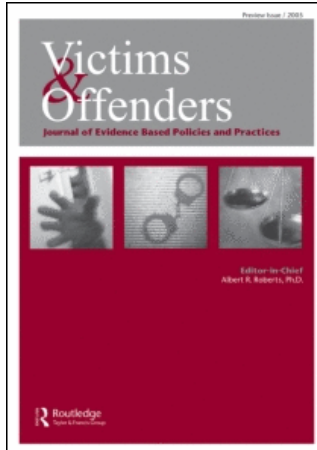


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Factors Associated With Perceptions and Responses to Bullying Situations by Children, Parents, Teachers, and Principals

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Abstract: This study provides one of the first assessments of bullying based on the perceptions of victimized children and their parents, teachers, and school administrators. It augments the extensive quantitative research findings already reported in the literature. The qualitative methodology privileges the “lived experience” of study participants. Interviews were conducted with children in grades 4 and 5 who self-identified as having been bullied, their parents, and educators. This study provides evidence to suggest that several factors influence individuals’ perceptions and responses to particular bullying incidents. These factors include whether the incident matches an individual’s definition, whether the child “fits” expectations about how victimized children behave and present themselves, and developmental features of bullying and what is considered normal.

Keywords: bullying, children’s and adults’ perspectives, perceptions of bullying, bullying definition, qualitative research

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INTRODUCTION

The pervasiveness of bullying among children is well documented. The effects may be far-reaching for bullies and victims, both of whom are at risk of emotional, social, and psychiatric problems that may persist into adulthood (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, & Scheidt, 2001; O'Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999). Bullying is recognized as a complex phenomenon. Indeed, a systemic ecological theoretical framework, whereby the dynamics are seen to extend beyond the children who bully others or who are bullied, is considered crucial to understanding the complexity of bullying problems. Individual characteristics, social interactions, and ecological and cultural conditions all are seen to contribute to social behavioral patterns (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Cairns & Cairns, 1991).

In this paper we report on a qualitative study in which the perceptions of children in grades 4 and 5 who reported being bullied were investigated, along with the perspectives of the children's parents and their teachers and school administrators. The findings indicate that a number of factors contribute to the complexity of bullying and influence how an individual responds to a particular incident. The knowledge gained through qualitative data complements the data gathered by quantitative methods (Cullingford & Morrison, 1995), and privileges individuals' "lived experience" (Van Manen, 1990).

The prevalence of children who report being bullied ranges from 9 percent in Norway (Olweus, 1991) to approximately 42 percent in Italy (Gini, 2004). Comparing rates across countries and cultures is difficult due to the divergent ways of defining and understanding bullying. A number of variables influence how bullying is identified and reported. Indeed, many languages have no equivalent word for the term "bullying," which affects the reported prevalence and intervention rates (Craig, Henderson, & Murphy, 2000; Smorti, Menesini, & Smith, 2003). Various forms of bullying are characterized differently by individuals (Craig, Henderson, & Murphy, 2000; Smith, Cowie, Olafsson, Liefhoghe, Almeida, & Harati et al., 2002). A number of challenges face parents and educators, including recognizing the diverse forms of bullying, such as indirect aggression and social exclusion. Sorting out which behaviors constitute bullying can be frustrating and discouraging, and influences whether adults intervene (Hazler, Miller, Carney, & Green, 2001; Mishna, 2004). Other factors such as attitudes toward children who bully and children who are victimized affect individuals' responses. Although children and adults are generally opposed to bullying (Boulton, Trueman, & Felmington, 2002; Charach, Pepler, & Ziegler, 1995), they may be unsympathetic toward a victim of bullying and feel rather more understanding of the child who bullies (Eslea & Smith, 2000; Gini, 2004).

Research suggests that students do not perceive teachers as intervening consistently or frequently to stop bullying (Craig et al., 2000). In a Canadian

study, one-quarter of the elementary school students said teachers often or almost always intervene, whereas three-quarters of their teachers reported that they usually intervened (Charach, Pepler, & Ziegler, 1995). Rigby and Bagshaw (2003) found that just under 50 percent of children reported that teachers were unhelpful in resolving bullying, 20 percent reported that teachers did not treat students with respect or listen to them, and 20 percent felt that teachers aggravated the situation. Conversely, some research indicates that children find interventions by parents, teachers, and peers helpful (Bentley & Li, 1995; Smith & Shu, 2000). In a study of victims' perceptions of whether telling the teacher was helpful, Bentley and Li (1995) found that 68 percent of the children reported that telling helped, while 32 percent reported that telling did not alleviate the bullying problems.

Teachers and parents are often unaware that a child has been bullied because many children do not admit to being victimized (Casey-Cannon, Hayward, & Gowen, 2001; Houndoumadi & Pateraki, 2001; Mishna, 2004; O'Moore, 2000; Pepler, Craig, Ziegler, & Charach, 1994). Various explanations have been offered for teachers' apparent lack of awareness of bullying. First, teachers may not witness bullying because of the "covert nature of the activity and the subtle manner which bullies use to intimidate their victims" (Miller, Beane, & Kraus, 1998, p. 23). Secondly, the context in which teachers observe children may limit their awareness (Leff, Kupersmidt, Patterson, & Power, 1999). Adults tend to observe children in structured and supervised situations (such as the classroom) rather than in unstructured peer situations (such as the playground, hallways, and lunchroom). Children, in contrast, observe each other in comparatively unstructured settings such as recess and the hallways (Nabuzoka, 2003). Consequently, adults and children may be responding to quite different behaviors. Atlas and Pepler (1998) noted that when teachers do know about bullying "they may do very little to intercede" (p. 88), which they attribute partly to adults not knowing how to respond.

There is very little research on how individuals' past experiences with bullying influence their understanding of and responses to bullying. Some research has found an association between personal experience with bullying and how one responds and intervenes (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003), whereas other research has not (Nicolaidis, Toda, & Smith, 2002).

There is agreement that interventions must encompass all levels, including the school, classroom and peers, parents, and the individual children involved in bullying, and that they must be supported by broader structural initiatives (Hanish & Guerra, 2000; Pepler, Craig, Ziegler, & Charach, 1993). In many countries school-based interventions have been implemented to challenge how systems foster children's victimization and to alter staff and student responses (Olweus, 1984; Sharp, 1996), and they have met with mixed success (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003; Pepler et al., 1994). Reasons for the variable effectiveness of bullying programs include: inconsistent institutional and

societal commitment (Eslea & Smith, 1998); prohibitive time and personnel demands (Gini, 2004); inadequate adaptation of interventions to particular schools and students (Stevens, De Bourdeaudhuij, & Van Oost, 2000); and teacher and school variables (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003; O'Moore, 2000).

