# A National Perspective of Peer Victimization: Characteristics of Perpetrators, Victims and Intervention Models

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## ABSTRACT

**The purpose of this article is to provide a general overview of several problems and possible solutions pertaining to characteristics or patterns pertaining to bullying. Peer victimization, violence, threatening, social isolation, verbal and physical behavior, teasing, humiliation, harassing, mobbing, support programs, social isolation, self-esteem, criminal conviction, anger management, character education, intervention strategies, counseling, conflict resolution, student discipline, peacemaking, planning processes, supervision, coordinated efforts, change theory, trustworthiness, psychological services, improving learning environments, and many other issues are discussed in the article.**

## Introduction

School bullying is widely regarded as a serious personal, social and educational problem which affects a substantial portion of school children. Not only does bullying cause harm and distress to the students who are bullied (Calaghan & Joseph, 1995; Olweus, 1993, 1997; Rigby, 1998; Slee, 1996), it also inflicts emotional and developmental scars that can persist into adolescence and beyond (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Olweus, 2001). Victims of bullying are not the only ones who are adversely affected.

Children who bully others experience enjoyment in exercising power and status over victims (Rigby, 1996) and fail to develop empathy for others (Olweus, 1984; Smith, 1991). In this way bullying eases the way for children who are drawn to a path of delinquency and criminality (Farrington, 1993; Junger, 1996; Olweus, 1991). To the

extent that schools carry the responsibility for providing a safe environment for children, effective containment of the bullying problem is a high priority. The perception of risk is often greater than the reality, as schools have been largely successful in keeping students and staff safe from harm (Small & Tetrick, 2001).

In issuing the first of a series of reports based on a national survey administered in 2000 by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, Michael Josephson stated, "The seeds of violence can be found in schools all over America. Today's teens, especially boys, have a high propensity to use violence when they are angry, they have easy access to guns, drugs and alcohol, and a disturbing number take weapons to school" (Josephson Institute of Ethics, Press Release, 2001b, p. 2).

Josephson Institute of Ethics found during their 2000 survey that more than one in three middle school students and high school students say they do not feel safe at school. Generally, males are more fearful than females. This could be with good reason. When questioning this age group of males, forty-three percent of high school males and thirty-seven percent of middle school males believe it is acceptable to hit or threaten a person who makes them angry.

When females were asked this same question, nearly one in five of the females agree that hitting or threatening was acceptable. An even higher percentage of students in this age group actually resort to violence with seventy-five percent of males and over sixty percent of females saying they have hit someone in the past twelve months because they were angry. Another reason students do not feel safe in school was found when the survey revealed that more than one in five high school and middle school males have taken a weapon to school at least once in the past year. When questioned, sixty percent of the high school males and thirty-one percent of the middle school males said they could easily access a gun if they felt the necessity to do so (Josephson Institute of Ethics, Data & Commentary, 2001a).

## What is Bullying?

Morrison (2002) surmised that bullying in schools is a worldwide problem that can have negative consequences for the general school climate and for the rights of students to learn in a safe environment without fear. Bullying can also have negative lifelong consequences—both for the students who bullies and for their victims. According to the National Institutes of Health (2001), bullying occurs most frequently in sixth through eighth grade; there is little variation between urban, suburban, and small-town areas with suburban youth being two to three percent less likely to bully others.

Banks (1997) opined that bullying is comprised of direct behaviors such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, and stealing that are initiated by one or more students against a victim. According to Ahmad & Smith (1994) and Smith & Sharp (1994), boys typically engage in direct bullying methods, girls who bully are more apt to utilize subtle indirect strategies, such as spreading rumors and enforcing social isolation. Batsche & Knoff and Olweus (1994) state the key component of bullying, whether it is

direct or indirect, is that the physical or psychological intimidation occurs repeatedly over time to create an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse.

