be 'cool' it usually worked"

"Attention – yes achieved ... got attention, wasn't good attention but they still got some"

"I think these girls were just bored, they thought it was funny and cool to pick on the other girls (she was awkward, overweight)"

Approximately 23% of the witnesses felt that the bullies were attempting to boost their own self esteem or feel better about themselves by targeting other children and youth to bully.

"To feel better about themselves"

"Feel better about himself by making the other feel worse"

"I think they were trying to make themselves feel better by putting others down. I don't think it worked"

"I think they were trying to make the 'bullied' feel as low as they had felt"

"She was trying to make herself feel better, jealousy. She was not successful"

Twenty-two percent of the participants felt that the children and youth who they witnessed bullying others were hoping to gain superiority, power, and control over others or a given situation.

"To make me feel/the other person feel like shit, and make them feel powerful. And they were probably successful"

"Trying to feel stronger than the other person, I would say the bully did feel stronger"

"I think that the bully just wants to feel superior to others and look 'tough' in front of peers"

"They wanted to have power, make them feel worthless and it worked"

"To make themselves feel superior"

Less than 7% of participants who witnessed bullying incidents stated that they did not know why the bully acted the way he/she had. Although this participant did not know why bullies behave the way they do, she makes an interesting point:

"I don't think there would be any personal gain, but there must be something that makes a bully feel good about making someone else feel bad"

The three predominant goals that these witnesses felt drove the bullies actions were social acceptance, attempting to feel better about themselves, and striving for power and control. Another, less common, opinion was that the bully was intentionally trying to humiliate, ostracize, or hurt another person.

8e: What impact, the participants felt, these experiences had on the victim

When witnesses were asked what impact they felt the bullying had on victims, almost all responses were negative. Less than 4% of these participants felt that there was no impact on the victims, and less than 2% felt that the victim became stronger as a result of the bullying. The descriptions and ways that the victims were negatively impacted

varied, but the majority fell into three categories; insecurities and low self esteem, being

hurt and upset, and fear.

"Made them dislike themselves"

"Ruined self esteem/confidence"

"I think they had a big impact in the way that they were afraid and less
social"

"The victims were always scared, not necessarily of their oppressors, but
what anyone around them might say, ask them, or think of them"

"Made just living suck"

"They felt weaker, a bit helpless and angry"

Some witnesses also felt that the impact on the victim involved feelings of loneliness or

embarrassment and shame.

"Sense of isolation and feeling like she had been rejected. She felt like she
had no friends and nobody liked her"

"The same disheartening, cold, and lonely feelings they had on me"

"Made the person feel alone and useless"

"Made them feel ashamed for who they were"

"Embarrassment"

"They were hurt and ashamed of how they are. Their self-confidence may
have gone down"

There were also reports by the witnesses of victims suffering from depression and

committing suicide as a result of being bullied.

"Depression, and low self esteem and confidence"

"Depression"

"A huge impact, the victim committed suicide"

"Made some people take their own lives"

Others participants who witnessed bullying behaviours clearly stated that the impact on the victim was lifelong.

"My brother will never be the same!!"

"The ones that were bullied a lot are pretty messed up now"

"Long standing emotional ones, possible depression"

"It definitely scared them and made it hard for later years"

"Changed their life forever, made them re-evaluate who they are"

Less than 6% of the participants who witnessed others being bullied did not feel that there was a negative impact on the victims of these incidents. The majority of these participants felt that the victims suffered from emotions such as low self esteem, emotional distress, fear, loneliness, depression, shame, or social anxieties, as a result of being bullied by others.

8f: What impact, the participants felt, these experiences had on the bully

When participants who witnessed bullying incidents were asked what they felt the impact was on the bully approximately 24% felt that there was no impact, and almost

12% stated that they did not know what, if any, impact was experienced by the bully. Of the participants who did feel there was an impact on the bully as a result of targeting others, most felt that the impact was positive for the bully (approximately 32% of all witnesses). Another 15% felt that the impact on the bully was, as noted previously, a negative one, while some participants (approximately 8%) felt that initially the bully may have experienced a positive impact, but later felt badly for their actions.

The positive impacts that the participants felt bullies may have experienced were emotions such as increased power and control, more attention and a gain in popularity, or an increase in self esteem and confidence.

"Pride. Satisfaction. A gain of power."

