



UNIVERSITY
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and HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Bullying Prevention: School Based Programs

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Overview of Presentation

- ▶ What is bullying and what does it look like in our schools and communities?
- ▶ How does bullying and problem behavior influence the school climate?
- ▶ Strategies for intervening and preventing bullying.

Federal Definition of Bullying

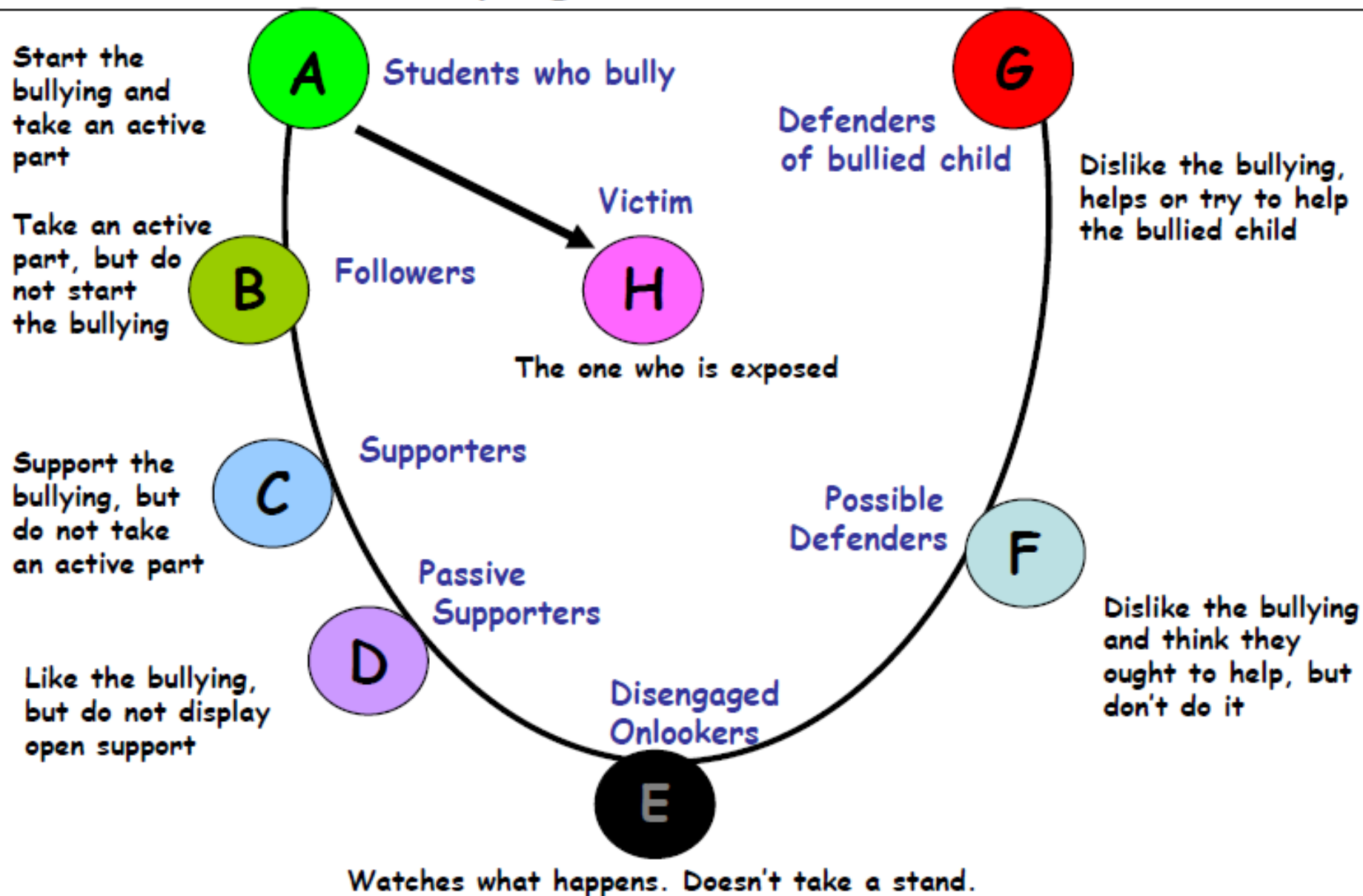
- “Bullying is any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths (who are not siblings or current dating partners) that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm.”