Rigby (1998) said bullying is any behavior that intends to hurt another person physically or emotionally. It includes not only the more obvious actions like punching and kicking, name-calling and teasing, but also spreading rumors, pointing out physical handicaps, shouting racial taunts, excluding victims from groups, humiliating, or spreading stories that a child wants to keep private (Salmon, James, Cassidy & Javoloyes, 2000). Bullying occurs when a person willfully and repeatedly exercises power over another with hostile or malicious intent (Lumsden, 2002). The term "bullying" encompasses a wide range of physical or verbal behaviors of an aggressive or antisocial nature. Bullying can include insulting, teasing, abusing verbally and physically, threatening, humiliating, harassing, and mobbing.

There are other less threatening forms of bullying, sometimes called "psychological bullying" such as gossiping, spreading rumors, and shunning or exclusion (Lumsden, 2002; Rigby, 1998). According to O'Toole (1999), a threat is an expression of intent to do harm or act out against someone or something. A threat can be spoken, written, or symbolically represented as in a drawing or motioning with one's hand as though shooting at another person (O'Toole, 1999). Of all the most common types of bullying or verbal aggression, teasing is considered the most common.

To head off potential problems in our schools today, administrators have made changes to the physical structures of the schools, such as adding new fences, metal detectors and additional security guards to the school campuses. Inside the schools, administrators have developed peer support programs, added and retrained more counselors, brought family counselors on campus, and added campus resource officers (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996). School-community partnerships are one key to building safe schools and communities. Students, teachers, parents, law enforcement officials, and civic and business leaders have important roles to play in reducing school violence and improving the learning environment (Pollack & Sundermann, 2001).

Various reports and studies have established that approximately fifteen percent of students in schools are either bullied regularly or are initiators of bullying behavior (Olweus, 1993). Bullying can have devastating effects on victims. As one middle-school student expressed it, "There is another kind of violence, and that is violence by talking. It can leave you hurting more than a cut with a knife. It can leave you bruised inside," (National Association of Attorneys General, 2000).

## Characteristics of Victims

Victims often fear school and consider school to be an unsafe and unhappy place to be. Bullying effects school attendance. It has been found that as many as seven percent of American's eight graders stay home at least once a month because of bullies (Banks, 1997).

Students who are victims of bullying are typically anxious, insecure, cautious, and suffer from low self-esteem (Banks, 1997). These students will rarely defend themselves or retaliate when confronted by the students who bully. Many of the victims of bullying lack social skills and friends, therefore, being socially isolated from their peers (Salmon, James, Casidy & Javoloyes, 2000)). Many times the victims tend to be close to their parents, and additionally, the parents of these children can be described as overprotective parents (Banks, 1997).

According to Batsche, Knoff& Olweus (1994) the major defining physical characteristic of victims of bullying is that they tend to be physically weaker than their peers. According to the literature, other physical characteristics such as weight, dress, or wearing of eyeglasses do not appear to be significant factors that can be correlated with victimization.

Students who are targeted by bullies often have difficulty concentrating on their schoolwork, and their academic performance tends to be "marginal to poor" academically (Ballard, Tucky, & Theodore, 1999). Typically, a bullied student feels anxious, with this anxiety possibly in turn producing a variety of physical or emotional ailments (Lumsden, 2002).

As found in the literature, the psychological scars left by bullying often endure for years. Ballard, Argus, & Remley (1999) states that exposure to bullying by peers has been found to be related to increased dropout rates, lower self esteem, fewer friends, declining grades, and increases in illness. Even into adulthood, when these individuals are no longer harassed or socially isolated, studies have found a higher level of depression and lower self-esteem among formerly bullied individuals (Lumsden, 2002).

Pellegrini & Bartini (2000) call the period of transition between elementary and middle school the "brutalizing period" because of the increased frequency and intensity of aggression experienced by students. The National Institute of Health (2001) conclude that students who are bullied report having greater difficulty making friends and have poor relationships with their peers. The literature suggests that boys and girls experience bullying in a different manner. Males tend to be more physical than females. Females have been found to use more subtle indirect strategies, such as spreading rumors and enforcing social isolation. The gender difference is evident in both elementary and middle schools (Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000).