In the study reported in the present paper we address the lack of literature on the effects of bullying from the standpoint of victimized children and the primary adults in their lives—their parents, teachers, and school administrators (Astor, Meyer, & Behre, 1999; Borg, 1998; Gamliel, Hoover, Daughtry, & Imbra, 2003; Mishna, 2004; Owens, Shute, & Slee, 2000). Moreover, we examined the perspectives of students, their parents, and educators to actual situations that they raised for discussion, which takes into account the possibly emotionally charged aspect of bullying incidents for children and adults, which can influence their responses (Newman & Murray, 2005). Qualitative research methodology can provide additional insight into more subtle types of bullying and the dynamics of bullying behaviour (Cullingford & Morrison, 1995; Smith & Brain, 2000), and can provide insight into factors that influence how children and adults understand and respond to bullying incidents. Parents' involvement is highly correlated with program success (Eslea & Smith, 2000), and teachers are critical in implementing programs (Craig et al., 2000). School administrators are rarely included in research, yet are key in providing information on school culture and attitudes (Astor et al., 1999).

METHOD

We conducted this study in four public schools in a large urban center in Canada. The schools were selected to differ in the variables that might influence bullying behavior, such as income, education, family composition, and percentage of recent immigrants (Astor et al., 1999). One school has been categorized in the lowest income range and one is in the second lowest. These schools have a high percentage of single parent families, a low proportion of parental higher education, many families who live in subsidized housing, and high numbers of recent immigrants. The third and fourth schools have been categorized in the highest and second highest income levels. These schools have a moderate to low percentage of single parent families, mixed to high parent education levels, most of the families living in single detached housing, and low to moderate numbers of recent immigrants (Schools Like Us Project Description, 2001–02).

In order to obtain students' self-reports of bullying behavior in school we administered the Safe School Questionnaire (Pepler, Connolly, & Craig, 1993, adapted from Olweus, 1989), to 157 students (63 boys and 94 girls) in six grade 4 classes and eight grade 5 classes (69 grade 4 students, 88 grade 5 students). Each principal sent an introductory letter to parents of all grade 4 and 5 students, with an appended letter from the researchers. A research assistant reviewed the study with students during class time. To obtain parental approval for

children to complete the questionnaire, a consent form was sent home. Of 349 students invited to participate, 159 (46 percent) received consent.

Data Collection and Analysis

After we received consent for the children to complete the questionnaire, research assistants administered the Safe School Questionnaire during class time. We used two items from this questionnaire to assess involvement in bullying: "How often have you been bullied in the current term?" and "How often have you been bullied in the last five days?" Prior to completing the questionnaire, a class discussion was conducted to define bullying. A definition of bullying, adapted from Olweus (1989), was provided at the beginning of the questionnaire. The children answered questions on a five-point scale. The reliability of the Safe School Questionnaire, measured by Cronbach alpha, was ($\alpha = .7768$), indicating a good internal consistency for the scale. Children respond to items with "it hasn't happened in the current term," "once or twice," "more than once or twice," "about once a week," or "several times a week." In response to the question on how often they have been bullied at school during the term, 80 (51 percent) said they were not bullied, 45 (29 percent) said once or twice, 14 (9 percent) said more than once or twice, 8 (5 percent) said about once a week, and 10 (6 percent) reported being bullied several times a week. In response to how often they were bullied during the last five days at school, 101 (63 percent) reported not being bullied, 29 (19 percent) said they were bullied once, 9 (6 percent) said twice, 12 (8 percent) said three or four times, and 6 (4 percent) reported being bullied five or more times.

On the basis of the questionnaire results, we selected nine boys and nine girls in grades 4 and 5 who identified being frequently bullied. For the qualitative phase of the study, we obtained consent from parents for the child's and parent's participation and for permission to invite the teachers and school administrators to participate. Children assented to be interviewed. We conducted 55 semistructured interviews with 18 children, 20 parents (in two cases, both parents were interviewed), 13 teachers (2 teachers had 2 children in their class, 1 had 3, and 1 did not agree to participate), and 2 vice principals and 4 principals.

A trained doctoral student and two trained Master of Social Work (MSW) students, with several years of social work experience, conducted 60- to 90-minute-long interviews in a private room in the schools. They audio-recorded the interviews and the audiotapes were professionally transcribed. We asked each respondent to define bullying, after which the interviewer read the following definition to ensure that the children and adults were aware of the accepted definition of bullying (Olweus, 1989): "We say a student is bullied when another student or group of students say nasty and mean things to him/her or tease him/her a lot in a mean way. It is also bullying when a student is hit, kicked, threatened, locked inside a room and things like that. These things may happen

often and it is hard for the student being bullied to defend him/herself. But it is not bullying when two students of about the same strength argue or fight.”

Children were asked about their definition and view of bullying; the focus (e.g., appearance, learning disability, race), type (e.g., direct or indirect), location, and perpetrators of their victimization; the effects; how they coped; and whether and whom they told. Adults were asked about their definition, their awareness of the child’s victimization and whether the child had told them they were bullied, reactions to the child reporting victimization, responses to the child, and perceptions of school support. As we reviewed the tapes and transcripts we modified subsequent interviews (Tesch, 1990)—for instance, we added a question about the adults’ own experiences of being bullied and of bullying as children (See the Appendix for a copy of the questionnaire).

NVivo qualitative software was used to organize the data (Richards, 1999). In analyzing the interviews we identified categories and themes (Merriam, 2002), and constant comparison led to groupings of similar concepts about individuals’ understanding of the children’s victimization (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). We identified consistent and contradictory themes. We took measures to ensure trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researchers are very connected to this research through many years of clinical practice and research in this field and thus brought perspective and caution to the research. Through interviews and returning to the children and adults to verify developing themes, we addressed member checking. We obtained multiple perspectives and triangulation by interviewing children and their parents and educators.

RESULTS

The prevailing pattern in the interviews was the difficulty the respondents had in characterizing bullying. This seemed related to a complex and confusing process whereby each individual considered factors that influenced how he or she viewed a particular incident. To complicate matters, a child, parent, and educator might assess the same incident quite differently. Naming bullying is singularly important. Whether or not an incident is seen as bullying influences how an individual reacts, for instance whether a child tells and how an adult responds.