Key Components of Bullying Behavior

1. Typically involves a pattern of behavior *repeated* over time
2. Involves an *intentional* aggressive behavior
3. Imbalance of *power* or strength

The Bullying Circle: Students' Reactions/Roles in a Bullying Situation (Olweus)



Types of Bullying

- Direct - Hitting, taunting, name calling
- Indirect - Rumors, exclusion, cyber bullying

*Important to teach school staff and parents that bullying is different from **rough-and-tumble play** and **fighting**



Cyberbullying

Bullying through email, instant messaging, in a chat room, on a Web site, or through digital messages or images sent to a cell phone.

Examples:

- Harassing text messages or emails
- Posting untrue information or embarrassing pictures
- Impersonating people by making fake profiles
- Flaming – online ‘fighting’ using electronic media and vulgar language
- Tricking someone into sharing personal information and sharing it with others
- Cyber stalking – repeatedly sending threatening messages



How is Cyberbullying Different?



- **It can happen at any time.**
 - Cyberbullying can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and reach a kid even when he or she is alone.
- **It can be done anonymously.**
 - Cyberbullying messages and images can be posted anonymously and distributed quickly to a very wide audience. It can be difficult and sometimes impossible to trace the source.
- **The effects are long lasting.**
 - Deleting inappropriate messages, texts, and pictures is extremely difficult after they have been posted or sent.

PREVENTING BULLYING

Through Science,
Policy, and Practice

The National Academies of
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The Landscape Of Bullying

Composition of peer groups, shifting demographics, changing societal norms, and modern technology are factors that must be considered to understand and effectively react to bullying in the U.S.

Research on bullying is largely descriptive, which generally fails to fully address contextual factors that affect bullying.

Community norms, neighborhood and acculturation serve as important moderators of bullying outcomes.



Individual variables such as age, gender, personality, and social status, as well as classroom norms favoring the bully or victim affect roles in bullying situations.

Bullying is a group phenomenon, with multiple peers taking on roles other than perpetrator and target. Peers are a critical factor because they influence group norms, attitudes, and behavior.

Who Is Involved in Bullying?

- **Roughly 30-40% students are involved in bullying**
 - 23% identify as a victim, 8% as a bully, and 9% as a bully/victim (Bradshaw, O'Brennan, & Sawyer, 2008)
- **Gender**
 - Boys are more likely to report bullying others compared to girls (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2009)
 - Some differences in involvement based on form
- **Race/Ethnicity**
 - African American youth more likely to be classified as a victim or bully/victim (Goldweber et al., 2013)

Groups Vulnerable To Bullying

Prevalence increases for subgroups of children- particularly those who are most vulnerable:

- **LGBT Youth:** Prevalence is double that of heterosexual youth
 - ✓ 25.6% - 43.6%
- **Youth with Disabilities:** Over-represented in bullying dynamic.
 - ✓ 1.5 times as much
 - ✓ Wide range in literature stem from measurement & definition, disability identification, comparative groups
- **Obese Youth:** At increased risk but difficult to attribute to a single physical attribute; often co-exists with other factors



Bullying & Stigma

- Stigma is a characteristic or social identity that is devalued in the eyes of others
- Increasing concern regarding youth who are involved in bullying due to affiliation with a socially stigmatized identity or characteristic
 - Being an ethnic/racial minority
 - Religious affiliation
 - Weight (being overweight or obese)
 - Having a health problem (e.g., asthma)



(National Academies of Science, 2016; Rosenthal, Russell et al., 2012; Waasdorp & Bradshaw, in press; Waasdorp, Mehari, Milam, & Bradshaw, 2019).

Potential Risks and Buffers

- Individual Factors
 - Resilience
 - Coping skills & emotion regulation
 - Social-emotional skills
 - Prior risks, vulnerability, accumulation of risk
- Social Factors
 - Connectedness and social support
 - Role of peers
 - Role of parents
 - Role of educators
- Contextual Factors
 - School climate
 - Societal norms and values



Consequences Of Bullying



Effects of Being Bullied

- Lower self-esteem
- Depression & anxiety
- Absenteeism
- Loss of interest in school
- Lower grades
- Illness



Additional Concerns About Children Who Bully

- **Children who bully are more likely to:**

- Get into frequent fights
- Be injured in a fight
- Steal, vandalize property
- Drink alcohol, smoke
- Drop out of school
- Perform poorly academically
- Carry a weapon