**Characteristics of Bullies**

Bullying makes a convincing case for the negative social, academic, psychological, and physical impact in schools. Olweus, Limber & Mihalic (1999) says bullies are more likely to be convicted of a crime, and Stein (1995) states bullies are more likely to take part in sexual harassment and assault in high school and in adulthood. Most children who become violent toward themselves or others feel rejected and psychologically victimized (Dwyer, Osher, & Warger, 2000) In most cases, children exhibit aggressive behavior early in life, and if not provided support, will continue a

progress developmental pattern toward severe aggression or violence (Dwyer et al., 2000). However, when children have a positive, meaningful connection to an adult, whether it be a home, school, or in the community, the potential for violence is reduced significantly (Dwyer et al, 2000).

According to Calaghan & Joseph (1995), it is not only victims who are at risk for short- and long-term problems; but bullies also are at increased risk for negative outcomes. One researcher found that those elementary students who were bullies attended school less frequently and were more likely to drop out than other students (Olweus, 1997; Hoerr, 2000). Several studies suggest that bullying in early childhood may be a critical risk factor for the development of future problems with violence and delinquency. For example, Olweus' (1997) research found that in addition to threatening other children, bullies were several times more likely than their non-bullying peers to commit antisocial acts, including vandalism, fighting, theft, drunkenness, and truancy, and to have an arrest by young adulthood. Another study of more than 500 children found that aggressive behavior at the age of 8 was a powerful predictor of criminality and violent behavior at the age of 30 (Eron, Husemann, Romanoff & Yarmel, 1987)

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) recently issued a report entitled, The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective as reported in O'Toole (1999), seeks to identify the warning signs of school shooters. In this report, they caution against responding with "knee-jerk" reaction; yet, all threats, no matter how small, need to be responded to as quickly as possible (Hoerr, 2000). According to the FBI's report, considering the personality traits, family dynamics, school dynamics, and social dynamics of the student is crucial to handling a threat effectively (O'Toole, 1999). Some of the characteristics or warning signs that a student might act on a threat could include the following: low tolerance for frustration and anger, depression, alienation (Hoerr, 2000).

A strong correlation seems to exist between bullying other students during the school years and experiencing legal or criminal troubles as adults. Chronic bullies seem to maintain their behaviors into adulthood, negatively influencing their ability to develop and maintain positive relationships with other adults (Banks, 1997) In one study, Olweus (1993) found 60 percent of those characterized as bullies in grades six through nine had at least one criminal conviction by age twenty-four. Chronic bullies

It is reported that students who participate in the activity of bulling others are more likely to drink alcohol, and to perform more poorly academically than their victims. Both bullies and their victims are more likely to have difficulty adjusting to their environment both socially and psychologically (National Institute of Health, 2001). Those students who have experienced both being the bully and the recipient of bullying behaviors fare the worst of all with these students experiencing social isolation, doing poorly academically, and engaging in problem behaviors such as smoking and drinking (National Institute of Health, 2001).

## Interventions

Bullying is a problem that occurs in the social environment as a whole. The bullies' aggression occurs in social contexts in which school personnel and parents are generally unaware of the extent of the problem. Other children are reluctant to get involved or simply do not know how to help their classmates. Because of these factors, effective interventions must involved the entire school community rather than focus on the perpetrators and victims alone.

Froschl and Gropper (as stated in Lumsden, 2002), suggest a written anti-bullying policy distributed to everyone in the school community can help send the message that bullying incidents will be taken seriously. Olweus (1994) concludes that the approach to bullying in schools need to involve interventions at the school, class, and individual levels. This can be done through developing school-wide bullying policies, implementing curricular measures, improvement of the school ground environment, and empowering students through conflict resolution, peer counseling, and assertiveness training (Banks, 1997).

