

Article 24

Review of Effective Middle School Bullying Prevention Programs: Helping School Counselors Utilize Effective Bullying Prevention Program Components and Outcome Measures

Darren A. Wozny and Joan Grimes

Wozny, Darren A., is an Associate Professor of Counselor Education at Mississippi State University-Meridian.

Grimes, Joan, is an Education Specialist (Eds.) graduate in the counselor education program at Mississippi State University-Meridian.

Introduction

School bullying is a significant impediment to development of a safe learning environment for middle school children.

Professional school counselors recognize the need for all students to attend schools in a safe, orderly, and caring environment. To promote this type of environment, comprehensive school counseling programs include anti-bullying/harassment and violence prevention programs along with comprehensive conflict-resolution programs to foster a positive school climate. (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2011, para. 1)

Bullying prevention programs are a way to cultivate a safer school culture for middle school children. The responsibility for bullying prevention program development often is assigned to middle school counselors and counselors need resources to design effective bullying prevention programs (ASCA, 2011). “Professional school counselors provide leadership to the school by assisting in the design and implementation of school-wide (bullying) prevention activities and programs. Comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment/violence-prevention and conflict-resolution programs require data-driven decision-making, coordination, instruction, and program evaluation” (ASCA, 2011, para. 4). The purpose of this article is to review effective middle school bullying prevention programs from the research literature and identify effective bullying prevention program activities/components (independent variables—interventions) and corresponding bullying prevention program outcome measures (dependent variables—evaluation). It is hoped that by identifying effective middle school bullying prevention program activities/components (interventions) and their corresponding outcome measures

(evaluation), it would make the task of developing and evaluating a middle school bullying prevention program more manageable for middle school counselors.

Statement of the Problem

Defining Bullying

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2014) defines bullying as unwanted acts of aggression committed intentionally and repeatedly between students when the two people show a difference in power (physically, socially, or by access to embarrassing information). This bullying can fall into three categories: verbal, social, and physical. Examples of verbal bullying include teasing, taunting, name calling, or verbalized physical threats. Examples of social bullying include acts of social exclusion, spreading negative rumors, cyberbullying, and embarrassing a student in public. Examples of physical bullying include kicking, punching, pushing, tripping, or destroying another student's possessions.

Magnitude of the Issue of Bullying

Perlus, Brooks-Russell, Wang, and Iannotti (2014) conducted a national study of sixth through tenth grade students from 1998–2010 whereby they sampled the population four times (1998, 2002, 2006, and 2010) to identify national trends in bullying. Bullying perpetration declined from 16.5% in 1998 to 7.5% in 2010. Bullying victimization also declined from 13.7% in 1998 to 10.2% in 2010. Physical fighting declined from 23.5% in 1998 to 18.8% in 2010.

Students At-Risk for Bullying

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2014) identified that there are some factors that increase the risk of a student being bullied such as: perceived as different and inferior by school peers (appearance, physical abilities, social abilities); children perceived as unable to defend themselves; children that are depressed or anxious; and children that are socially isolated from other students. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services indicated students that are more likely to bully others have several risk factors in common: low frustration tolerance; less supportive family environments; judgmental of others; noncompliant; see violence as acceptable in social interactions; social connections with other students that bully.

Impact of School-Based Bullying Prevention Programs

Perlus et al. (2014) identified the national trends of bullying perpetration, bullying victimization, and physical fighting declining from 1998–2010 and noted that bullying perpetration and physical fighting declined more among middle school than high school students. Perlus et al. attributed these positive national trends in decreased levels of bullying to increased national awareness on the issue of school violence and support for the development and implementation of many evidence-based school bullying prevention programs.

However, although the national trend may indicate decreased levels of bullying, the issue of bullying in middle school remains a significant problem and middle school counselors are encouraged to implement evidence-based bullying prevention programs

and evaluate their program effectiveness. This literature review addresses middle school bullying prevention program efficacy studies used to identify bullying prevention program activities/components (interventions) and their corresponding outcome measures (evaluation).