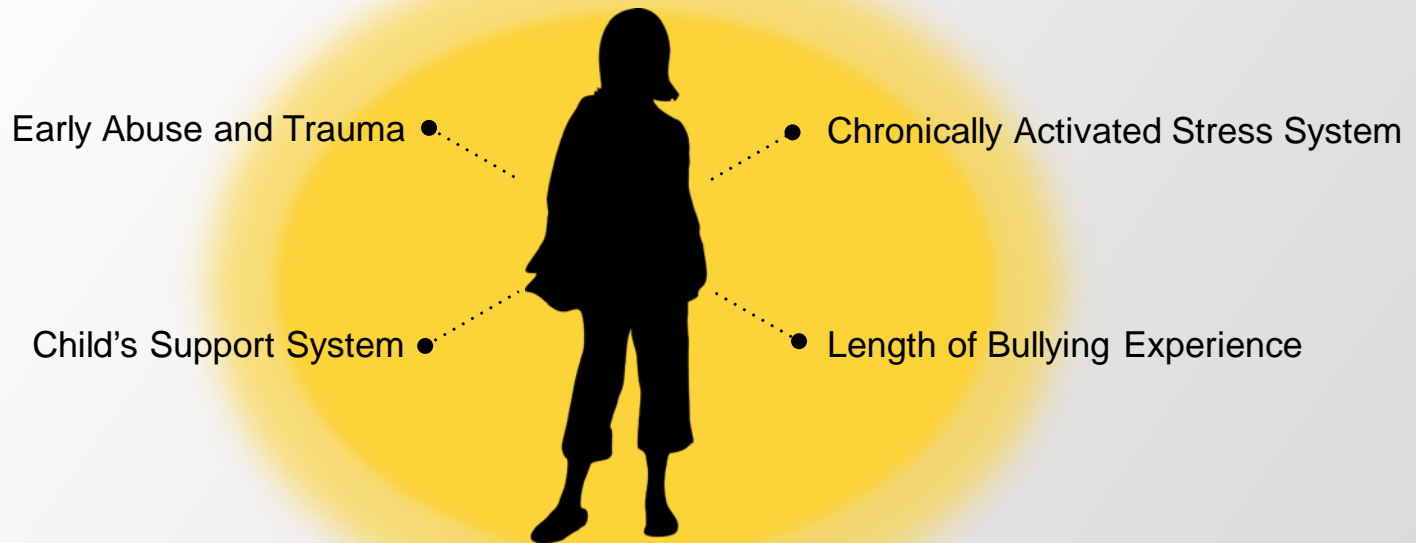


- **This pattern may continue into young adulthood**

- Bullies were 4x as likely to have 3 or more legal convictions by age 24

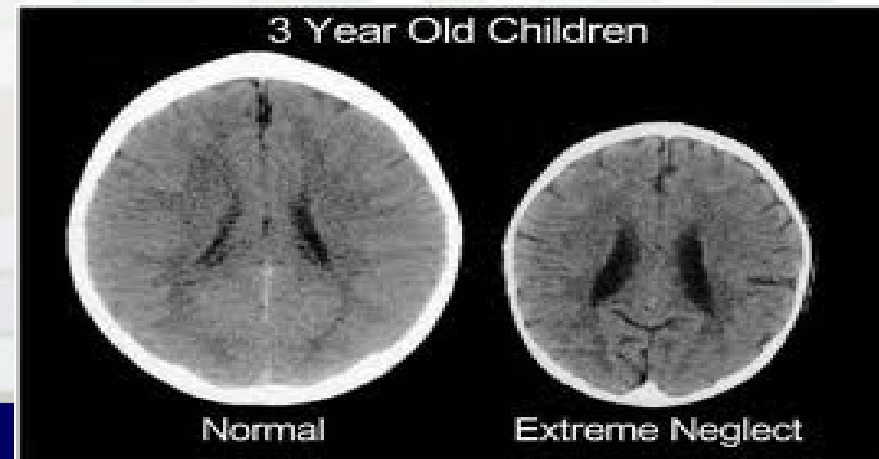
Neuro-behavioral Consequences

Existing evidence suggests both social-cognitive and emotion regulation processes may mediate/moderate the relation between bullying and adverse mental health outcomes



How Bullying Gets Under the Skin

- Neurobiology
 - HPA, genetic, brain development
 - Adverse childhood experiences
 - Allostatic load
 - Elevated inflammation markers C-reactive protein (CRP)
- Trauma-informed approaches
- Tiered interventions





Health Consequences of Bullying

	<u>Bullied</u>	<u>Not Bullied</u>
Headache	16%	6%
Sleep problems	42%	23%
Abdominal pain	17%	9%
Feeling tense	20%	9%
Anxiety	28%	10%
Feeling unhappy	23%	5%
Depression	49%	16%

(Fekkes et al., 2004)

Social-Emotional Problems Youth Involved in Bullying

- **Bully/Victims are the most at risk**
 - More likely to endorse retaliatory attitudes
 - More likely to experience internalizing symptoms (sad, lonely)
 - Less likely to feel connected and safe in their school
- **Bullies tend to feel popular and justified in their aggressive behavior**
 - Middle and high school bullies were more likely to report having many friends at their school
- **Effects of bullying do not diminish over time**
 - Middle school and high school victims and bully/victims are more likely to report internalizing symptoms and aggressive-impulsive behavior
 - Older students tended to feel less connected to their school

Why address bullying in schools?