"They got in trouble with the school but since they still do it they obviously feel power"

"It probably makes them feel stronger and better but deep down they are still hurting and trying to take it out on someone else. Maybe they are jealous of the other person"

Because he got the attention he was looking for, he continued to bully others"

Fifteen percent of the participants who witnessed bullying felt that the impact to the bully was a negative one. The two major opinions were that the bully felt badly or that they had lost respect and friendships over their behaviour.

"The bully was probably full of regret"

"They realized that what they were doing was wrong"

"No one will even talk to them"

"The bully was frowned upon by mature students"

"They felt powerful, but then stupid after everyone stood up for her and they lost some friends and significant others over it"

Approximately 8% of those who witnessed bullying felt that the impact on the bully was perhaps positive initially, but negative later. Sometimes this seemed to be more of a hopefully analysis rather than one based on actually seeing the impact.

"Made them feel popular and powerful, but maybe now years later, guilty"

"They probably will regret doing it one day, and feel ashamed at some point"

"In the long term I think the bully may have regretted his/her decisions"

"Higher self-esteem for a while, but not forever"

"Satisfaction at first, for some perhaps remorse later on. Especially in the case of followers as opposed to leaders"

"At first, gratifying, but later in life regretful"

Many of the witnesses, approximately 32%, felt that the bully experienced a positive impact due to their bullying behaviour. These participants felt the bullies experienced an increase in power and control, popularity, and self esteem. Almost 24% of the witnesses felt that there was no impact on the bully as a result of their behaviours. Approximately another 24% of the participants who witnessed bullying incidents felt that there was at least some negative impact on the bully; perhaps immediate or delayed regret or a loss of acceptance among peers.

8g: What impact these experiences had on the witnesses

Although there were ten participants who stated that they felt no impact from witnessing bullying incidents, most noted some type of impact. Approximately half of the remaining participants experienced some form of negative impact, and the other half were impacted in a more positive, learning, sort of way by the bullying that they witnessed.

Approximately 48% of the participants who witnessed bullying were impacted negatively. This may have been feeling sad or upset, fear, or disappointment. One participant stated that the experience lowered her self esteem, and two others felt that they wished they could have done more to help the victim. Two participants, both male, were left feeling confused and/or conflicted by the incident.

"I felt bad and helpless at times"

"I was disgusted"

"Frustrating, helpless. Often times you couldn't/wouldn't do anything for fear of retaliation later by that bully and their friends"

"Guilt for not acting or taking part. Pride when I intervened"

"I felt really bad for the victim and grew not too fond of the bully"

"I was disgusted and ashamed of them"

"I felt I had to do something, but didn't want drama in my own life to occur, or people beating me up. I should have said something"

Approximately 50% of the participants who witnessed bullying incidents found the impact on them to be of a positive nature. The experience caused them to become more

proactive and caring, it created a greater awareness, or they found it to be a learning experience; how to handle future incidents, knowing when to step in, or how to protect themselves both online and face-to-face.

"I learned how to cope with being bullied, how to bully, and how to stop bullying"

"Made me want to treat others the way that I want to be treated"

"Helped me to identify instances of bullying, and also to be able to sort of know what to do should a similar instance occur. Of course, a sense of disgust came about as a result of being a witness"

"It made me want to help people that were being bullied, until I was being bullied and nobody would help me"

"In total they made me more respective of others' feelings and opinions. I didn't want to be like him"

"Made me more sympathetic for those bullied, realized different ways people can be bullied. Made me notice bullying more"

Despite the fact that ten participants stated that they were not impacted by witnessing bullying experiences, more than 98% of the participants were impacted in some way. A slightly higher number of witnesses found that they were impacted in a way that allowed them to learn from the experience. The other participants were impacted in more negative ways, such as fear, sadness, or shame for not acting.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to build upon current knowledge regarding bullying; why it occurs, its impact, and why bullies victimize others. Given the retrospective nature of the data collection, it is important to remember that, although participants answered to the best of their knowledge, they may or may not have been able to accurately relay what actually occurred or remembered all of the details. Also, particularly in the case of witness accounts, it is possible that private interventions occurred to which they were not privy. It is equally plausible that bullying continued in more subtle or private ways after an intervention took place that the victim did not share. However, this does not negate the fact that participants' current and past experiences impacted their perceptions of bullying and provided valuable insight into this issue.