Review of the Literature

The middle school bullying prevention programs reviewed here were selected based on several criteria. Each prevention program needed to sufficiently explain their prevention activities (program components); each prevention program preferably had a quasi-experimental design or better (randomized controlled trials with randomization at the individual level often are not possible due to schools being intact groups); each program had identifiable dependent variable(s) and corresponding evaluation instruments; and each program reported program evaluation results.

The Bully Busters program was evaluated by Newman-Carlson and Horne (2004) using a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design. Bully Busters is a psychoeducational program to help teachers acquire skills, techniques, and strategies that combat bullying. The program consists of training sessions for teachers, seven modules dealing with recognition of aggression (increasing awareness of bullying; recognizing the bully; recognizing the victim; taking charge—interventions for bullying behavior; assisting victims—recommendations and interventions; the role of prevention; relaxation and coping skills) and intervention skills, a teacher manual, and teacher support team (Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004). The teacher manual included classroom guidance lessons so that teachers could teach the bullying prevention knowledge and skills with their classroom students. Newman-Carlson and Horne encouraged collegial teacher support groups of five to ten teachers that met and served as the ongoing resource of classroom teachers to (a) share their success or failure stories; (b) seek advice from other teachers; (c) obtain additional classroom activities; (d) dispel fears and feel supported; (e) and develop collaborative problem-solving skills (p. 262). Fifteen teachers received treatment, and 15 teachers comprised the control group. These teachers taught sixth to eighth grade in a public school system in the Southeastern United States. Measurements were disciplinary referrals, the Teacher Inventory of Skills and Knowledge (TISK), the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES), the Teacher Efficacy and Attribution Measure (TEAM), and the Osiris School Administration System Activity Tracker (OAS). Using these instruments, Newman-Carlson and Horne found that the dependent variable of teachers' knowledge/use of intervention skills (TISK) and the dependent variable of teachers' self-efficacy (TES; TEAM) in working with different types of children increased while the dependent variable of classroom bullying decreased (disciplinary referrals and OAS).

In a quasi-experimental research study by Bell, Raczynski, and Horne (2010), the Bully Buster program was examined for efficacy. A discussion of the Bully Buster program (Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004) in the previous paragraph defines the program. However, in the Bell et al. (2010) study, the Bully Busters program was administered in abbreviated form. The abbreviated program components were training for teachers, a teacher manual (Bully Busters Program) and chosen classroom activities from any of the seven modules of the program, and teacher support group sessions whereby problematic situations could be addressed through role-play. The sample for this study

included 488 students in the sixth to eighth grades taught by 52 teachers in a public middle school in the Southeastern United States. The dependent variable of teacher self-efficacy showed a significant difference on the Teacher Expectation and Efficacy Measure (TEEM) but not on the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES). The dependent variable of teacher awareness/perception showed no significant change as measured by both the School Safety Problems–Teacher (SSP-T) and the Teacher Classroom Climate (TCC). The dependent variables of students’ perceptions of school climate, levels of victimization, and safety problems showed no significant change as measured by the Student Classroom Climate (SCC), the Problem Behavior Frequency Scales (PBFS), and the School Safety Problems–Student (SSP-S). The dependent variable of reporting of bullying behavior did, however, increase significantly as measured by parents on the Problem Behavior Frequency Scales (PBFS-P; Bell et al., 2010). It is important for school counselors to examine both the significant and non-significant prevention program outcomes because many programs have multiple dependent variables and each program may be limited in its effectiveness to only some of the dependent variables. Furthermore, once the school counselor identifies the dependent variable(s) that the program is effective in changing, the school counselor then needs to link the program activities that are linked with that dependent variable to select the most successful aspects of each bullying prevention program.