1. For students and their futures
2. Healthy school climate
3. Larger community
4. For the purposes of risk management for schools
5. It's a wise investment
6. It's the law in nearly all states!



Why Adults Don't Always Intervene:



- Have difficulty recognizing bullying
 - 87% staff thought they had effective strategies for handling a bullying situation and 97% reported that they would intervene in a situation if they saw bullying
 - But only 21% of students involved in bullying had reported the event to a school staff member
- Fail to recognize the importance of intervening
- Uncertain *how* best to intervene
 - Adults often don't know how best to intervene in bullying, especially with special populations (LGBT, racial/ethnic minority, overweight youth)
- Lack of time

Student vs. Staff Perceptions

Students (N=15,185)

- Seen adults at school *watching bullying and doing nothing*
– 43%
- Believe adults at their school *are NOT doing enough to stop or prevent bullying*
– 58%
- Believe that teachers who try to stop bullying only *make it worse*
– 61%

Staff (N=1,547)

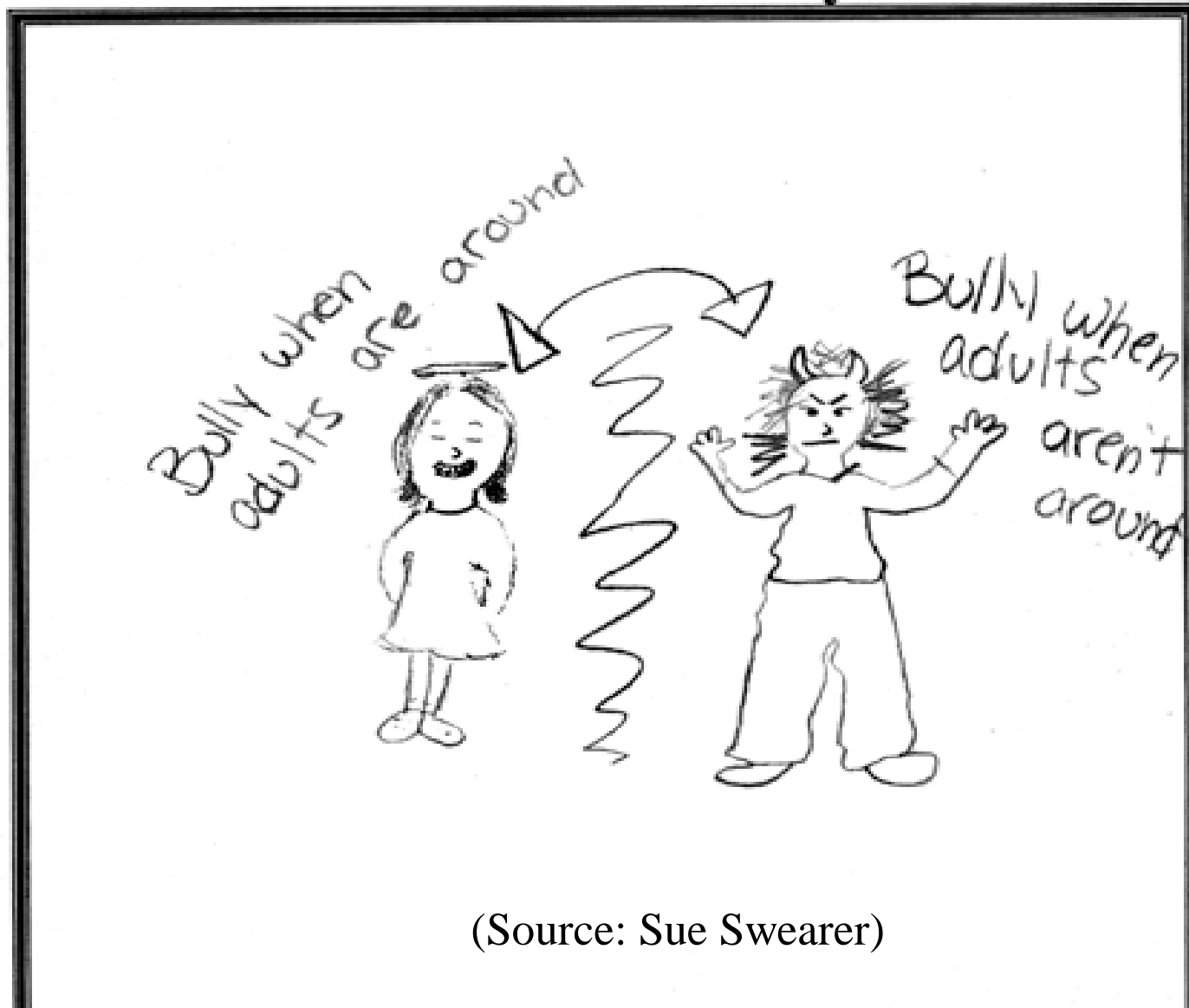
- Said they would intervene if they saw bullying
–97%
- Believe have effective strategies for handling bullying
–87%
- Believe they made things worse when they intervened
–7%

(Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2007)

(% "agree" to "strongly agree") (Bradshaw et al., 2007, SPR)

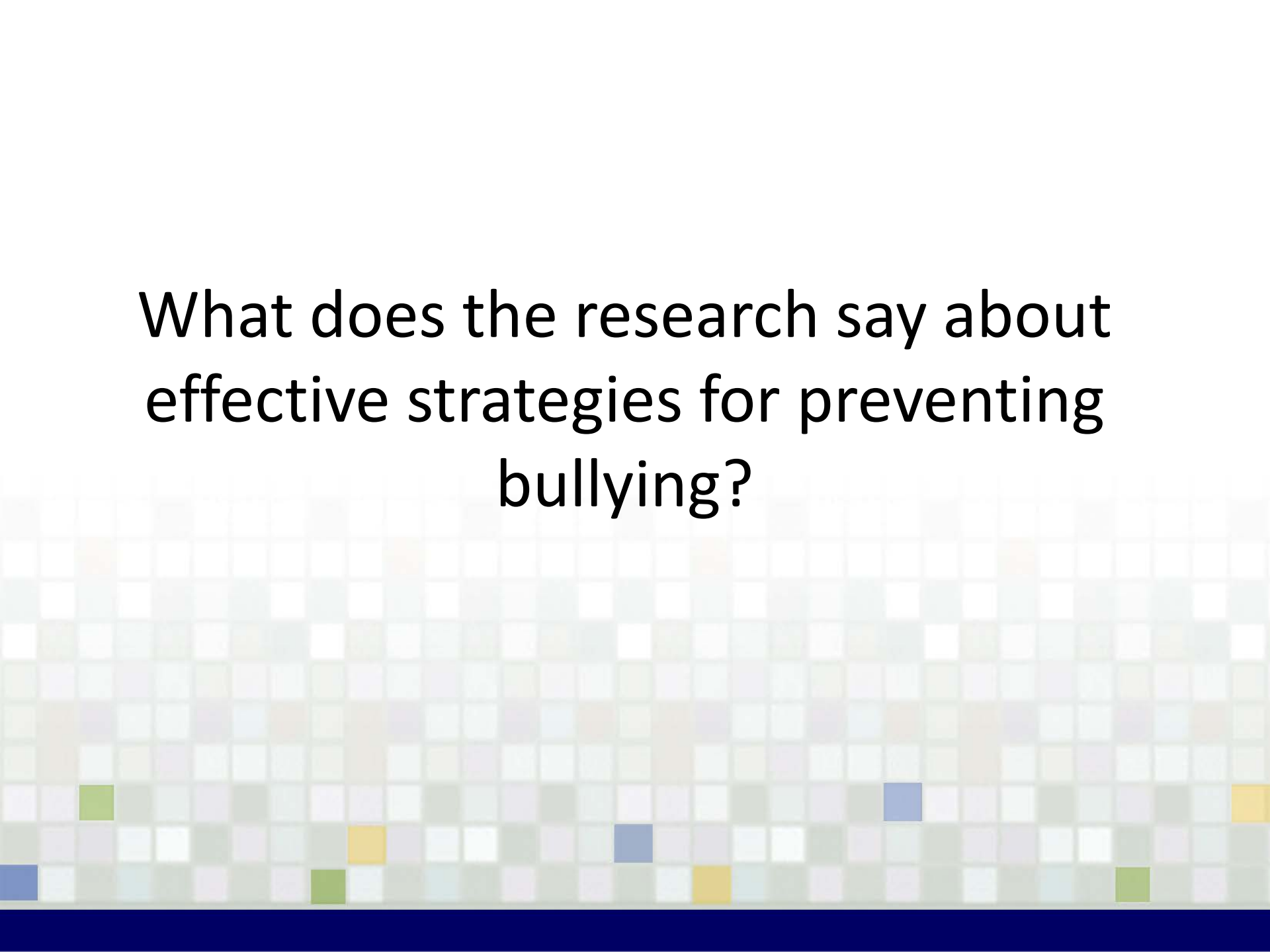
Stereotypes of Youth Who Bully

Draw A Bully



(Source: Sue Swearer)

What does the research say about effective strategies for preventing bullying?