How Individuals Respond to Bullying

Definition of Bullying

The majority of the children and adults referred to a power imbalance that exists in bullying situations. For instance, one child said, “older kids think they can overpower the little ones”; a parent talked about the victim being disempowered as a result of “one child trying to exert their power towards

another child for intimidation”; a teacher described a child who bullies as “trying to get some kind of power or control over that person”; and a principal depicted bullying as a person “putting another in a position where they are intimidated or feel they need to do something they are not comfortable with.” Almost all of the respondents stressed that bullying is intentional. In one girl’s view, for example, “bullies enjoy hurting and scaring others.” Many parents referred to children trying to make a child feel “down,” “lower,” or “in a lesser category.” A teacher talked about one child trying to make another child “feel inferior and bring about feelings of fear, anxiety and intimidation.” Most respondents included direct and indirect behaviors and articulated such forms as exclusion, threats, gossip, and rumors. Several children, for instance, included spreading stories, taking someone’s belongings or money, and excluding others; one principal stated, “the rumor mill, especially for grades 5 and 6, is really deadly.” A few respondents had not previously considered indirect behavior as bullying but after reflecting on the definition provided shifted their views. For example, one mother recognized that the definition incorporated behavior exhibited by her daughter’s friend, such as gossip, that until then she had not considered bullying. Notably, most respondents did not mention repetition, which is a feature of the standard definition (Olweus, 1993).

Disclosure of Bullying

Approximately half of the parents and teachers were not aware that their child or student was bullied. Many of these adults were surprised that the children were bullied, whereas a few were not surprised. Of the children who had not told an adult, some were adamant that telling adults makes bullying worse. For instance, one boy claimed, “they think if I go to the principal’s office and tell him they won’t do it any more, but they’ll do it more because you told on them.” A minority of children indicated that it was helpful to tell their parents or teachers. For example, one boy said the teacher gave detentions or sent kids to the office, which he thought led others to become friendlier toward him. Another child awoke daily feeling scared and reassured herself that “the teachers are there, they [the children who bully] can’t do anything.”

A prevalent finding was that many of the children reported that they told or would only tell an adult if they thought the bullying became “serious.” One girl, in describing the impact of being bullied, said she shifted from feeling excited about going to school to not wanting to attend, yet wasn’t ready to tell her parents until “it hurt more.” She had become used to people making fun of her, which let her cope and keep her victimization secret. She said, “I knew this wasn’t right and they were doing something wrong. I had to tell someone but I wasn’t ready.” It was not only indirect bullying that children withheld from adults. For example, one boy who said he would only tell if the bullying became serious did not disclose being beaten up by some boys because “it wasn’t too serious,” and he coped by trying to have “happy thoughts.”

Among reasons offered by the children for not telling adults, first and foremost was fear of repercussions from the child who had bullied or fear that their peers would “hate” or dislike them. Other reasons included the secrecy of bullying, powerlessness of the victimized child, the victim blaming himself or herself, fear of losing the relationship if the child who bullies is a friend, and expectations that adult intervention would be not helpful and might even fuel the problem. Some children expressed fear their parents or teachers would go to the principal. Nevertheless, some children clearly found it helpful to tell their parents or teachers.

Direct and Indirect Bullying

Although the majority of respondents included indirect bullying in their definitions, in response to incidents that occurred in relation to the identified child they repeatedly “normalized” and minimized the behaviors, thus overlooking nonphysical aggression. One principal observed that physical incidents are the ones that typically come to his attention. Many children and adults seemed to use a hierarchy to categorize bullying behaviors. For instance, one girl considered such behavior as name-calling less serious than physical aggression and another child commented, “if they hurt you, obviously a person would tell. But if they only use verbal comments, it’s not like you are going to get hurt or anything, you are just going to hurt inside.” Similarly, a mother advised her daughter to ignore bullying that was not physical aggression. Another mother who as a child “grew up with glasses and I heard ‘four eyes’ all the time” was relieved to hear her daughter was called names because “this is what kids do.” She explained that when approached to participate in the research, she had worried “it was something worse. I thought somebody was pushing her or hitting her or something like that but she told me the girl called her a stupid girl with glasses.”

In contrast, other respondents considered indirect bullying serious. One boy claimed, “people say ‘get over it, they are just words’ but feelings hurt just as much and in some cases more. Because the pain from words stays with you and makes you feel bad. Kicking and punching hurts for a while and though it may give you a bruise, it doesn’t hurt as long as words.”

Use of Language

A striking finding concerned the words some respondents used when describing particular children. The language chosen to describe children and their involvement in bullying problems demonstrated the adults’ ambivalence toward these children. For example, one teacher who was active in bullying interventions referred to certain grade 4 and 5 girls as “lovely,” and then added, “you would get the girls in particular, I daresay getting into the small-B bitch mode, where they would be hurtful to each other. It was verbal or gossip.” Another teacher described some girls as “conniving,” “vicious,” “mean,” and

“just awful,” and said, “I would rather have a class full of the worst boys than these girls who are just nasty.” Several educators referred to children who were bullied in such terms as “playing the victim” or “thriving on being a victim.” A mother described her son as “doing the Scarlet O’Hara thing.”

An unanticipated effect of the research was the shift a number of respondents described in their views as a result of receiving new information. Several children, parents, and teachers (for instance) reconsidered how they perceived particular incidents after hearing the definition of bullying provided by the researchers. Moreover, one parent contacted her child’s teacher after learning that her daughter reported victimization on the survey, and several teachers noted that they monitored students more closely after learning the children had reported being bullied.

Complexities in Determining Bullying

Through analysis of the interviews, we found that several factors contributed to the complexity of bullying and influenced how the children and adults viewed and responded to incidents. These factors include: how individuals distinguish bullying from nonbullying (including whether the incident matches their definition, and whether the child who bullied is considered a friend); whether a child “fits” expectations about how a victimized child presents himself and behaves; developmental features of bullying and whether the behavior is characterized as “normal”; personal experiences with bullying; and the role of the broader context.

How Individuals Distinguish Bullying From Nonbullying

Whether the incident matches an individual’s definition In attempting to distinguish bullying from nonbullying behavior, there appears to be a process of establishing whether the behavior matches one’s own definition of bullying. For example, one girl who described being “bullied physically” at her previous school expected this to continue at her current school and was relieved when it did not. She reported, “then I did the survey and I thought about people who have told me to go away and stuff and I thought, ‘oh I have been bullied.’ ” After she recognized that verbal exclusionary behavior fit the definition of bullying and did not constitute “normal” expectable behavior, this girl reassessed the situation. She then realized that she had the right to be safe and did not have to accept the verbal taunts.

A recurring theme was the respondents’ struggle to determine whether an incident matched their own criteria for bullying, such as whether the incident entailed a power imbalance or intent to hurt. This is illustrated by one teacher’s remark that “it can be very hard to decide whether it really is a bullying situation, whether it’s one up, one down, or 50–50.” Many respondents emphasized that they look for intent to cause harm, which is integral to bullying.