Until recently, little attention has been given to the establishment of anti-bullying initiatives in U.S. schools. Within the past several years, a number of school-based programs have been developed to address bullying, although the degree to which they embrace a whole-school approach to the problem varies. Only one U.S. program has been based explicitly on the comprehensive model developed by Olweus in Sweden and Norway. Sponsored by a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Gary B. Melton, Susan P. Limber, and colleagues at the Institute for Families in Society at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, SC, have implemented Olweus' model for use in rural middle schools in that State. Interventions are focused at the levels of the individual, classroom, school, and community at large. A comprehensive evaluation involving 6,500 children currently is under way to measure the effects of the program.

Reducing the occurrence of the first move toward violence appears to be the most promising approach to preventing school violence. Currently, schools rely almost exclusively on arbitration to resolve disputes between youth. Students often perceive this process as coercive. (Crawford & Bodine, 2001, p. 20).

## Conflict Resolution

Crawford and Bodine suggest an alternative approach for students, bringing the parties of the dispute together for conflict resolution. When students are provided with the skills to resolve the dispute, and when adults expect them to come to an agreeable resolution, students will do so. Through the conflict resolution process, students gain ownership of constructing a solution directly (Crawford & Bodine, 2001).

School personnel need to map the school's "hot spots" for bullying incidents and provide better supervision in these areas (Lumslen, 2002). It is suggested that teachers stand in their doorways during passing times helping to supervise hallways and locker-time, where many incidents of harassment frequently occur.

Teachers need to work with students at the class level to develop class rules against bullying. Curriculum efforts in the classroom with role-playing exercises and related assignments can teach those students directly involved in bullying alternative methods of interactions (Banks, 1997). Teachers are also encouraged to use cooperative learning activities where the students interact with their peers in the regular classroom to reduce social isolation (Banks, 1997). Students need to be taught how to interact using modeling, coaching, prompting, praise, and other forms of positive reinforcement. Schools can take a proactive stance by implementing programs that teach students social skills, conflict resolution, anger management, and character education (Lumslen, 2002).

A parental awareness campaign is necessary to increase parental awareness of the problem, to point out the importance of parental involvement for program success, and to encourage parental support of program goals. According to William Pollack (as stated in Lumslen, 2003), a psychologist, "Research shows that the success of any program is sixty percent grounded in whether the same approaches are used at home," (Lumslen, 2003, p.4).

The report, Conflict Resolution Education: A Guide to Implementing Programs in School, Youth-Serving Organizations, and Community and Juvenile Justice Settings (2001), identified four basic approaches to conflict resolution education: process curriculum, mediation program, peaceable classroom, and peaceable school (Crawford & Bodine, 2001). An authentic conflict resolutions education program should be taught to all students, not just those with disruptive behaviors. School wide primary prevention strategies promote academic success and emotional/social skills development in a positive climate (Pollack & Sundermann, 2001). Targeted early interventions should also create services that address risk factors and build protective factors for students at risk of developing academic and behavior difficulties. This type of intervention can include tutoring, instruction in problem solving, and conflict resolution provided by counseling and mental health staff (Pollack & Sundermann, 2001).

The following description suggested by Conflict Resolution Education: A Guide to Implementing Programs in School, Youth-Serving Organizations, and Community and Juvenile Justice Settings, (2001), outlines the focus of conflict resolution (Crawford & Bodine, 2001). They suggest that a process curriculum approach should be used to teach the components of conflict resolution education, and students would receive instruction in conflict resolution in a distinct course with daily or weekly lesson plans (Crawford & Bodine, 2001).

Additionally, selected students or adults would be trained in the mediation program approach to act as neutral third parties who help disputing youth reach resolutions (Crawford & Bodine, 2001). Schools who have comprehensive violence preventions and response plans in place, and the personal trained to implement those plans report positive results such as: improved academics, reduced disciplinary referrals and suspensions, improved school climate that is more conducive to learning, better staff morale, more efficient use of human and financial resources, and enhanced safety

(Pollack and Sundermann, 2001). When schools encourage resilience, students are empowered to overcome risk factors that could lead them into making dangerous choices, and offering the students the opportunity to redirect their energies toward achieving success in the classroom and their personal lives (Pollack and Sundermann, 2001).