The vast majority of the participants provided definitions of bullying that were in line with those noted in the literature (Canadian Children's Rights Council, 2010; Willard, 2005). Participants also gave appropriate examples of both traditional and cyberbullying in accordance with the Canadian Children's Rights Council (2010) and Willard (2005). There is a distinct understanding that bullying goes far beyond that of physical bullying. Terms such as emotional harm, verbal abuse, intentional, and repeated attacks were frequently found in the participants' definitions. This understanding of what bullying is indicates that today's youth are aware of what bullying may look or feel like. This is an important aspect of the education process, but not enough. Simply being able to identify bullying does not necessarily decrease its occurrence; it is also essential to educate children and youth regarding ways in which they may be able to stop bullying

incidents. Interestingly, two international students gave examples of hazing and initiation as bullying. Although one can see the connection, these events do not necessarily fit the North American definition of bullying. This discrepancy may be due to differences in defining and identifying bullying acts across cultures.

Both participants who bullied others and those who were bullied reported the incidents occurred most frequently in elementary school (55.6% and 62.6% respectively) and diminished over time. These results do not correspond with the extensive research findings that bullying rates are highest during the junior high years (Bullying.org, n.d.; Hymel et al., 2005). This divergence may be due to the phrasing of the survey question, which asked participants to recall when the bullying incidents first began. Interestingly, participants who reported witnessing bullying recalled seeing these incidents at ages that differed from those reported in both past research and by other groups in this study. Where past research cites the most common age for bullying is during junior high school, and participants in this study indicated that they both bullied others and were victims of bullying most frequently in elementary school, witnesses in this study most commonly chose to provide wide age ranges. Some participants reported witnessing bullying from elementary to high school, or even elementary to present, when asked their age at the time of witnessing bullying incidents (39%). Other participants reported observing bullying during high school years (27.2%). Nineteen percent reported witnessing bullying acts in elementary school, and 14% of participants stated that they had witnessed bullying acts during junior high. These discrepancies may be due to the notion that, for these participants, bullying was occurring all the time; there was no obvious beginning or end to these behaviours within their environment. It is also possible that particular incidences

stand out more than others for some participants even if the reported timeframe was not when frequency was at its peak.

Although actual rates of bullying are hard to determine due to under reporting and discrepancies in definitions (Ma, 2001; Peterson & Ray, 2006), rates are estimated to be between six and ten percent of youth who bully others, and eight to twelve percent who are victims of bullying (Craig, et al., 2009; Public safety Canada, 2010). This estimated percentage of youth who are victims of bullying is significantly lower than the percentage of participants (63.9%) who self-reported being victims of bullying in this study.

Figure 1. Comparison of Rates of Bullying Experiences.
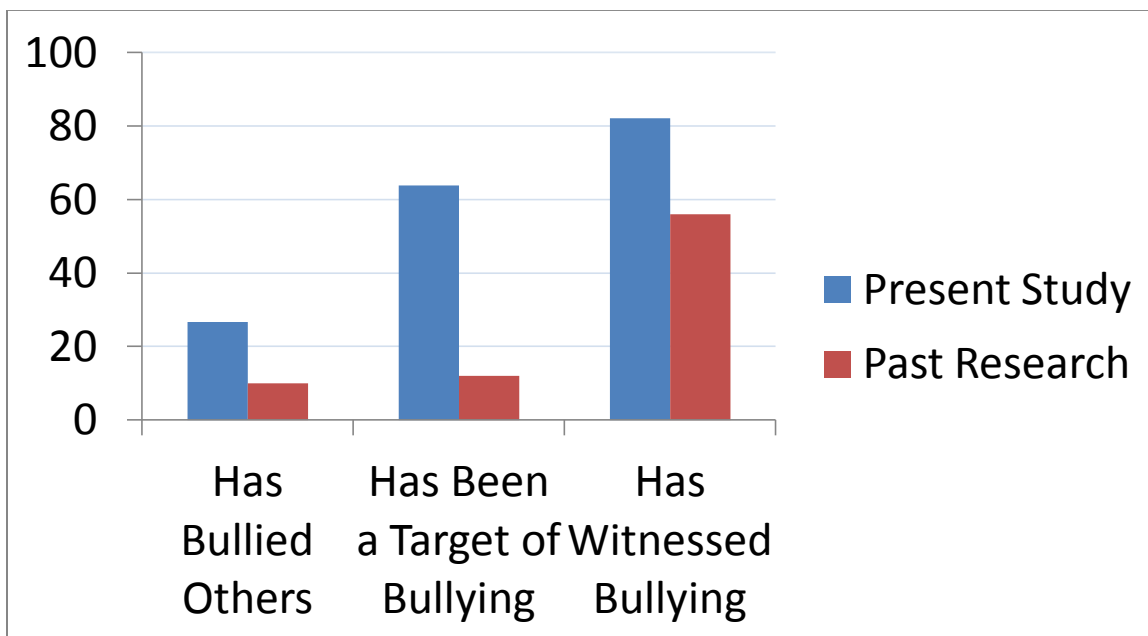
This huge discrepancy may have occurred for a variety of reasons. Part of the goal of this study was to determine participants' understanding of what bullying is. For this purpose, a universal definition of bullying was not provided for the participants. Although most of the participants had an understanding of at least some of the defining components of