A number of children and adults highlighted the difficulty labeling bullying because of the “thin line between bullying and teasing.” One mother, for instance, said that when she asked her daughter whether anyone bullied her, “she always says ‘well they tease me.’ So I’m not sure if teasing is when they are just kind of playing with you but not necessarily having a hidden agenda of hurting you. I think bullies really want to hurt you.” Others determined whether an incident was bullying based on whether the bully was “joking.” As an example, one child reported not being upset after an episode that felt hurtful because “when she says that she was joking, I feel much better because she didn’t really mean it.” In referring to the boy who bullied her son, a mother expressed concern about accepting someone’s assertion that they were joking: “When you throw somebody to the ground and start kicking them, that’s not playing.” A principal echoed this mother’s view, saying that the distinguishing factor should be how the recipient feels.

Whether the child who bullies is considered a friend Bullying by children who were considered friends was especially perplexing for the children and adults alike in their efforts to distinguish bullying from “normal” conflict among friends. According to one teacher, “one minute they are best friends and the next minute they’re excluding each other and talking behind each other’s back.” Some respondents were not sure whether a child could be considered a friend because of aggressive behavior. For instance, one girl did not know if a boy “is my friend” because he “bullied and punched me and I had a bruise for two weeks.” The issue of a power imbalance was particularly confusing when bullying occurred among friends.

Whether the Child “Fits” Expectations About How a Victimized Child Presents Themselves and Behaves

A number of respondents held assumptions about how victimized children would present themselves. One assumption mentioned by several of the adults is that these students would not seem “well adjusted.” This is illustrated by one teacher’s surprise that two students reported being victimized because neither “showed signs of having been bullied and they’re reasonably well adjusted.” The teacher assumed “it would affect your concentration and grades.” Another teacher was similarly surprised because the student who identified as bullied seemed content, which the teacher believed one would “not normally see.” A parent did not recognize that her son was bullied as “he never got mad or anything,” which would have signaled to her that the child was bullied.

Another assumption that was revealed is that victimized children would lack confidence or be passive and unable to assert themselves. It never occurred to one teacher “that [child X] would be bullied because she can stand up for herself.” Another teacher, who was told by a child that he was bullied

and who had intervened to rectify the situation, still struggled with whether the child was bullied because “a victim does not respond the way he does. He would probably run away and become more terrorized, but he is outspoken.” A teacher—who had earlier stated that physical aggression was more serious—was shocked that a boy in her class reported victimization, although he had told her he was being called names “because he has friends and is liked.” The teacher was upset, which she attributed to not realizing this boy was being victimized and she commented, “It is tricky because something you see as minor may be major to the kid.”

Other adults were not surprised a child was bullied despite not having been aware of the child’s experiences precisely because they felt the child displayed characteristics or behaviors they would expect to see. Several teachers noted that these students had vulnerabilities other children could exploit, such as their weight or the way they dressed, or had unique qualities. One teacher added, “Being different of course is a good thing, but he is too young to know that.”

An assumption held by some respondents is that teachers do not bully. For instance, one mother had discounted her daughter’s depiction of her teacher as “bullying” her and “tried to make her see the side of the teacher.” During the interview the mother reconsidered her view and stated in reference to the teacher, “If you are angry or something, don’t bring it to your work, especially if you are dealing with kids.” She added that rather than trying to get her daughter to see how she and the other students may have been responsible for the teacher’s actions, she would now stress to her daughter that she wasn’t to blame for the teacher’s behaviors.

Determining What Is “Normal” and Developmental Features of Bullying

The meaning respondents attributed to bullying varied. Many of them described bullying as “part of growing up.” Although one teacher saw bullying as inevitable and “as a good thing that helped victims learn to deal with others who are controlling or manipulative,” most respondents stressed that although bullying was “normal” it was not okay and had to be stopped.

At times a child considered a situation bullying whereas the adult concluded that it was not bullying. In some situations it appeared that the adult characterized the incident as a normal part of development. For example, in response to her daughter’s distress after a boy said hurtful things to her and “tried to touch her chest,” a mother suggested that the boy liked her. Because the mother thought this was a “normal part of growing up” she attributed benign meaning to actions that are clearly problematic requiring intervention and that understandably distressed her daughter. Similarly, it never occurred to one teacher that a girl in her class who reported being bullied “might have really been affected in her feelings or psychologically,” although the teacher saw boys repeatedly take her possessions and call her names. The teacher

commented, "It is hard at this age to say whether they want to hurt her when she is so adorable. Boys say things to get her attention and show off, like a courting thing." Consequently, the teacher did not intervene.

Respondents raised issues related to the developmental stage of the children. For instance one mother commented that children at this age gain awareness of their power and "just grew nastier and nastier." A principal, discussing her own experience as a child who bullied in grade school, believed that although she intended to hurt another child she had not really understood the consequences for the victimized child until many years later. Several parents and educators emphasized that it is the adult's responsibility to help children deal with bullying, because at this age children cannot do this on their own. One teacher attributed the fluctuations among friends to the children's age: "One day they're friends, one day they're not, which is common at this age."

Several adults expressed concern that because of its pervasiveness children might perceive bullying as the norm and not even recognize when they are being bullied. For instance, one mother who believed her daughter would tell her about being bullied "when she is really upset" was worried "it may be to the point where she hears it so much that it becomes second nature to her." A teacher was concerned that children's stereotypical views about children who bully and who are victimized may prevent them from recognizing when they themselves are being bullied: "To them this is normal behavior. Kids with this archetypal view of what a bully is, suddenly learn that a bully doesn't have to be physical. She can be a gossip or the one not inviting you to a party. It is awesome for them to learn that they are a bully or victim and that they have rights to stop it." Some parents expressed disappointment in what they perceived as some teachers' lack of willingness or ability to help the children, which they believed aggravated the situation.

Adults' Personal Experiences With Bullying

Almost all of the adults reported being bullied as children and only a few acknowledged that they had bullied others. They portrayed themselves as having been hit, threatened, excluded, and laughed at and many came to believe that they had the characteristics of the names they were called—for example, that they were "poison," ugly," or "fat." They recalled feeling sad, afraid, and ashamed, and felt they had nowhere to turn, and several remarked that the effects had persisted. A loss of self-esteem was described as a particularly painful outcome. Most of the adults did not tell anybody because of their shame or their sense that the bullying "wasn't bad enough."

Several adults believed their bullying experiences made them more sensitive to the covert nature of bullying. One teacher told his class about his victimization and subsequent success as a way of instilling hope. Another teacher indicated that being teased about her physical appearance led to her

defense of other children and she described herself as remaining vigilant. One teacher who said she had not been bullied made conflicting comments: "I might have had the feeling that I was bullied, picked on, or excluded from certain groups, but I would never care about it or I would deal with it. I never felt victimized because of these attitudes. The key is not to feel victimized." She encourages her students to ignore bullying when possible.