## Cooperation and Conflict Resolution

The International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution Approaches, developed at Teachers College, Columbia University, is another model to assist school personnel and community members in the prevention of violence in schools. The framework of this program covers both what needs to be done and how to proceed in the implementation. The perspective of this approach is schools are facilitating change in the culture of the school system at four levels: the disciplinary, the curricular, the pedagogical, and the cultural (Coleman & Deutsche, 2000).

This approach is based on several elements related to the causes and prevention of violence. The elements of the program are:

1. Violence is a function of the interplay between personal and social factors.
2. Conflict is a naturally occurring phenomenon with both constructive and destructive potential.
3. Competition and cooperation between people and groups produce profoundly different consequences.
4. A constructive process of conflict resolution is similar to an effective, cooperative problem-solving process.
5. Competition begets competition, cooperation begets cooperation.
6. There is an intimate connection between conflict and justice.
7. A systemic approach toward conflict resolution can facilitate a change in the competitive culture of schools (Coleman & Deutsche, 2000).

Interventions at each of the levels concern both students and adults, are aimed at both individuals and systems, and promote empowerment, positive social interdependence, nonviolence, and social justice (Coleman & Deutsche, 2000).

The first level is the student discipline system made-up of a peer mediation program. Typically, students (some as young as ten years, as well as those in high school and college), along with teachers, are selected to be mediators and are given between ten to thirty hours of training and follow-up supervision (Coleman & Deutsche, 2000). In order for schools to take full advantage of the gains from peer mediation programs, and cooperation and conflict resolution curricula, their staffs also must be trained.

Collaborative negotiation training for adults often parallels student training, but it focuses on problems that are more germane to the personal and professional lives of adults. The program also stresses that all adults in schools should be trained: teachers, administrators, counselors, bus drivers, lunchroom aids, paraprofessionals, librarians,

coaches, etc. Having everyone in the school community trained will help institutionalize the changes through adult modeling of the attitudes and behaviors desired for the students; demonstration of the value of such approaches; and encouragement of the development of new language, norms, and expectations around conflict and conflict management throughout the school community (Coleman & Deutsche, 2000). Effectually, this will be the forth level of the program.

At level two of the program is curriculum offering conflict resolution training. Curriculum components cover themes such as understanding conflict, communication, dealing with anger, cooperation, affirmation, bias awareness, cultural diversity, conflict resolution, and peacemaking (Coleman & Deutsche, 2000). These programs differ on their approach and contents based upon the age and background of the students in the classroom. Most programs share the goals of instilling the attitudes, knowledge, and skills conducive to effective cooperative problem solving, and of discouraging the attitudes and habitual responses which give rise to win-lose struggles (Coleman & Deutsche, 2000). Elements in the curriculum used would include: being able to recognize the type of conflict; understanding and accepting cultural diversity; respect for the interest of others; mutual problems to be solved cooperatively; communication skills; and developing skills to deal with conflict resolution (Coleman & Deutsche, 2000).

The third level is pedagogy. To further enhance the development of conflict resolution skills from specific units or courses, students can practice these skills in their regular subject areas with two teaching strategies: cooperative learning and academic controversy (Coleman & Deutsche, 2000).

The forth level is the last level involving both the school and the community culture from level one (Coleman & Deutsche, 2000). According to the International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution, the collaborative training and processes need not and should not stop at the school doors (Coleman & Deutsche, 2000). Many student conflicts originate outside of school: at home, on the school bus, or at social events. International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution believes that parents, caregivers, local clergy, local police officers, and members of local community organizations, among others, should be trained in conflict resolution and involved in the overall planning process for preventing destructive conflict among children and youths (Coleman & Deutsche, 2000).