Olweus and Limber (2010), in an extended selection cohorts design (same students from same schools surveyed over three different points in time) study, sought to establish the efficacy of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP). An experimental or quasi-experimental design was not employed because all schools implemented the OBPP program in Norway, eliminating the possibility of utilizing control schools. The OBPP focuses on reducing/preventing bullying and developing better peer relations through restructuring the school climate and building a sense of community among students and adults in the school. Within this program, adults are trained as authoritative role models, the school environment is restructured, rewards for bullying are reduced, and a safe environment is developed. Components of the OBPP include school-level components, classroom-level components, individual-level components, and community-level components. The OBPP school-level components include training of the OBPP coordinating committee and staff, sharing school policies associated with bullying, developing the school’s supervisory system (facilitate monitoring students and identify/intervene in bullying incidents), developing kick-off events to launch program, and identifying methods of engaging parents (Olweus & Limber, 2010). The OBPP classroom-level components include getting the message out in the school regarding the rules against bullying and enforcing consequences (school policy fidelity), classroom guidance lessons related to bullying, and classroom meetings with parents regarding the issue of school bullying (Olweus & Limber, 2010). The OBPP individual-level components include supervising student activities, ensuring all staff intervene on the spot when bullying is observed, meeting with students involved in bullying (bully and victims are met separately), meeting with parents of involved students, and developing individual-level intervention plans for involved students, as needed (Olweus & Limber, 2010, p. 127). The OBPP community-level components include recruitment/participation of community members on the OBPP coordinating committee, and developing OBPP program-community partnerships to help disseminate

the anti-bullying messages in the community (Olweus & Limber, 2010). For this study, Olweus and Limber sampled 2,500 students from grades five to grade eight in 28 elementary and 14 junior high schools in Bergen, Norway. The evaluation instrument, the Olweus Bullying/Victim Questionnaire, measured the dependent variables of victimization and bullying. The OBPP reduced both bullying victimization and bullying significantly.

Another study featuring the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program was completed by Bowllan (2011). This quasi-experimental study included a sample of 158 students who completed a baseline assessment and 112 students who received treatment for one year. These participants were the students of 17 seventh and eighth grade teachers in a small Catholic middle school in the Northeastern United States. Through use of the Revised Olweus Bullying/Victim Questionnaire and the Olweus Teacher Questionnaire, Bowllan found that the dependent variables of prevalence of bullying and exclusion by peers were reduced among seventh grade female students. However, Bowllan indicated that the results were not significant for eighth grade females or male students. The dependent variable of teacher identified bullying increased, as did the dependent variables of teacher ability to talk to bullies and teacher ability to talk to victims.

In a quasi-experimental research study by Pack, White, Raczynski, and Wang (2011), the Safe School Ambassadors Program demonstrated efficacy in decreasing bullying and increasing awareness of bullying situations in schools. This bullying prevention program, developed by Community Matters, features a student-centered approach with the goal of reducing bullying and enhancing school climate. This program seeks to identify and recruit student leaders (from different social cliques and interest groups) on campus and then to train these leaders to identify, prevent, and respond to aggression and mistreatment of other students.

The school ambassadors are trained to act as proactive and helpful bystanders by interrupting mistreatment as it occurs, preventing mistreatment from happening by discouraging peers from committing hurtful or violent acts, supporting students that have been mistreated, and obtaining adult help when situations are too complex or dangerous from them to handle by themselves. (Pack et al., 2011, p.128)

Teachers serve as mentors and are trained to teach lessons and run groups. Five middle schools in a central Texas school district were evaluated over a 2-year period. Three schools received treatment and were matched with two control schools. In each of the treatment schools, 60 to 80 students were identified as socially influential leaders of various groups within the schools. Through three original surveys (School Climate Survey, Ambassador/Key Students Survey, & Key Adults Survey) and selected school data, the researchers measured the dependent variables—intervention behaviors in bystanders, number of occurrences of reported bullying, and suspensions due to the offense of bullying. These surveys were administered as pre-tests and post-tests. The Safe School Ambassadors Program was found to create a higher rate of active bullying intervention for male ambassadors compared to control schools. The program also helped friends of Ambassadors to report increased levels of bullying intervention and decreased levels of observed mistreatment in the treatment schools compared to the control schools (Pack et al., 2011).