The background of the slide features a grid of small, semi-transparent squares in various colors including white, light blue, light green, light purple, and light orange. At the bottom of the slide, there is a solid dark blue horizontal bar.

Preventing Bullying at School

1. Supervise students' activities
2. Ensure that all staff intervene “on-the-spot” when bullying occurs
3. Hold meetings with students involved in bullying
4. Develop individual intervention plans for involved students



On-the-Spot Interventions: *The “Teachable Moment”*



1. Stop the bullying
2. Support student who has been bullied
3. Name bullying behavior & refer to school rules
4. Engage the bystanders
5. Impose immediate & appropriate consequences
6. Take steps to ensure bullied student will be protected from future bullying

Stopping Bullying on the Spot

- Intervene immediately. It is ok to get another adult to help.
- Separate the kids involved.
- Make sure everyone is safe.
- Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
- Stay calm. Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders.
- Model respectful behavior when you intervene.

Recommended Strategies

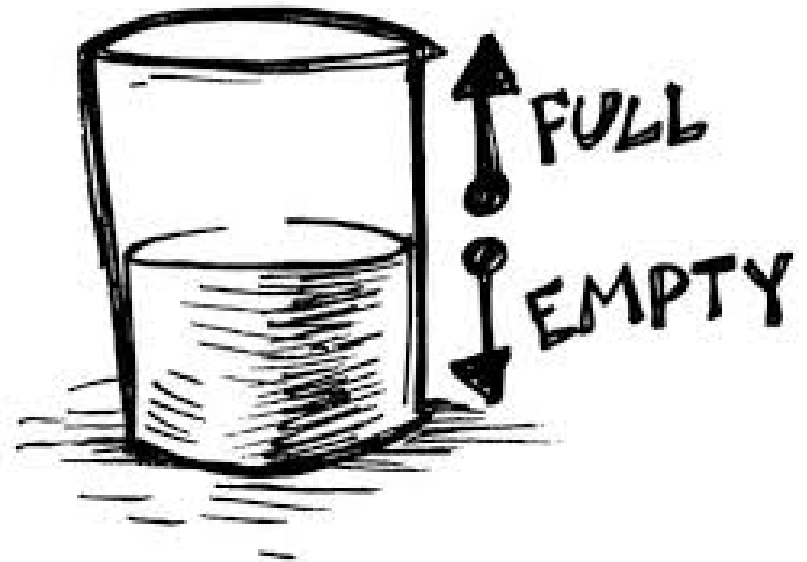
- Talk with child
 - Directly state that bullying is wrong
 - They or the target do not deserve to be treated this way
 - Directly state that aggressive retaliation is not right
 - Listen to child's concerns
 - Coach on possible strategies
 - Peer support, avoid situations where bullying might occur, when appropriate tell bully that the bullying should stop (better among younger kids)

Recommended Strategies (cont)

- Foster open communication
- Encourage parents to reach out to school for supervision and support services (teacher, guidance counselor, administration)
 - Seek mental health services when needed
- Develop a process (e.g., behavioral matrix) for monitoring behavior at school and home
- Reward prosocial, non-aggressive behavior
- Limit exposure to violent media and content (e.g., domestic violence, abuse)

Do bullying prevention programs work?

- Some argue...
 - There are relatively few effective universal “bullying” prevention programs (Merrell et al., 2008; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011)
 - 23% decrease in perpetration of bullying
 - 20% decrease in victimization



What works in school-based prevention of aggressive and disruptive behavior problems?