## Olweus Prevention Program

One of the most effect bullying prevention programs is The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. This model program was developed and implemented in 1983 in Norway as part of the Norwegian Government's plan for the prevention of delinquency and violence among children and youth. Since then, the program has been successfully implemented in other countries including the United States as a part of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Program Services Administration (SAMHSA).

The Olweus program is a multilevel, multicomponent school-based program designed to prevent or reduce bullying in elementary, middle, and junior high schools. Once this program is implemented in schools, there is a thirty to seventy percent reduction in student reports of being bullied and bullying others (SAMHSA Model Programs). In addition, when this program is implemented there is a significant reduction in student reports of general antisocial behavior, such as vandalism, fighting, theft, and truancy (SAMHSA Model Programs). Schools report that there are improvements in classroom order and discipline, and a more positive attitude toward schoolwork and school in general with this program. The program attempts to restructure the existing school environment to reduce opportunities and rewards for bullying.

The Olweus Program works with interventions at three levels. The first level is school wide interventions, which includes a survey of bullying problems at each school, increased supervision, school wide assemblies, and teacher inservice training to raise the awareness of children and school staff regarding bullying. The second level is classroom interventions entails the establishment of classroom rules against bullying, regular class meetings to discuss bullying at school, and meetings with all parents; and the third individual-level interventions are discussions with students identified as bullies and victims.

When addressing risk factors in individuals, the program works to decrease individuals' impulsivity, conformity to rules, lack of empathy, low frustration for tolerance, and decreasing interest in school (SAMHSA Model Programs). Within the school, the program works with positive peer attitudes toward violence, as well as changing school staff members' attitudes of indifferences and accepting attitudes toward bullying (SAMHSA Model Programs). The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program works within the family unit by changing the amount of parental involvement; parents who are overly permissive, as well as parents who discipline too harshly or use physical punishment; and encouraging parental supervision of their children (SAMHSA Model Programs).

Implementations of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program require significant and ongoing commitment from school administrators, teachers, and support staff members (SAMHSA Model Programs). The first step would be the establishment of a Bullying Prevention Program Coordinating Committee that would consist of school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and the program onsite coordinator (SAMHSA Model Programs). During the first year of the program all school staff participate in a one day training session. Teachers are expected to read the "Teacher Handbook: Olweus' Core Program Against Bullying and Antisocial Behavior" and "Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do." Teachers are expected to facilitate weekly classroom meetings lasting twenty to forty minutes and to participate in regular Teacher Discussion Groups (SAMHSA Model Programs). School support staff members are expected to participate in additional training and attend monthly meetings.

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program has been evaluated using two different types of evaluation designs. Results from an evaluation of ten schools in Oslo, Norway shows a reduction in bully/victim problems between thirty-three and sixty-four percent for the various sub-groups girl and boys between the ages of eleven and thirteen years old in grades five to seven (SAMHSA Model Programs).

**Bullying Prevention Program**

This program targets students in elementary, middle, and junior high schools. All students within a school participate in most aspects of the program. Additional individual interventions are targeted at students who are identified as bullies or victims of bullying. Core components of the program are implemented at the school level, the class level, and the individual level

School-wide components include the administration of an anonymous questionnaire to assess the nature and prevalence of bullying at each school involved in the project, a school conference day to discuss bullying and to plan interventions, formation of a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee to coordinate all aspects of the school's program, and increased supervision of students at "hot spots" for bullying.

Classroom components involve the establishment and enforcement of class rules against bullying, and holding regular class meetings with students. The individual components are interventions with children identified as bullies and victims, and discussions with parents of involved students. Counselors and school-based mental health professionals may assist teachers in these efforts.