Role of the Broader Context

Comparisons among the schools revealed similar frequencies of bullying as reported by the children, despite the variance across schools on variables such as socioeconomic status (SES), parents' education level, percentage of single parent families, recent immigrants, and families living in subsidized housing. Our analysis of the interviews provided elaboration on how the overall school environment appears to influence bullying and individuals' responses. A teacher in a school in the lower SES bracket, which was described by respondents as chaotic, commented, "I came to this school because I wanted to get some class management skills. I was hit by a hurricane." In contrast, a teacher in the school categorized as in the highest income level believed that the school's reputation as "nice" actually impeded teachers' and parents' vigilance. He thought it ironic that although the parents are "stronger advocates for their kids than most parents" and "the best audience to reach with antibullying information," they were not told that the children are bullied. Agreeing that the students are "nice," the teacher said that the degree of bullying "is just as much. It's a much more covert kind of bullying, but it still happens."

Challenges for Parents and Teachers in Responding to Bullying

Several challenges for parents and teachers in responding to bullying became apparent. The adults found it particularly taxing when they had not witnessed an incident and struggled to discern what had occurred. Teachers in particular described constantly trying to figure out what had occurred without having seen the incidents. As one teacher explained, "It's hard because it is happening when I am not there." Many teachers said they met with the child who had bullied and the victimized child together with witnesses. In struggling to determine what occurred and how to respond, the teachers considered such matters as which child was more "credible." One school administrator stated that "if you're not there to witness it you're caught in the dilemma so it's either you punish them both or you don't punish anybody." He recognized however that this approach could lead to the "innocent kid never wanting to come to you anymore."

Another significant challenge for many of the adults that emerged in our analysis of the interviews is dealing with bullying that occurs among friends. One mother struggled to sort out whether a friend was actually bullying her

daughter or whether the behavior fit within the realm of “typical” conflict. Prior to considering the definition provided by the researchers, she had not considered it bullying but had believed her daughter “picks manipulative friends, and it’s an age thing.” Another mother, angry that her daughter was treated poorly by her friends, encouraged her daughter not to let others “push you around.” Not wanting to embarrass her daughter by intervening, this mother felt she had to “bite my tongue, but she’s got to learn for herself what makes a good friend and what doesn’t.”

Several adults reported not knowing how to intervene. For example, a teacher who endeavored to be sensitive described a situation in which a boy pulled down a girl’s pants. Girls who witnessed the incident told the teacher that the girl had pulled her own pants down. When the boy admitted responsibility, the teacher sent him to the office and he was suspended. The teacher did not deal with the girls who had lied about the incident for fear of making things worse and fueling gossip.

Only one adult, a principal who had been very involved in bullying prevention initiatives, identified the challenge for adults to listen to the children and then help them problem solve. She commented, “What drives me nuts about parents and teachers, and I’m guilty of it myself because sometimes your ears feel like they are going to fall off, but when kids come to tell you, ‘so and so is calling me a name or so and so is doing this,’ we have to listen.” This principal’s statement touches upon another challenge—dealing with the relentlessness of bullying behavior. Most teachers complained about lacking time and resources to adequately address bullying. They described feeling “exhausted,” “scared,” “helpless,” and “fed up” with the lack of time to be consistent, and “pressured” to assume many roles in the classroom and to simultaneously cover the curriculum. For example, one teacher described feeling torn “between the amount of stuff we’re supposed to teach kids and the amount of time it takes to bring kids along socially and deal with the problems in the classroom.” Linked with this struggle is the lack of training received by most of the educators in this study and the lack of policies, guidelines, and support to intervene in indirect aggression incidents. Many teachers described feeling at a loss in dealing with indirect bullying, whereas they reported that there are policies and administrative supports to deal with bullying involving direct and physical aggression. As explained by one teacher, “Sometimes bullying between girls is hard to identify and deal with in a disciplinary way, which is mostly what the vice principal and principal do if they’re dealing with discipline.”

A further challenge that emerged for adults is having empathy for some children who are bullied, especially those children whom adults consider provocative and instigators or whom adults view as “exaggerating” and overly sensitive. For example, one teacher described the child in his class who reported being victimized as impulsive and as provoking others. The teacher commented that “people laugh at him,” but he believed that the boy “wants to

be a victim.” This teacher depicted the boy’s crying as “fake tears.” In the interview, he recalled incidents when peers were physically or verbally aggressive toward the boy, and he had not intervened because he thought the boy had bothered others. The boy was approaching him much less, which the teacher presumed was because of the child “knowing what my reaction to him is. I am hoping that’s a good thing.” This is in contrast to a teacher who remarked about a boy in her class who reported being victimized that, despite his irritating behaviors, “I don’t think it is right that the other children treat him that way,” and worked with the peers and with the boy to develop his social skills.

One mother struggled to take her son’s reports of being bullied seriously because of his tendency to exaggerate. Thus, despite her son having come home with a “bloody lip” one time and a “ripped shirt” another time, she explained, “It’s really hard to gauge what’s an exaggeration.” Aware of his mother’s reactions, her son said, “Last year I came home and said this kid chased me around the schoolyard waving his fists saying ‘I’m going to hurt this guy,’ and she didn’t believe me. It was happening so often she thought ‘is he telling me the truth?’ And of course I was.” He articulately explained, “When your mother doesn’t believe you, you have no support in dealing with the issue, and it is not going to stop. Although kids can do something, children can’t always deal with this kind of situation. We just can’t on our own. It’s not as if we were born with a sense of what to do here, what to do there. So we need help.”

DISCUSSION

This study provides one of the first qualitative assessments of the perceptions of victimized children and their parents, teachers, and school administrators. The study is unique in that it investigated the respondents’ reactions to “real life” situations in which the students reported having been bullied (Craig et al., 2000; Eslea & Smith, 2000). A limitation is the degree to which the results can be generalized because of the qualitative methodology.

Analyses revealed that the children and adults generally understand what constitutes bullying. They all considered bullying as harmful. Most referred to a power imbalance, intent to cause harm, and direct as well as indirect behaviors. However, few mentioned repetition, which corresponds with the findings of Siann, Callaghan, Lockhart, and Rawson (1993). The effects of repetitious bullying, regardless of the severity of the individual incident, are well documented (Craig et al., 2000; Hazler et al., 2001) as is the dread or fear of future occurrences that can accompany all forms of bullying behavior, which intensifies a victim’s distress (Sian et al., 1993). Thus, repetition is thought to underlie the bullying dynamic, which becomes reinforced over time.