- Teach *social-emotional skills* directly in real context
- Foster *respectful, supportive relations* among students, school staff, & parents
- Support & **reinforce** *positive* academic & social behavior through comprehensive systems
- Invest in *multiyear, multi-component* programs
- **Combine** *classroom, school- & community-wide* efforts
- *Universal prevention* efforts

(Gottfredson et al., 2004; Greenberg et al., 2003;
Rones & Hoagwood, 2000)



Recommended Core Components

- Teacher training
- Activities for students
- Parent activities
- Multi-component programs
- School-wide
- Continuum of positive supports
- Data-driven process

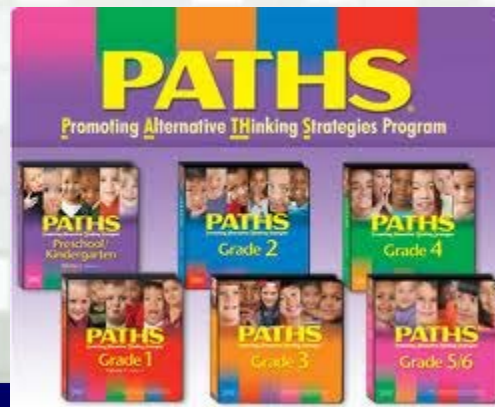


Reducing Bullying and Rejection

- Universal school-wide prevention models that prevent violence and disruptive behaviors may also impact bullying
 - Classroom management
 - Social-emotional learning programs



Coping Power



Reducing Bullying and Rejection

- School-wide efforts, which involve all school staff, and are implemented across all school settings show the most promise (Espelage & Swearer, 2004; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011)

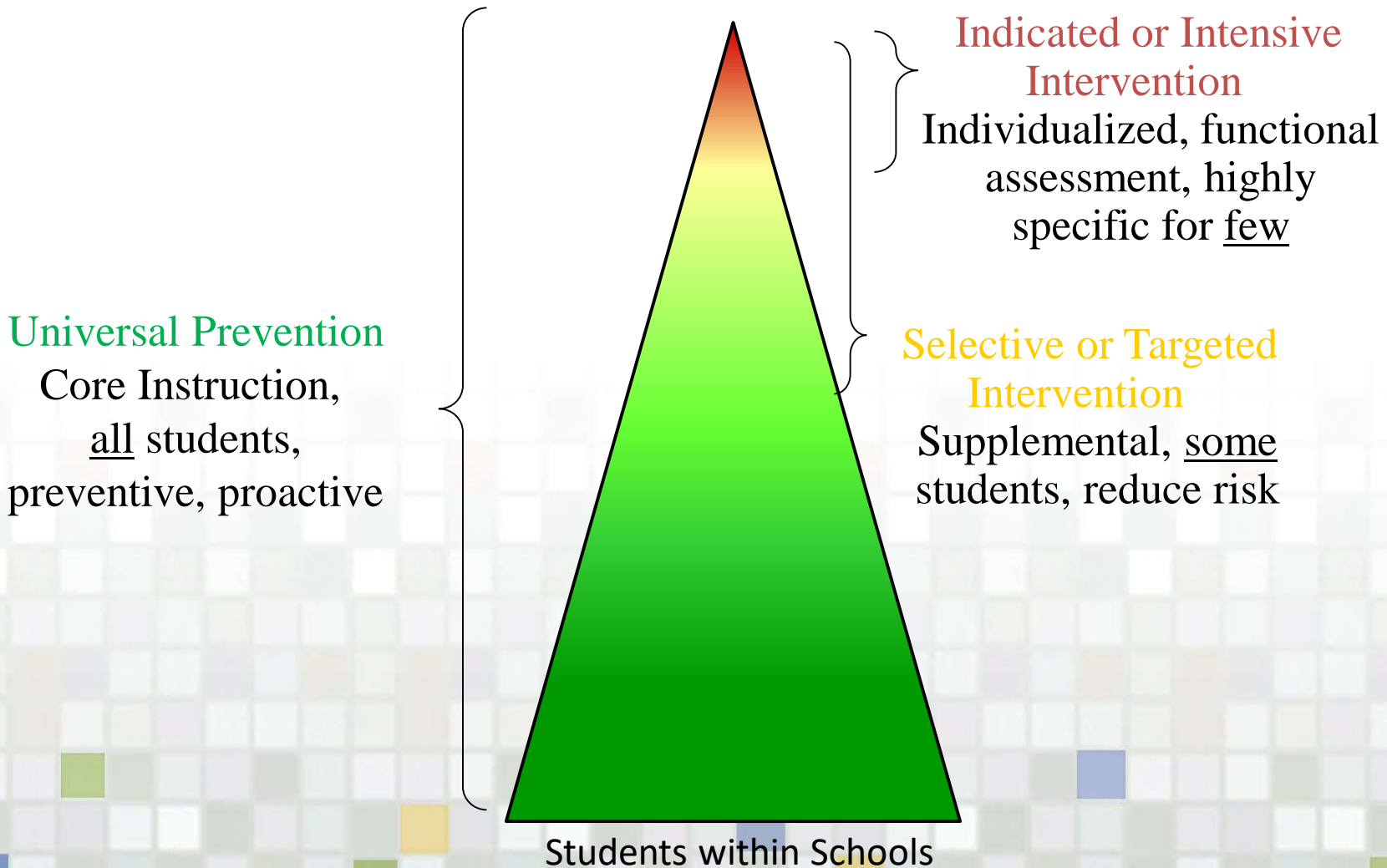


Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS/VTSS)