bullying, there may not have been a clear understanding regarding determining factors such as a power imbalance, and the repetitive nature of bullying. Because of this, some participants may have considered one time incidents of being teased, or disputes where peers had equal power, as bullying incidents'. Another possible explanation for the discrepancy may be the subject pool from which these participants were drawn; all participants in this study were university students. It is feasible that, because these individuals may have been more intelligent or privileged, either financially or environmentally, they were more likely seen as a threat to bullies, and therefore more likely to be targeted as victims in bullying incidents. Had there been more diversity regarding family socioeconomic status, level of education, gender, and ethnicity, the bullying rates may have been more in line with past research findings.

The percentage of participants who self-identified as bullies was also higher in this study than in previous research; 26.7% rather than the often cited 6-10%. Again, this is most likely due to the lack of one definition for bullying. Some of the participants who reported bullying others indicated that it was a one-time event, and they did not repeat the behavior. In other instances it appeared that there was an ongoing, mutually abusive, relationship between two or more parties. These, by North American definition, would not necessarily meet the criteria to qualify as bullying.

Because victims of bullying should never be blamed for being targeted, it can be difficult to determine why children and youth choose certain peers to torment. There is a fine line between attempting to establish how victims are chosen and accusing them of being at fault. In the present study, all participants were asked why they thought certain people were bullied and victims of bullying were asked specifically why they felt that

they were bullied. Although many participants suggested that the reasons lay solely at the feet of the perpetrators, the majority (54% of all participants and 46% of victims) of the reasons given were due to the notion that the victim was different in some way. The range of what was considered different was vast, with participants noting such examples as weight, overall appearance, hair color, glasses, sexual orientation, intelligence, an unusual name, and ethnicity. These findings are similar to those reported by Hymel et al.'s (2005) in their study on moral disengagement and bullying. In their study, 87% of the 494 student participants (grades eight, nine, and ten) stated that children were bullied because they were different. In a society which supposedly welcomes and embraces differences, it would appear that being different is still not desirable as a youth.

As for the participants who put the onus on the bully, most contended that the bullies were insecure and sought to increase their own confidence by putting others down. Results of research in this area indicate that bullying behaviour is often the result of the home environment, noting that bullying by parents or siblings, or as the common form of interaction, is the norm in the home (Lake, 2004; Ma, 2001; Malete, 2007; Peterson & Ray, 2006; Rigby, 2005; Vitaro, et al., 2006). While this perception was occasionally stated by some participants in the present study, it was not a common response for the occurrence of bullying behaviour. Participants who reported bullying others may very well have been raised in an environment that condoned and even encouraged bullying behaviour. However, as this form of interaction may have been the norm for them, they may not be aware that this behaviour is perceived as bullying. Also, depending on how familiar witnesses are with a person's home life, the participants who

stated that they had witnessed bullying behaviours may not know what a bully's familial environment entails, thus cannot state this as a reason for the behaviour.

When asked what satisfaction bullies may be seeking, both participants who reported bullying others and those who had witnessed bullying most commonly felt that social acceptance was the motivator for bullying behaviours. Approximately 28% of people who had bullied others stated that they had done it in hopes of becoming more popular, because they were following a crowd, to make others laugh, or because it was fun. Similarly, approximately 33% of the participants who witnessed bullying incidents felt that the perpetrators of these acts were seeking peer attention, respect, and increased popularity. Although these were by no means the only reasons given, it is interesting that bullies and witnesses alike cited this as the most common goal. This finding speaks to the importance of peer involvement and education in the bullying phenomenon. The American Medical Association (2010) noted the importance of employing anti-bullying education in the daily routines of children and youth. With this knowledge and increased understanding of the effects of bullying, witnesses may be less likely to encourage bullying behaviour and stand up for victims. If children and youth took a more active role in stopping bullying, even simply not approving of or encouraging the behaviour, it is possible that a decline in bullying incidents would occur. As one self-reported bully stated, she stopped bullying others because "I like having friends."