Spiel et al. (2011) utilized a randomized intervention-control group design to evaluate the efficacy of their ViSC Social Competence Program. The ViSC Social Competence Program is a primary preventive program to reduce aggression and bullying (Strohmeier, Hoffman, Schiller, Stefanek, & Spiel, 2012). Components of the program include using teachers as the primary target group, coach training, school team training, classroom guidance lessons, integration into the existing school policy, and a class project. The teacher training consisted of how to recognize bullying (teacher group discussion, led by ViSC Coach, to mutually define bullying behavior and then practice identification with case vignettes), how to tackle acute bullying cases (following consistent procedures to address bullying incidents—first discuss bullying with the victim; second, discuss with bullying student in a firm though respectful manner that bullying is wrong; third, discuss bullying incident with parents of involved students—practice with cases), and how to implement preventive measures at the school (coordinating with the ViSC Coach to identify existing school activities and new school activities that would be consistent with the ViSC Social Competence Program; Strohmeier et al., 2012). The ViSC Class Project is how the program disseminates the bullying prevention information/skills to students through teachers trained in the program (classroom guidance lessons include: class social rules; improving our important social situations; recognizing the emotions of others and helping them feel better; what to do if we are treated mean or unfair; what to do if we do not understand the behavior of others that are culturally different; and what have we learned so far and what do we still need to accomplish; Strohmeier et al., 2012). The Spiel et al. (2011) study's participants included a sample of 2,042 students and 338 teachers in grades five to eight in Austria. Three self-report scales to measure aggression/bullying and three self-report scales to measure victimization were used as evaluation instruments. The study found a statistically significant decline in the dependent variable of aggressive/bullying behavior but did not find a statistically significant decline in the dependent variable of victimization.

Domino (2013) studied the Take the Lead Program in a pre-test post-test control group cohort design. Take the Lead is grounded in socioecological and positive youth development theories and seeks to increase the social competencies of students in the social skills continuum. The Take the Lead lesson goals include: self-assessment and self-awareness (identifying positive attributes that contribute to self-confidence, competency, and hope); building confidence and competence (development of independent thinking and utilizing one's strengths); elements of communication (development of stronger basic communication skills of active listening and communicating clearly); interpersonal relations (identifying positive actions that are prosocial in building healthy social relationships); developing social skills (identify and practice prosocial skills in daily interaction with others); identifying and managing emotions (identify variety of emotions, practice appropriate emotional expression); assertiveness (differentiate assertive from passive and aggressive communication styles and practice assertiveness and empathic relating with others); exclusion, aggression, and other negative behaviors (identify the different forms of bullying, the impact of bullying on individuals/relationships and intervene when bullying occurs to keep school a safe environment); personal decision making (promote responsible decision making that reduces risk-taking behaviors among students); and problem solving (practice problem solving to reduce bullying in middle school; Domino, 2013, p. 432). The program consists

of teacher training, classroom guidance lessons centered on knowledge, skill, and application, and parent training. Participants in the study were all of the seventh graders in a suburban public middle school in southwestern Connecticut. The dependent variables of bullying and victimization, as measured by the Peer Relations Questionnaire, were significantly reduced by the Take the Lead Program.