- Application of behavior learning principles
 - Clear behavioral expectations (e.g., *ready, responsible, and respectful*)
 - Recognition system
 - Procedures for managing disruptions
- Focus on changing adult behavior
 - Emphasizes staff buy-in
 - Team-based & data-based process
 - Consistency in discipline practices
- Can be implemented in any school
 - Non-curricular model – flexible to fit school culture & context
- Coaching to ensure high fidelity implementation



A Multi-tiered System of Support: A Public Health Approach to Prevention and Integration



Role of Families & Communities

- Involving families and communities
 - Parents may need training in
 - How to talk with their children about bullying (Lindstrom Johnson et al., in press)
 - Promote disclosure
 - Foster coping skills
 - Modeling in the home
 - How to get actively involved in school-based bullying prevention efforts (Waasdorp et al.)
 - Raise community-wide awareness
 - Social marketing campaigns encouraging all youth and adults to intervene

Intervening with Cyberbullying

- Schools
 - Causes a disruption at school
 - Often occurs in person as well
 - May not be able to administer consequences if outside the school day
 - Programs already in place for reducing bullying can impact cyberbullying
- Parents
 - Students may not want to tell because they fear losing privileges
 - General monitoring and strong parent/child relationships are most effective at reducing incidences of cyberbullying (Casas et al., 2011)
 - Need more than 1 discussion
 - Save the evidence
 - Contact school (is any bullying occurring at school?)
 - Contact police (threats of physical harm, stalking, harassment, etc.)

Role of the Medical Community

- Early screening and identification
- Prevention programming for children and families
- ED based prevention programming
- Trauma-informed approaches
- Training medical professionals
- School-based health staff (e.g., school nurses)



(Lindstrom Johnson, Bradshaw, Wright, & Cheng, 2017)

Things to Consider Regarding Bullying Prevention

- All states have passed laws related to bullying prevention which encourage the use of programs...
- Some responses do not work or may be damaging:
 - Zero-tolerance not effective, may deter reporting
 - Little evidence that one-day assemblies are sufficient
 - Peer-led groups
 - Grouping students who bully together
 - Conflict resolution (peer mediation between bully & victim)

Changing the Script on Bullying Prevention . . .

- From stopping bullying to preventing bullying
 - Need safe, supportive, and healthy learning communities
 - Promotion of social and emotional skills
 - A district, school, and classroom approach
 - Everyone is a stakeholder

Forthcoming....



HANDBOOK ON BULLYING PREVENTION

A LIFE COURSE PERSPECTIVE

Catherine P. Bradshaw, Editor

Bullying is a topic that has raised major concern for our nation, so much, that all states have passed policies that specifically address this issue. This problem is very common among youths and adults, and has the potential to have long-term effects. In the *Handbook on Bullying Prevention: A Life Course Perspective*, chapter authors provide recommendations for prevention and early intervention in bullying situations involving youths and adults across the life course.

There are very few books specifically written about bullying across the life course, and this title focuses on understanding causes and consequences, as well as prevention, in several different settings, not just schools. This handbook is intended to serve as a "go-to" resource to bring awareness and provide effective strategies for stemming the harmful impacts of bullying. *Handbook on Bullying Prevention* is a helpful guide for social workers, mental health clinicians, practitioners, researchers, and educators.



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HANDBOOK ON BULLYING PREVENTION A LIFE COURSE PERSPECTIVE

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HANDBOOK ON BULLYING PREVENTION

A LIFE COURSE PERSPECTIVE

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On-Line Resources

- Stop Bullying
 - <http://www.stopbullying.gov>
- National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)
 - Success in school online resource kit
 - <http://www.naspcenter.org/resourcekit/index.html>
- Collaborative for Academic, Social, & Emotional Learning (CASEL)
 - <http://www.casel.org>
- National Center on PBIS
 - <http://www.PBIS.org>
- Blueprints for violence prevention
 - <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/index.html>
- Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Admin. (SAMHSA)
 - <http://nrepp.samhsa.gov/>

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