Participants in this study also strongly felt that bullies may be exhibiting these anti-social behaviours in an attempt to feel better about themselves by making others feel badly. Almost one quarter of the participants who reported bullying others stated this as the main reason why they targeted others. Some of the time it did make them feel better

about themselves, but it was often only a short term satisfaction. These statements speak to the need to address issues around the self-confidence and positive identity of children and youth, needs identified by both VanderVen and Torre (1999) and France (2007). Child and youth care workers, parents, and educators are in a position to provide the safe and trusting environment needed to facilitate the development of these strengths in children and youth.

Despite the high rates of victimology and witness reports by participants in this study, most of the bullying incidents went unreported. These findings, and the reasons behind them, are in line with past research on the bullying phenomenon. For example, Peterson and Ray (2006) stated that unreported bullying may be due to fear, embarrassment, and feelings of futility. In the current study, less than 24% of the participants who admitted to bullying others claimed to have been reported for their behaviour, approximately 17% of witnesses did not report what they saw, and almost half (48%) of participants who were bullied did not report the incidents. This equates to almost half of the testimonials in this study. The most common reason for not reporting bullying was fear; fear of retaliation, making the situation worse, becoming the next target, getting hurt or getting in trouble. Some victims felt that it wouldn't help, and others felt too embarrassed to tell anyone. With all of the pro-active bully awareness initiatives that schools and community organizations claim to be running, this number is both astonishing and disturbing. Bullying largely takes place away from adults; the three main players in bullying are the perpetrator, the victim, and the peer witness. Children and youth need to be made to feel safe and confident enough, both in themselves and the system, to report bullying incidents. If they are not telling adults in authority, we need to

question why these incidents are not being reported. If reporting is not happening, then there is no opportunity for the relevant adults to help.

Having said this, the findings in this study regarding the existence and success rate of interventions are not encouraging. Despite the fact that virtually all participants who admitted to bullying others no longer view themselves as bullies, only five females (no males) reported undergoing an intervention. It is well documented that bullying occurs in all age groups (e.g. Ma, 2001), for all but one or two of these participants to have stopped bullying behaviours is curious. The reason for this may be due to the elitist nature of the subject pool. It is possible that youth who continue bullying into adulthood choose life paths other than university after high school. It is also possible that the respondents were not entirely truthful or they lacked a clear understanding of all of the nuances of bullying behaviours. In the case of participants who witnessed bullying acts, almost 73% were unaware of any formal interventions, and of these, almost half were viewed as unsuccessful. Of the 11 successful interventions, at least half had an element of peer involvement. Almost 74% of the participants who reported being bullied did not experience an intervention. Of the 25 who did, only six felt that their interventions were successful. With such a poor success rate for existing intervention methods, it is understandable why children and youth hesitate to put themselves in further jeopardy by reporting the bullying incidents in which they are either involved or witness. As stated by the participants who witnessed bullying, peer intervention does seem to be slightly more successful. This finding supports the claims by so many participants that bullying occurs in the first place in order to obtain peer acceptance. Again, this information raises the

question that if peers stood up for victims and expressed disapproval of bullying behaviours more often, would it help decrease the rate of bullying?

Although participants appeared to have a clear understanding of what cyberbullying is and how it occurs, very few chose to report specifically about their experiences with cyberbullying, even when they did mention involvement in this type of bullying. Virtually all participants reported that cyberbullying is becoming more prevalent due to the accessibility and popularity of the internet and social networking sites. These findings support those of Qing (2006) and Wolak, et al. (2007). For this study, survey questions enquired about experiences pertaining to bullying, both traditional and cyberbullying, rather than distinguishing between them with separate questions. To this end, it appears that participants chose to relate experiences with traditional bullying more often than those involving cyberbullying. It is possible that, had there been a distinction between traditional and cyberbullying in the questions asked, more information regarding cyberbullying may have been forthcoming. It is also possible that the participants are just a few years too old (almost 80% of participants were between the ages of 18 and 20) to have fully been entrenched in the vortex of cyberbullying. The majority of participants reported bullying occurred during their elementary school years, when they were approximately 10 years old, before social network became really popular.

Limitations of the Study

The findings in this study are interesting and expand upon current knowledge of the nuances of the bullying phenomenon. Some findings are supported by existing

research while others deserve further attention. However, it is important to note that there are limitations to this study.