Another finding that corresponds with quantitative research findings is that although the respondents included indirect bullying in their definitions, they often considered this form of bullying as less serious (Hanish & Guerra, 2000; Smith & Ananiadou, 2003; Smith et al., 2002). This view of indirect bullying, together with the glaring absence of repetition within the children's, parents', and educators' definitions, suggests that the respondents do not fully grasp the potentially damaging effects of the full range of bullying behaviors. Despite the inclusion of indirect victimization in definitions, some of the most common and hurtful forms—such as exclusion—are often not seen as bullying and thus their damage is overlooked (Boulton & Hawker, 1997; Townsend-Wiggins, 2001). Verbal aggression and social exclusion that adults have not witnessed are even less likely to be viewed as bullying and to lead to intervention (Craig et al., 2000; Mishna, 2004), a finding that was evident in the present study. It is necessary to provide information for children, parents, and educators on the potentially devastating impact of repetitive bullying behaviors—including those that are not obvious (Casey-Cannon et al., 2001) or that appear minor (Craig et al., 2000). Since these behaviors can have longstanding psychological effects (Cullingford & Morrison, 1995; Sian et al., 1993), prompt and effective intervention is required.

Another form of bullying consists of sexual comments and gestures, found to be pervasive from kindergarten through high school (Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002; Land, 2003; Nansel et al., 2001; Stein 1995, 1999) and to often occur in public locations. Stein (1995) noted that although students consider this behavior serious and many report trying to talk to someone, they find it difficult to obtain help. The antecedents for sexual harassment consist of teasing and bullying, which adults seem to implicitly accept (Keise, 1992; Stein, 1995). This disturbing pattern, in which adults did not respond to either the gestures and behaviors or the victimized student's apparent distress, emerged through analysis of the interviews.

Boys tend to be victimized through direct aggression, while girls are more likely to be victimized through indirect or relational aggression (Craig & Pepler, 1997; Crick & Grotpeter, 1996; Owens et al., 2000). Crick and Grotpeter (1995) concluded that because relational aggression had not been investigated, the degree of aggression displayed by girls was underestimated. A concerning finding in this study was the language some adults used when describing some of the children's behavior, especially that of the girls. Descriptors of the girls suggest that these adults do not understand the nature of relational aggression. Rather, the girls' behaviors were seen as representative of the girls' personalities.

Educators compared the existence of school policies for dealing with physical aggression with the lack of guidelines addressing nonphysical bullying. The insufficient knowledge of indirect bullying together with the teachers' reported lack of systemic support must be considered to address the relative

neglect of indirect bullying. It is important to develop policies and interventions that are tailored to target particular forms of bullying (Smith et al., 2002).

The finding that many teachers and parents were unaware that children were being bullied corresponds with the findings in the literature (Hanish & Guerra, 2000; Newman, Murray, & Lussier, 2001). In this study the teachers and parents demonstrated similar degrees of awareness, in contrast to other findings that parents are more likely to know about children's victimization (Eslea & Smith, 2000; Houndoumadi & Pateraki, 2001).

The complexity of determining whether an incident is bullying appears related to several factors that influence respondents' decisions. These factors include whether the incident matches an individual's definition, whether the child "fits" expectations about how victimized children behave and present themselves, and developmental features of bullying and what is considered normal.

Establishing whether an incident is bullying was often confusing for the children and adults. This difficulty is frustrating and discouraging and contributes to a lack of intervention in bullying situations (Hazler et al., 2001). A significant finding within the present study is that the children's, parents', and teachers' definitions did not necessarily correspond with how they depicted actual situations. This discrepancy suggests that a clear definition is required for education, intervention, and research but is not sufficient. Although putting one's definition into practice has received less attention in the literature, the finding that it is complex to operationalize bullying in real incidents receives some support. In a study of parent and student attitudes, Eslea and Smith (2000) found that individuals' attitudes toward bullying might indeed be incongruent, which they attributed to individuals' difficulty condemning bullying if they empathize with the child who bullies. Another study that compared children's responses to vignettes with those of trainee teachers found that children judged children in the vignette harshly if the children became upset when teased, even though they reported that they would react similarly (Landau, Milich, Harris, & Larson, 2001). The researchers ascribed this response to the difference between a child's rational response to others in a difficult situation and his or her own emotions should they be in a similar position. Thus, emotional responses may be one factor that thwarts children's abilities to respond prosocially.

Assumptions about how children who are bullied would behave prevented several adults from recognizing bullying situations. Although many victims do display such characteristics (Hazler, Carney, Green, Powell, & Jolly, 1997), it is important to rectify the misconception, expressed by several respondents, that victimized children will be recognizable because of changes in their behavior or because of other characteristics such as level of adjustment. Indeed, attempts to categorize the characteristics of children who bully or who are bullied have received mixed reactions. Although some authors believe these distinctions help to understand the dynamics of those involved (Smith &

Brain, 2000) others contend that such characterization perpetuates and simplifies the problem and can reduce awareness of other factors considered integral to bullying, such as the social context (Craig & Pepler, 1997; O'Moore, 2000).

Respondents attempted to determine whether behaviors were normal or bullying. Their judgments influenced their responses, which corresponds with findings in the literature. At times adults did not consider certain incidents bullying, whereas children did. The children and adults described instances when a child told a teacher or parent to no avail because the adult did not respond or did not intervene effectively. The manner in which adults respond to children's reports of bullying episodes depends on their definitions and whether they interpret the episodes as "normal" (O'Moore, 2000; Smorti et al., 2003). The adult's conclusion influences his or her response as well as the child's reporting (Landau et al., 2001; Limper, 2000). In this study, when such discrepancies occurred between children and adults, the adults appeared to minimize or invalidate the child's experience. Indeed, an obstacle to identifying and intervening in bullying situations occurs when adults perceive forms of bullying such as teasing, name-calling, and put-downs as normal or harmless (Clarke & Kiselica, 1997; Craig & Pepler, 1997). Underestimating the harm caused by some forms of bullying may lead to inappropriate responses (Astor, 1995; Cullingford & Morrison, 1995). When educators do not respond, "what the children learn from the adults' handling of bullying incidents must be more frightening to them than the individual bullying incidents" (Clarke & Kiselica, 1997, p. 316).