In a quasi-experimental research design, Karna et al. (2013) assessed the efficacy of KiVa Anti-Bullying Program. The KiVa Anti-Bullying Program was developed by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture at the University of Turkey to stop the national trend of bullying. KiVa Anti-Bullying Program is predicated on the idea that positive change in the bystanders' behavior will reduce the rewards gained by bullies and their motivation to bully in the first place. KiVa strongly emphasizes the empathy, self-efficacy, and anti-bullying attitudes of onlookers, who are neither bullies nor victims (Karna et al., 2013, p. 536). The components of the program are classroom lessons, a virtual learning environment (KiVa Street) for older students, well-developed graphics and symbols, teacher training, and school teams to address bullying cases (indicated interventions). The KiVa universal prevention activities that were implemented with middle school students include classroom guidance lessons (themes: "group interaction," "me and others," "forms of bullying," "the consequences and counter-forces of bullying") and KiVa Street (a virtual learning environment where middle school students can go to a virtual theatre and watch short films on bullying, go to library to research bullying, and play interactive games related to bullying to help develop their knowledge and skills in addressing bullying in their middle school; Karna et al., 2013). The sample for this Finnish study consisted of 74 classes of first to third grade students (6,927 students) and 73 classes of seventh to ninth grade students (16,503 students). The Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (self-reported and peer-reported bullying and victimization) and a Participant Role Questionnaire (bystander intervention components—assisting the bully, reinforcing the bully, and defending the victim) showed that overall for both elementary and middle schools that implemented the KiVa program there was a 20% reduction in victimization and bullying compared to the control schools. In grades seven to nine, the largest effects could be seen in the male population when measuring the dependent variables of bullying and victimization. Karna et al. (2013) found that the KiVa bystander intervention components decreased bystander roles of assisting the bully and reinforcing the bully but not the role of defending the victim.

Discussion: Counselor Implications

In this section, school counselors in the process of designing their middle school bullying prevention programs will be shown a method to design an integrated school bullying prevention program (combining prevention components from effective programs). First, school counselors need to choose a primary dependent variable (long-term outcome) of their middle school bullying prevention program rather than a secondary dependent variable (intermediate process outcome of prevention component). Second, school counselors need to find an instrument to measure their primary dependent variable to evaluate the outcome of their middle school bullying prevention program for school administrators. Third, school counselors need to choose the prevention activities/interventions (independent variables) for their middle school bullying

prevention program to achieve their primary dependent variable. Fourth, school counselors may choose to find instruments to measure their secondary dependent variables if they want to evaluate the prevention components of their middle school bullying prevention program (process research).

The 2011 ASCA position statement on conflict resolution and bullying/harassment prevention highlights the central role of the school counselor in bullying prevention programs and the ASCA National Model (2012) provides school counselors with guidance on the evaluation of prevention programs within the school counseling program. The need for a middle school bullying prevention program is based on bullying being cited as a significant need on the school counselor's needs assessment (sources: students, parents, faculty/staff) and other school data (e.g., discipline referrals and suspensions; ASCA, 2012).

The use of data helps school counselors identify students who are having difficulties or behavioral problems (for example, bullying); assess and evaluate the effectiveness of activities within the school counseling program (for example, middle-school bullying prevention program); and improve, modify, or change services provided to students (for example, improving the components of a middle-school bullying prevention program). (ASCA, 2012, p. 49)

The ASCA National Model (2012) emphasizes that school counselors need to evaluate all aspects of their school counseling programs by using three types of data (process, perception, and outcome data). "To document how students are different as a result of the school counseling program, school counselors collect and analyze process, perception, and outcome data and include them in program activity results reports" (ASCA, 2012, p. 51). Process research are secondary dependent variables and include both process and perception data. Process data is the "number of participants involved, number of times the intervention took place, and evidence that an event occurred" (ASCA, 2012, p. 102). For example, 27 students participated in the classroom guidance lesson on conflict resolution is an example of process data. Perception data "asks participants what they think they know, believe, or can do; collected through surveys that measure self-reports of attainment of competencies, attitudes and beliefs and perceived gains in knowledge" (ASCA, 2012, p. 102). For example, reporting that 68% of middle school students report feeling safe at school prior to conflict resolution groups and 79% reported feeling safe after the groups is an example of perception data. Outcome data "shows the impact of a program's interventions; reports the extent to which the program has had a positive impact on students' ability to utilize knowledge, attitudes, and skills to effect improvement in achievement, attendance, and behavior; and should be collected from multiple sources" (ASCA, 2012, p. 102). For example, school counselors could use multiple sources of outcome data to evaluate the effectiveness of their middle-school bullying prevention program such as discipline referrals related to bullying, suspension rates related to bullying, and a physical bullying-related measure/survey (sources: students, parents, and faculty/staff).