The use of questionnaires was chosen for this study in order to expand the number of participants for analysis. However, this method of data collection limits responses, and does not allow for the expansion of detail that an interview would. It is also possible that respondents may not be truthful or, as in some cases, may not have answered all of the questions asked. Others may have responded with answers they considered acceptable or what the researcher wanted. However, as no identifying information was on the completed questionnaires, participants may have provided their true perceptions.

There was also a distinct lack of diversity in the participant demographics. Because the subject pool was limited to introductory classes at Mount Saint Vincent University, 83.3% of the participants were Caucasian, 76.7% were female, and 79.4% were between the ages of 18 and 20. Also, because they were university students, their backgrounds (e.g., socioeconomic status, home environment, educational background) may not represent the demographics of Nova Scotia.

These limitations do not negate the findings of this study however. It is important to research bullying experiences in all realms of society, in order to gain a more comprehensive view of this issue. Each group adds a new, and in some cases, unique perspective. This may allow greater understanding of the different, or similar, dynamics within the bullying phenomenon.

Recommendations for Future Research

1.   The current study used a survey format to gather information. While this is an acceptable methodology, and allows for data from a large number participants, it did not provide in-depth perceptions on the issue of bullying. Future research on bullying could employ a qualitative method such as focus groups or individual interviews. The number of participants would be fewer, but the researcher can probe and clarify issues related to bullying.

2. It would also be valuable to incorporate follow up interviews, which would give the researcher an opportunity for a more in-depth look at the feelings and desires of all involved in bullying incidents over time.

3. This study was retrospective, relying on participants to report on events that usually happen in their past. It would be valuable to access a younger population in a number of different settings for future research, particularly in regards to cyberbullying, in order to evaluate their perceptions of bullying and what is currently happening.

4.   It will be important to analyze bullying activities at the elementary school, junior high school and high school levels to determine the ages that various bullying modes are most frequent. A cross-sectional approach can be used to tap age, ethnic, and gender perceptions at different points in time.

5. Teachers and parents also need to be surveyed or interviewed regarding their perspectives on bullying, interventions, and the resources that are available to them. As awareness and knowledge are so important in the prevention of bullying, it would be valuable to determine whether or not adults who are stakeholders in

the nurturing of children and youth have a concrete grasp on the bullying phenomenon within our society.

6. As of yet, research is vastly lacking regarding cyberbullying. More studies need to be done, specifically focused on this new form of bullying. A closer look at the ages when cyberbullying occurs, how it is used, as well as what populations are engaging in it, would be valuable to create more effective prevention and intervention methods pertaining to cyberbullying.

7. Future research studies in this area should include a sample that is more representative of the Nova Scotia demographic.

Recommendations for Practise

1. One result of this study shows that there is still a serious problem with the lack of reporting bullying incidents. Children and youth are still afraid of the backlash, and feel that they are better off just putting up with the bullying. Safer ways to report bullying need to be put into place; perhaps creating a non-threatening or anonymous way of reporting would encourage more victims and witnesses to come forward.

2. Another concern for victims is that it will not help even if they do report the incidents. As bullying still seems to be predominantly within the school environment, it is important to ensure all school personnel are properly trained in dealing with all aspects of bullying; listening to and caring about the victim, taking the reports seriously, and dealing with them in a discrete, timely, and effective manner.

3. It is also recommended that parents be provided with more opportunities to educate themselves regarding bullying. However misguided, not all parents feel the need to seek out information. Finding a way to educate all parents and guardians so that they may learn to recognize signs of bullying, identify the different types of bullying, and understand that not all victims will react the same, is an important challenge, but one that must not be dismissed.

4. It appears that peers play a complex role in the bullying dynamic. According to the results of this study, many bullies behave maliciously towards others in an attempt to be liked or admired by others. It also seems that peers can be effective interventionists in eliminating bullying acts. Given this, it is important to teach children and youth who witness bullying how to safely and effectively intervene. They need to believe that they will be protected from future bullying and supported by adult authority figures for their actions.

5. There are still a lot of unanswered questions regarding cyberbullying. Schools do not get involved with cyberbullying as it is largely taking place off school property. As of now, children and youth do not always recognize, and in some cases are unaware, that they are victims of cyberbullying. Increased education for children, youth, and all adults who support and interact with them is needed in the areas of recognition, resources, and reporting of cyberbullying.