**Conclusion**

School is supposed to be a place where students feel safe and secure and where they can count on being treated with dignity and respect. But, because of bullying students are do not feel safe. Bullying is a serious problem that can dramatically affect the ability of students to progress academically, socially and psychologically. Achieving school safety requires meeting several challenges simultaneously. Uniting concerned adults and youth through a community partnership is an effective means of raising children and teenagers to be happy, responsible citizens. The selection of appropriate programs and strategies to improve school safety is important.

Programs to reduce school bullying and violence should promote cooperation, constructive controversy, and conflict resolution with the knowledge that it takes more than a single course to bring about fundamental change. Students need to have continued experiences of constructive conflict resolution as they learn different subjects. These students need to experience a school environment that provides the daily practice of cooperative relations, constructive resolution of conflicts, and social justice (Coleman & Deutsche, 2000).

These experiences, combined with an education in the principles of cooperative work and conflict resolution, should help students develop attitudes and skills which are strong enough to resist the prevalent countervailing influence in their non-school environments (Coleman & Deutsche, 2000). Programs to reduce violence in schools should also help students acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that will enable their cooperation with others in resolving constructively the inevitable conflicts within

and among families, communities, ethnic groups, and nations (Coleman & Deutsche, 2000).

Solving a problem such as bullying does not simply mean stopping the act of aggression. It means building positive social relationships between bullies, victims and others in the school community, and most importantly, building relationships of trust so that children do not live with fear and suspicion. If we are to build trust relationships, however, we must understand what it means to be trustworthy in other people's eyes. Interestingly, the behaviors associated with being trustworthy differ somewhat, depending on whether one takes a security value system perspective or a harmony value system perspective (Braithwaite, 1998).

It is concluded that with the prevalence of bullying in the United States schools there is a need to for more research to understand, and devise ways to intervene against bullying. There has been research in Norwegian, Sweden schools and in the Unites States showing there are successful school intervention programs available. These programs focus on increasing teacher and parent supervision, and the establishment of clear rules prohibiting bullying and providing support to those who experienced bullying.

The prevention models mentioned in this literature review are just a few of the programs currently available to eliminate bullying behavior. The School Violence Resource Center (SVRC) sponsored by a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, is housed at the Criminal Justice Institute, University of Arkansas System. The SVRC maintains a website that has over 45 school violence prevention programs, evaluated by independent entities such as Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, Hamilton Fish Institute, Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and others. The website for this resource is: http://www.svrc.net/ModelPrograms.htm

**Implications for Counselors**

School counselors can play a central role in achieving the dual goal of school safety and academic success by helping students build needed skills and overcome barriers to learning and healthy development. Effective school counseling programs can promote school safety. Anti-bullying programs can offer students mental health and psychological services that otherwise might not be accessible or available in their communities.

It has been found that as many as seven percent of American's eight graders stay home at least once a month because of bullies (Banks, 1997).

Students who are targeted by bullies often have difficulty concentrating on their schoolwork, and their academic performance tends to be "marginal to poor" academically (Ballard, Tucky, & Theodore, 1999).

To the extent that schools carry responsibility for providing a safe environment for children in which they learn to contribute productively to society, effective containment of the bullying problem is a high priority.

Morrison (2002) opined that bullying in schools is a worldwide problem that can have negative consequences for the general school climate and for the rights of students to learn in a safe environment without fear.

Not only does bullying harm both its intended victims and the perpetrators, it also may affect the climate of schools and, indirectly, the ability of all students to learn to the best of their abilities

School-community partnerships are one key to building safe schools and communities. Students, teachers, parents, law enforcement officials, and civic and business leaders have important roles to play in reducing school violence and improving the learning environment (Pollack & Sundermann, 2001).

It has been found that as many as seven percent of American's eight graders stay home at least once a month because of bullies (Banks, 1997).

In conclusion, peer victimization is a growing problem throughout America and internationally. School bullying is regarded as a serious personal, social and educational problem that impacts a substantial portion of school children. The issues discussed in this article should assist those working to improve the quality of life and education for youth faced with these multiple pressures.

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