Empathy emerged as a factor that influenced how adults responded to the children who identified as bullied. A fundamental human need consists of empathic connections with others (Kohut, 1984). Contemporary psychoanalytic theory posits that in understanding individuals the emphasis must be on their subjective sense of self rather than the supposedly objective reality (Atwood & Stolorow, 1984). It is increasingly recognized that in all interactions the observer is intrinsic to the observed (Stolorow, Atwood, & Brandchaft, 1994) and that "each person's perspective is inevitably partial and that a more adequate view of anything requires dialogue" (Orange, 1995, p. 4). An association has been found between teachers' empathy for the bullied child and their response to the child (Craig et al., 2000; Kallestad & Olweus, 2003). Teachers who express empathy toward others have been found more likely to identify bullying, consider it serious, and report that they would intervene (Craig et al., 2000). In a study examining the factors that influence how teachers and schools implement the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, responsiveness and empathy toward children who are bullied were associated with the degree to which teachers implemented the program (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003).

It is imperative to offer education and training to increase parents and educators' cognizance of their own attitudes and the factors that may influence their mind-sets, and of the possibility that children's viewpoints may differ

from their own and that children's distress may be greater than the adult anticipates (Landau et al., 2001). If a child turns to an adult who does not consider the situation to be bullying or serious, the adult must respond in a way that does not invalidate the child's perspective. If children are not listened to and validated, they may doubt their own feelings and views, and may stop telling adults about their victimization (Mishna, 2004). Intervention efforts must address those incidents whereby the adult's assessment of the situation and the subjectivity of the victimized child may not converge.

In the current study we found that most of the educators had not received training on bullying. The critical role of teacher training in identifying and responding to diverse bullying behaviors has been identified (Boulton, 1997; Craig et al., 2000; Townsend-Wiggins, 2001). Several teachers expressed concern about the lack of time and resources to properly address bullying. Just as students who are bullied need empathy for their situation, it is necessary to convey to teachers empathy for their difficult position. In addition, it is important to empathize with parents. Additionally, the literature lacks an examination of the impact of a child's victimization or bullying behavior on the family (Mishna, 2003).

The finding that a sizeable percentage of the children did not tell an adult corresponds with the troubling finding that reported victimization underestimates the problem (Hanish & Guerra, 2000; Sharp, 1996). Many of the children explained that they keep their victimization secret until it becomes "serious." Approximately half of the children in the study had not previously disclosed their victimization to an adult. Of those who had previously disclosed, a number had not told until they could no longer bear the bullying. By the time these children had told or adults had recognized that the children were being bullied, considerable damage had been done. The reasons for withholding disclosure given by the children and hypothesized by the parents parallel those in the literature (Mishna & Alaggia, 2005). These reasons include fear of retaliation and the children's belief that they are to blame, that they should handle the problem on their own, and that telling adults simply will not help or might even worsen the child's predicament (Clarke & Kiselica, 1997; Houndoumadi & Pateraki, 2000; Newman et al., 2001). These findings reinforce the insidiousness of repetition and the need for adults to respond to children and intervene before the child reaches the point of powerlessness and overwhelming distress.

A prominent reason given by children for not telling was their concern about friends who bullied them, and not wanting to get their friend into trouble or not wanting to lose the friend. These results are supported in the literature. In a study of middle school girls, for instance, although respondents described their best friends acting in ways they considered bullying they remained friends (Casey-Cannon et al., 2001). In another study, children in grades 3 and 4 were more likely to ask a teacher for help when they did not

care about maintaining a friendship with the child who was the aggressor. This finding offers evidence that children were aware that telling a teacher could mean the end of a friendship (Newman et al., 2001). Adults must understand such friendship dynamics as moment-to-moment fluctuations in order to grasp the complexities and to help the children manage their friendships (Pellegrini, 1998). Without information to the contrary, adults might believe that leaving children to their own devices in navigating the friendship fosters growth. Programs aimed at bullying do not address the dynamics and attachment issues inherent in friendships. Interventions must be tailored to bullying among friends—targeting the children, their parents, and educators. Because conflict is inevitable in close relationships (Newcomb & Bagwell, 1995), the management and resolution of conflict are important to developing and maintaining friendships.

An unanticipated effect was the shift by some children, parents, and educators in their stances toward bullying. Thus the research process itself offered evidence that the information made a difference which could lead to individuals changing their attitudes. This is supported by research in which it was found that information can influence the way individuals respond (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003). Since naming bullying depends in part on beliefs and attitudes, this provides further support for the need to examine attitudes toward bullying and the need to develop interventions to help individuals become more aware of their own reasoning.

The finding that the majority of the adults were bullied as children corresponds with evidence that bullying is widespread. This finding suggests that educators and other professionals must deal with feelings that may be brought up for them in order to respond effectively to bullying (Gibbons, Lichtenberg, & van Beusekom, 1994).

CONCLUSION

The bullying dynamic demands a perspective that takes into account the inherent complexities involved—the individual, and the social and environmental context. The adult-child relationship in particular affects children's ability to manage in many areas, and especially in bullying situations. In the study reported in this paper we identified factors that influence the ways in which children who reported being victimized and the significant adults in their lives perceive and respond to bullying. Determining such factors is critical in order to increase our understanding of how the victimized children, their parents, teachers, and school administrators view and react to bullying situations and how the adults interact with the children who report being victimized. Such understanding is essential in order to develop effective interventions (Gamliel et al., 2003; Smith, 1997). The short- and long-term effects of victimization on children and youth are well documented. Results of this

study affirm the definite need for increased training of students, their parents, and teachers and school administrators that addresses factors which influence how these individuals understand and respond to bullying incidents. Such education must provide validation about how confusing and difficult it can be for children and adults alike to deal with bullying behavior, increase knowledge and understanding of the various and subtle forms of bullying, and clarify and correct assumptions and misperceptions.

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APPENDIX: SAFE SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE

GRADES 4–6

QUESTIONNAIRE

Debra J. Pepler, York University
Jennifer Connolly, York University
Wendy Craig, Queen's University

SAFE SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE
1993**BULLY-VICTIM QUESTIONNAIRE****STUDENT SAFE SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE****AGE**_____ **GRADE**_____ **TEACHER**_____ **DATE**_____

The following questions ask you about some things that might have happened to you at school SINCE SEPTEMBER 2002. We know that some children might have been bullied before then, but in this questionnaire, we are only asking about the time since September 2002. There are no right or wrong answers. Only what YOU think is important. Your answers are private and will not be seen by anybody else at school. Please work by yourself. If you have any questions, ask one of the researchers for help. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer.

1. Are you a boy or a girl?
 - a boy
 - b girl

2. How often have you spent recess alone because other students do not want to spend time with you?
(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)
 - a it hasn't happened since September 2002
 - b Once or twice
 - c more than once or twice
 - d about once a week

- e several times a week
f I don't have recess

On the following pages are some questions about bullying. We say that a student is being bullied when another student or a group of students say nasty and mean things to him/her or tease him/her a lot in a mean way. It is also bullying when a student is hit, kicked, threatened, locked inside a room and things like that. These things may happen often and it is hard for the student being bullied to defend him or herself. BUT, it is NOT bullying when two students of about the same strength argue or fight.