6. Laws and policies need to be put into place with regards to whose responsibility it is to police social networking sites and other online forums which facilitate cyberbullying. Police rarely charge cyberbullies as it is very hard to track and prove who the perpetrator is. One question that arises is whether social

networking sites should be taking more responsibility for the content that is entered onto their sites. Should they be legally responsible for blocking or deleting, slanderous or painful comments? The responsibility for monitoring the social networking forums, which lead to cyberbullying, must be determined and made clear to the public.

7. Opportunities for child and youth care workers to engage in professional development around issues of bullying (types, recognition, intervention) are necessary.

8. Educators should be focusing on developing environments that support positive interactions and discourage bullying behaviours. Environments that are supportive help create a healthy climate of acceptance and understanding.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study provide valuable insight into the issue of bullying in Nova Scotia. While the participant group was fairly homogenous, the results confirmed that bullying was, and continues to be, a common concern confronting children and youth. Today's children and youth encounter threats from traditional face-to-face bullying as well as anonymous cyberbullying through social networking websites. Given the high percentage of participants who did not report, or who were not reported for, bullying incidents, there is still much work to be done to gain the trust of individuals effected by bullying, thus facilitating an increase in the rate of reporting and intervention. All stakeholders involved in the lives of children and youth must promote a climate of acceptance and fairness. Anti-bullying campaigns should target children, youth, and all

adults, not just be limited to school age populations. Bullying is not limited to one gender

or age group. Most importantly, research, with a focus on identifying effective

intervention strategies and best practises to eliminate bullying, must be continued and

communicated.

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Appendix A

Sample List of Social Network Sites

Sample list of Social Network Sites complied from Boyd (2007); Boyd & Ellison (2007); Kowalski & Limber (2007); Marden (2010); and Willard (2005).

AOL	MiGente
AsianAvenue	Mixi
Bebo	MySpace
Bolt	Orkut
Classmates.com	Piczo
Cyworld	QQ
Facebook	Ryze.com
Faceparty	SixDegrees
Formspring.me	Skyrock
Friendster	StudentCenter.org
Grono	Tagworld
Hi5	Tribe.net
Hyves	Twitter
LinkedIn	Vox
LiveJournal	Xanga
Lunarstorm	Yahoo!
Microsoft Windows Live Space	YouTube

Appendix B

Measure

Survey on Bullying

Background Information:

Gender   ___ Female   ___ Male

Age   ___ 18-20   ___ 21-24   ___ 25-29   ___ ≥ 30

Ethnicity   ___ Caucasian   ___ African Nova Scotian

                 ___ First Nations   ___ Other (Specify _____)

Are you a Canadian ___ or an International Student ___?

Degree currently enrolled in: ___ BA   ___ BSc

                             ___ Professional Degree (Specify _____)

Did you grow up in an Urban Area ___ or Rural Community ___?

Section A: Please answer the following questions

1. How would you define bullying?

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. List behaviours that you feel are examples of bullying.

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. One form of bullying that is currently used is online/cyberbullying. How would you describe this type of bullying?

   _____

   _____

b. Do you feel cyberbullying has become more prevalent? Yes ___ No ___ If yes, why?

_____

_____

_____

c. Please provide some examples of cyberbullying.

_____

_____

_____

4. Why do you think some children/youth/adults are bullied?

_____

_____

_____

5. Why do you think some people bully others? What do you think they get out of behaving this way?

_____

_____

_____

6. Have you ever: ___ been bullied?   ___ bullied others?

___ witnessed others being bullied?

(Check all that apply)

If you **were/are bullied** please go to **Section B**, if you **bullied others** please go to **Section C**, and if you **have witnessed bullying**, please go to **Section D**. Please fill in all sections that apply to your experiences (more than one section may be completed).

Section B

1. How old were you when the bullying first started? ___

   b. Was it a one-time incident, or did/has it continued? _____

   b.i. Was/were the bully/bullies male ___, female ___, or both ___?

   b.ii. Were they the same ___ or different ___ bullies over time?

Please explain _____

_____

_____

2. What type of bullying or cyberbullying behaviours did you experience?

_____

_____

   b. Why do you think you were bullied?

_____

_____

3. How did you react to the bullying behaviours?

_____

_____

4. Did you report the bullying? ___ yes ___ no. If yes, to whom, if not, why?

_____

_____

5. Was there an intervention? ___ yes ___ no

   b. If yes, by whom: ___ peer ___ parent ___ school ___ other (specify _____)

c. Please describe the intervention.