In school settings where the school district has selected or mandated a particular middle school bullying prevention program, the school counselor still has an important role in implementing the selected prevention program and also evaluating the prevention program's effectiveness. It is in this latter role that the clinical implications here apply for school counselors to define their primary dependent variable (outcome research) and

select one or more appropriate measures. Furthermore, school counselors could also identify their secondary dependent variables (intermediate process outcome of prevention components) to evaluate which of their prevention components (activities) are most effective and contributing to an overall effective prevention program. School counselors could then present this bullying prevention program process and outcome research data to school administrators to advocate for changing program components that have demonstrated ineffectiveness and/or changing to a different bullying prevention program (if outcome evaluation for the mandated bullying prevention program demonstrates ineffectiveness).

Victimization and Bullying as Primary Outcome Dependent Variables

All six of the middle school prevention programs utilized victimization and bullying as the primary dependent variable to evaluate the overall outcome of their prevention programs, though each program used a wide variety of measures to do so. It is helpful to school counselors to understand that there are multiple viable measures of the same primary dependent variable (victimization and bullying).

After implementing Bully Busters in a middle school setting, classroom bullying as a dependent variable was shown to decrease as measured by disciplinary referrals and the Osiris School Administration System Activity Tracker (OAS; Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004). Another study of Bully Busters (Bell et al., 2010) found that reported bullying as a dependent variable increased significantly as assessed by the Problem Behavior Frequency Scale-Parent.

Olweus and Limber (2010) evaluated the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program to find that both the dependent variables of victimization and bullying decreased as evaluated by the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire. The incidence of bullying and exclusion by peers (social bullying) were dependent variables assessed by the Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire and both decreased in seventh grade female students when using the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (Bowlan, 2011). Pack et al. (2011) found that implementation of the Safe School Ambassadors Program decreased the dependent variables of the number of occurrences of reported bullying (assessed by the Ambassador/Key Students Survey, Key Adults Survey, school discipline records) and suspensions due to the offense of bullying (Key Adults Survey, school discipline records, and the Impact Scale, as completed by administrators, counselors, and teachers).

Domino (2013) evaluated the Take the Lead program and established that the middle school bullying prevention program decreased both bullying and victimization as measured by the Peer Relations Questionnaire. This highlights another measure of physical bullying victimization. The KiVa program (Karna et al., 2013) was evaluated by the Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire and established that the KiVA middle school bully prevention program reported a decrease in the dependent variables of bullying and victimization.

Spiel et al. (2011) evaluated the ViSC Social Competence Program and showed significant decreases in the dependent variable of aggressive behavior (bullying) as assessed by a self-report scale.

As school counselors can see from the discussion, there are a wide variety of potential measures to establish the overall effectiveness of their middle school bullying prevention programs. If school counselors are utilizing multiple measures of their

primary dependent variable, at least one measure should be a well-established measure with solid evidence of reliability and validity. Self-reports of bullying should be avoided as the sole method of measuring the primary dependent variable as the validity of self-report data is often questioned.

Selecting Middle School Bully Prevention Program Components

There are multiple viable paths to reduce victimization and bullying with middle school bullying prevention programs. A school counselor must choose one or more viable evidence-based paths. The most common middle school bullying prevention program components focus their intervention/prevention activities on teacher training and classroom guidance lessons (Domino, 2013; Karna et al., 2013; Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004; Olweus & Limber, 2010; Pack et al., 2011; Spiel et al., 2011). Some programs target bystander intervention to change the school culture related to bullying (Karna et al., 2013; Pack et al., 2011). Other middle school bullying prevention program components include teacher support groups (Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004), school bullying policy development, implementation, and compliance (Olweus & Limber, 2010), engaging parents in the bullying prevention program (Olweus & Limber, 2010), and development and dissemination of anti-bullying marketing messages in the school and/or community (Olweus & Limber, 2010). Less common program components include utilizing interactive virtual learning environments (Karna et al., 2013).