There are several answers next to each question. Read each one carefully and circle the answer that best describes what is right for YOU. Remember that the questions refer to things that have happened to you SINCE SEPTEMBER 2002.

3. How often have you been bullied at school since September 2002?
(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)
- a I haven't been bullied since September 2002
b once or twice
c more than once or twice
d about once a week
e several times a week
4. In what ways have you been bullied at school?
(CIRCLE AS MANY ANSWERS AS YOU WANT)
- a I haven't been bullied since September 2002
b I have been teased a lot
c I have been hit or kicked
d I have been bullied in other ways—for example, threatened or locked indoors (describe)
- _____
- _____
5. Have you been bullied anywhere else since September 2002?
(CIRCLE AS MANY ANSWERS AS YOU WANT)
- a no, I haven't been bullied anywhere else
b yes, on my street

- c yes, on the way to and from school
 - d yes, somewhere else (describe)
-
-

6. How often does it happen that other students won't let you join in what they're doing?

(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)

- a it hasn't happened since September 2002
- b once or twice
- c more than once or twice
- d about once a week
- e several times a week

7. How often have you been bullied because of your race?

(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)

- a it hasn't happened since
 September 2002
- b once or twice
- c more than once or twice
- d about once a week
- e several times a week

8. How often have you been bullied because of your religion?

(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)

- a it hasn't happened since
 September 2002
- b once or twice
- c more than once or twice
- d about once a week
- e several times a week

9. How often have you been bullied because of your appearance?

(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)

- a it hasn't happened since September 2002
- b once or twice
- c more than once or twice
- d about once a week
- e several times a week

10. How often have you been bullied because of problems you have with learning (a learning disability)?
(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)
- a it hasn't happened since September 2002
 - b once or twice
 - c more than once or twice
 - d about once a week
 - e several times a week
11. Has somebody who you think is your friend bullied you?
(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)
- a it hasn't happened since September 2002
 - b once or twice
 - c more than once or twice
 - d about once a week
 - e several times a week
12. About how many times have you been bullied in the last five days at school?
(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)
- a none
 - b once
 - c twice
 - d three or four times
 - e five or more times
13. How often do teachers try to put a stop to it when a student is being bullied at school?
(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)
- a almost never
 - b sometimes
 - c almost always
 - d I don't know
14. Where does bullying happen at your school?
(CIRCLE AS MANY AS YOU WANT)
- a in the washroom
 - b in the classrooms
 - c in the gym
 - d in the hallways

- e at the lockers
- f in the change room for gym/pool
- g in the lunchroom
- h on the school bus
- i on the playground other (describe)_____
- _____
- _____
- j I don't know

15. How often do other students try to put a stop to it when a student is being bullied at school?

(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)

- a almost never
- b sometimes
- c almost always
- d I don't know

16. If you were bullied since September 2002, did the teacher talk to you about it?

(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)

- a I haven't been bullied since September 2002
- b no, the teacher hasn't talked with me about it
- c yes, the teacher has talked with me about it

17. If you were bullied since September 2002, did your parents or another adult at home talk to you about it?

(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)

- a I haven't been bullied since September 2002
- b no, they haven't talked with me about it
- c yes, they have talked with me about it

18. How does it make you feel when you see a student being bullied at school?

19. What would you do if you saw a student being bullied?

20. What would you do if you were being bullied at school?

21. How often have you taken part in bullying other students since September 2002?

(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)

- a I haven't bullied other students at school since September 2002
- b once or twice
- c more than once or twice
- d about once a week
- e several times a week

22. How often have you taken part in bullying other students in the last five days at school?

(DON'T INCLUDE THE WEEKEND)

- a not at all
- b once
- c twice
- d three or four times
- e five or more times

23. Do you think you could join in bullying a student you didn't like?

(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)

- a no
- b maybe
- c yes
- d I don't know

24. Have you bullied somebody who you think is your friend?

(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)

- a it hasn't happened since September 2002
- b once or twice
- c more than once or twice

286 *F. Mishna, D. Pepler, and J. Wiener*

- d about once a week
 - e several times a week
25. If you have bullied other students since September 2002, did the teacher talk to you about it?
(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)
- a I haven't bullied other students at school since September 2002
 - b no, the teacher hasn't talked with me about it
 - c yes, the teacher has talked with me about it
26. If you have bullied other students since September 2002, have your parents or another adult at home talked with you about it?
(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)
- a I haven't bullied other students at school since September 2002
 - b no, they haven't talked with me about it
 - c yes, they have talked with me about it
27. How often have you bullied other students because of their race since September 2002?
(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)
- a I haven't bullied other students at school since September 2002
 - b once or twice
 - c more than once or twice
 - d about once a week
 - e several times a week
28. How often have you bullied other students because of their religion since September 2002?
(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)
- a I haven't bullied other students at school since September 2002
 - b once or twice
 - c more than once or twice
 - d about once a week
 - e several times a week
29. How often have you bullied other students because of their appearance since September 2002?
(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)
- a I haven't bullied other students at school since September 2002
 - b once or twice

- c more than once or twice
 - d about once a week
 - e several times a week
30. How often have you bullied other students because of problems they have learning, since September 2002?
(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)
- a I haven't bullied other students at school since September 2002
 - b once or twice
 - c more than once or twice
 - d about once a week
 - e several times a week
31. Why do you think some kids help bullies hurt other kids?
-
-
-
32. Do you think you:
(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER)
- a bully other kids
 - b are bullied by other kids
 - c both bully other kids and get bullied by other kids
 - d do not bully other kids and I do not get bullied by other kids
33. Why don't some kids try to stop bullying when they see bullying taking place?
-
-
-
34. Why do some kids bully other kids?
-
-
-
-

35. What do you think teachers should do to help if students are being bullied?

(CIRCLE AS MANY ANSWERS AS YOU WANT)

- a talk to the students
 - b break up fights
 - c punish the bullies
 - d get the bullies and victims to talk to each other
 - e nothing
 - f other (describe) _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

36. What do you think parents should do to help if their kids are being bullied?

(CIRCLE AS MANY ANSWERS AS YOU WANT)

- a talk to their child about it
 - b talk to their child's teacher or the principal
 - c talk to the bully's parents
 - d other (describe) _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

37. If there were one thing you could tell teachers and/or principals or other children about your experience of bullying at school, what would it be?

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO TALK WITH US ABOUT THESE QUESTIONS, CHECK THIS BOX ☐