_____

_____

_____

_____

6.   Was the intervention effective? ___ yes ___ no. Why or why not?

_____

_____

7.   What impact did being bullied have on you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Additional Comments relevant to the topic:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section C

1. How old were you the first time you bullied/cyberbullied someone? _____

2. What type of bullying/cyberbullying behaviour did you engage in?

_____

_____

3. Were you ever reported for bullying behaviours? ___ yes ___ no

    b. If yes, by who and to whom?

_____

_____

    c. What, if any, effect did the reporting have on you?

_____

_____

4. Did peers, family members, or school staff recognize you as a bully?

    ___ yes ___ no If yes, what, if anything, did they do?

_____

_____

5. Was there an intervention? ___ yes ___ no

    b. If yes, by whom: ___ peer ___ parent ___ school ___ other (specify _____)

    c. Please describe the intervention.

_____

_____

_____

6. Was the intervention effective? ___ yes ___ no. Why or why not?

_____

_____

_____

7. How did your bullying behaviour impact you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Do you still consider yourself a bully today? ___ yes ___ no

   b. If no, what caused you to change your behaviour? If yes, why do you think you

   still bully others?

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. What satisfaction did you hope to gain from bullying others?

_____

_____

_____

b. Did bullying others satisfy this need/desire? ___ yes ___ no. Please explain.

_____

_____

_____

10. Thinking back, do you remember how you felt immediately after bullying another

person? Please describe those emotions.

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. Describe the emotions felt several hours, or a day, after the incident took place.

Was it the same? Different? Had you already put the incident behind you?

_____

_____

_____

Additional Comments relevant to the topic:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section D

1. What types of bullying/cyberbullying incidences, have you witnessed?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   b. How old were you when you witnessed these incidences? _____

2. In these particular incidences, were you in a position to intervene in any way (i.e. by stopping the act, seeking help from an adult at the time of the act, or reporting the act later)? ___ yes ___ no. If yes, please describe what you did and how the situation was handled.

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Do you know if there was an intervention? __ yes __ no (if no, go to question 5)

   b. If yes, by whom: ___ peer ___ parent ___ school ___ other (specify _____)

   c. Please describe the intervention.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   d. Was the intervention effective? ___ yes ___ no. Why or why not?

   _____

   _____

5. What personal gain do you think the bully was trying to achieve, and do you think he or she was successful? Please describe.

_____

_____

_____

6. What impact, do you feel, these bullying experiences had on the victim?

_____

_____

_____

7. What impact, do you feel, these bullying experiences had on the bully?

_____

_____

_____

8. What impact did witnessing these bullying experiences have on you?

_____

_____

_____

Additional Comments relevant to the topic:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix C

Cover Letter to Participants

Dear Student,

My name is Sarah Dorey, and I am currently enrolled in the Master of Arts (Child and Youth Study) program at MSVU. As part of my degree requirements, I am conducting research on bullying; specifically cyberbullying. I am gathering information and perspectives from people that have been bullied, have bullied others, and/or who have witnessed bullying. The goal of this research is to expand our current knowledge regarding bullying behaviour in order to facilitate the development of effective preventative programs.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. You do not have to answer any questions on this survey that causes you discomfort. All information will be confidential and no identifying information will be required on the survey. While quotes from individual surveys may be cited in the thesis and future publications to illustrate a point, there is no way to identify the source of the quote. The focus is on group results. Data from the surveys will be coded and stored on a secure server at MSVU. Hard copies of the surveys will be shredded once the data has been entered. To allow time for dissemination of the information through conference presentations and published articles, electronic data files will be kept for three years following the thesis defence and then deleted from the computer.

If you choose to participate in this research, please complete Section A of the survey and Sections B, C, and D depending on which section(s) applies to your experiences. Should you need any clarification regarding any of the questions please ask me, I will remain in the room until everyone is finished. You can then place the

completed survey in the large envelope at the front of the room. The process should take approximately 10 to 20 minutes depending on how many sections are applicable to you. If you would like a summary of the research findings, you can contact me at the below email address and a copy will be provided.

Should you have any further questions regarding this study, please contact me, Sarah Dorey, or my thesis supervisor, Dr. Carmel French. If you have any questions regarding how this study is being conducted, you may contact the University Research Ethics Board (UREB) c/o MSVU Research and International office at (902) 457-6350 or via e-mail at research@msvu.ca.

I would like to thank you for participating in my research project. It is my hope that this research will result in more proactive and effective prevention and intervention programs regarding bullying behaviours.

Sincerely,

Sarah E. Dorey
Graduate Student, MSVU

Dr. Carmel French
Dept. of Child and Youth Study, MSVU