School Climate and Bystander Activity as Secondary Process Dependent Variables

A couple of the middle school bullying prevention programs included school climate and bystander intervention as secondary process dependent variables. The bullying prevention program activities related to school climate and bystander activity will be presented here along with their corresponding process data measures.

After implementing the Safe School Ambassadors Program, the secondary process dependent variable of intervention behavior in bystanders was shown to have a higher intervention rate for males as measured by the School Climate Survey, Ambassador/Key Students Survey, and the Key Adults Survey (Pack et al., 2011). The bystander intervention component of the Safe School Ambassadors Program was the identification of key students (student cliques and student organizations) and training those students to be bystanders that would intervene to decrease bullying and help change the school culture by socially encouraging other students in their cliques and social organizations to defend the victim when the risk of bullying occurs.

Karna et al. (2013) evaluated the KiVa bullying prevention component of bystander intervention as a secondary process dependent variable measured by the Participant Role Questionnaire. The Participant Role Questionnaire measured three different bystander roles associated with bullying that included “assisting the bully” (helping bullying the victim after another student starts it), “reinforcing the bullying” (laughing during a bullying incident or cheering for the bully), and “defending the bullying victim” (trying to break up a fight and/or comforting a bullying victim after an incident; Karna et al., 2013). The bystander intervention components of the KiVa program included several of the KiVa universal prevention activities that were implemented with middle school students that include classroom guidance lessons (themes: “group interaction,” “me and others,” “forms of bullying,” “the consequences

and counter-forces of bullying”) and KiVa Street (virtual learning environment regarding bullying knowledge and intervention skills development; Karna et al., 2013). The bystander intervention evaluation results were mixed. Karna et al. (2013) found that the KiVA bystander intervention components decreased bystander roles of assisting the bully and reinforcing the bully, but not the role of defending the victim.

Teacher Beliefs and Self-Efficacy as Secondary Process Dependent Variables

Newman-Carlson and Horne (2004) found that the Bully Busters program increased two teacher-related dependent variables, that being teachers' knowledge/use of intervention skills and teachers' self-efficacy in working with different types of children. These dependent variables were measured by the Teacher Inventory of Skills and Knowledge (TISK), the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES), and the Teacher Efficacy and Attribution Measure (TEAM).

The Bully Busters Bully Prevention Program component of teacher training (training, teacher manual, and role playing exercises to do with students) was evaluated by Bell et al. (2010) to assess the dependent variable of teacher self-efficacy. Bell et al. showed a significant difference on the Teacher Expectation and Efficacy Measure (TEEM) but not on the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES). The dependent variable of teacher awareness/perception showed no significant change as measured by both the School Safety Problems – Teacher (SSP-T) and the Teacher Classroom Climate (TCC). Thus, the process evaluation of the prevention program component of teacher training was mixed.

Bowllan (2011) found that use of the Olweus Bully Prevention Program components (school-level, classroom-level, and particularly individual-level) increased the dependent variables of teacher-identified bullying (school-level, classroom-level, and individual-level), teacher ability to talk to bullies (individual-level), and teacher ability to talk to victims (individual-level), as measured by the Olweus Teacher Questionnaire.

Burger, Strohmeier, Stefanek, Schiller, and Spiel (2011) evaluated the ViSC Social Competence Program teacher training component by surveying the 338 teachers with the Handling Bullying Questionnaire (HBQ) with a pre/post program evaluation and found that teachers that had participated in the teacher training utilized more non-punitive language with bullies and reported a wider range of strategies to help bullying victims than teachers that did not participate in the ViSC Social Competence Program.

Conclusion

ASCA's (2011) position statement on conflict resolution and bullying/harassment prevention strongly supports the need for bullying prevention programs to ensure safe learning environments for all students and emphasizes the central and vital role that school counselors play in the design, implementation, and evaluation of these programs. The studies evaluating the efficacy of six different middle school bullying prevention programs have been included in this literature review. The synthesis of the literature review has been organized by the various middle school bullying prevention program dependent variables (outcome research) with their corresponding evaluation instruments and linked to prevention program components/activities (interventions—dependent variables). It is intended that middle school counselors will utilize this method in the

design, implementation, and evaluation of their middle school bullying prevention program: use needs assessment and school data to highlight the need for bullying prevention program; select bullying prevention program components that have evidence of effectiveness (design); identify their prevention program's primary dependent variable and utilize multiple measures of outcome data; identify their secondary dependent variables and choose appropriate measures of process and perception data; and use the above program evaluation data to improve, modify, or change bullying prevention program components. Through this close look at the evidence-based middle school bullying prevention programs, the best suited integrated program for a particular school can be designed, implemented, and evaluated for effectiveness.

References

- American School Counselor Association (ASCA). (2011). *The professional school counselor and the promotion of safe schools through conflict resolution and bullying/harassment prevention*. Retrieved from https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/position%20statements/PS_Bullying.pdf
- American School Counselor Association (ASCA). (2012). *ASCA national model: A framework for school counseling programs* (3rd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Bell, C. D., Raczynski, K. A., & Horne, A. M. (2010). Bully Busters abbreviated: Evaluation of a group-based bully intervention and prevention program. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 14(3), 257–267. doi:10.1037/a0020596
- Bowllan, N. M. (2011). Implementation and evaluation of a comprehensive, school-wide bullying prevention program in an urban/suburban middle school. *Journal of School Health*, 81(4), 167–173. doi:10.1111/j.1746-1561.2010.00576.
- Burger, C., Strohmeier, D., Stefanek, E., Schiller, E., and Spiel, C. (2011, July). Effects of the Viennese Social Competence Training (ViSC) on teachers' strategy use for tackling bullying. Poster presented at the 12th European Congress of Psychology. Istanbul, Turkey.
- Domino, M. (2013). Measuring the impact of an alternative approach to school bullying. *Journal of School Health*, 83(6), 430–437. doi:10.1111/josh.12047
- Karna, A., Voeten, M., Little, T. D., Alanen, E., Poskiparta, E., & Salmivalli, C. (2013). Effectiveness of the KiVa Antibullying Program: Grades 1–3 and 7–9. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 105(2), 535–551. doi:10.1037/a0030417
- Newman-Carlson, D., & Horne, A. M. (2004). Bully Busters: A psychoeducational intervention for reducing bullying behavior in middle school students. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 82(3), 259–267.
- Olweus, D., & Limber, S. P. (2010). Bullying in school: Evaluation and dissemination of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 80(1), 124–134. doi:10.1111/j.1939-0025.2010.01015.x
- Pack, C., White, A., Raczynski, K., & Wang, A. (2011). Evaluation of the Safe School Ambassadors Program: A student-led approach to reducing mistreatment and bullying in schools. *Clearing House*, 84(4), 127–133. doi:10.1080/00098655.2011.564974

- Perlus, J., Brooks-Russell, A., Wang, J., & Iannotti, R. (2014). Trends in bullying, physical fighting, and weapon carrying among 6th through 10th grade students from 1998–2010: Results from a national study. *American Journal of Public Health, 104*(6), 1100–1106.
- Spiel, C., Strohmeier, D., Schiller, E., Stefanek, E., Schlutes, M., Hoffmann, C., Yanagida, T., & Pollhammer, B. (2011). WiSK Programme: Forderung sozialer und interkultureller Kompetenzen in der Schule. WiSK evaluationsstudie: Abschlussbericht (ViSC Social Competence Program. Evaluation study. Final report). Report to the Federal Ministry of Education, Arts, and Cultural Affairs. Vienna, Austria: University of Vienna.
- Strohmeier, D., Hoffmann, C., Schiller, E., Stefanek, E., & Spiel, C. (2012). ViSC social competence program. *New Directions for Youth Development, 2012*(133), 71–84. doi: 10.1002/yd.20008
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2014). *Risk factors: Children at risk for being bullied and children more likely to bully others*. Retrieved from <http://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/factors/index.html>

Note: This paper is part of the annual VISTAS project sponsored by the American Counseling Association. Find more information on the project at: <http://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/vistas>