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1

Bullying as a Developmental Precursor to Sexual and Dating Violence Across Adolescence

Bullying as a Developmental Precursor to Sexual and Dating Violence Across Adolescence





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3



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4

Today's Presenter



Dorothy L. Espelage (she/her/hers)

Ph.D.

William C. Friday Distinguished Professor of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

5

Previous Webinar



Building a Safer Future: Insights on Youth Violence and Bullying Prevention

This webinar reviews two decades of research and practice on bullying and cyberbullying, including definitional issues, prevalence, risk, and protective factors associated with different forms of bullying. Rates of these behaviors and common targets of intervention are discussed.



Continuing education credits are available!

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6

Acknowledgement

Bullying as a Developmental Precursor to Sexual and Dating Violence Across Adolescence

Dorothy L. Espelage, Ph.D.

William C. Friday Distinguished Professor of Education

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA

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7

7

Funding Sources & Disclaimer

- Research was supported by Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (#1U01/CE001677; 5u01ce002841) to Dorothy Espelage (PI); Opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this presentation are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the CDC
- Research was supported by NIJ Grant (MUOFX-0022) to Dorothy Espelage (PI) & Sabina Low (co-PI); Opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this presentation are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice
- Research was supported by NIJ Grant (#2015-MU-MU-K003) to Iris Ed, Vincent, Espelage,
 Walker (co-Pls); Project SOARS (Student Ownership, Accountability, and Responsibility for School safety). National Institutes of Justice (IRIS Ed)

The presenter has no relationships or conflicts of interest to report.

Learning Objectives

- 1. Understand the research on youth bullying as a precursor to adolescent sexual violence and teen dating violence
- 2. Recognize risk and protective factors targeting interventions to address the link between bullying and sexual violence/teen dating violence
- 3. Identify programs addressing risks and protective factors to reduce these forms of violence

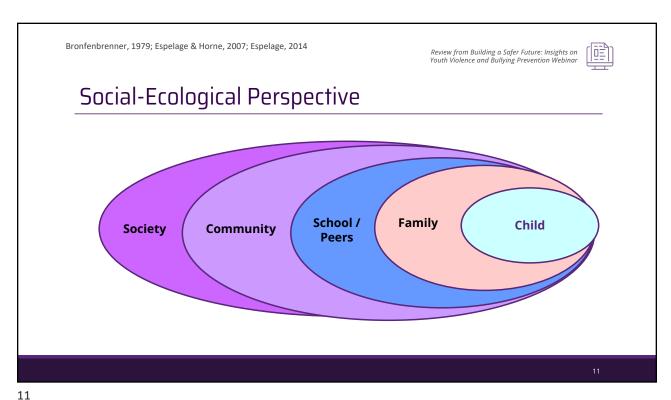
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Why did you prioritize attending this webinar on bullying and sexual violence among youth?

Share your response in the chat-pod.

10



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Theoretical Framework

- Bullying can be broadly construed as social interactions (or social dynamics) that are
 influenced, maintained or mitigated by relationships in the school, peer, and familial
 contexts (Pepler et al., 2006; Espelage, 2016).
- Social Interactional Learning Model family violence serves as an important context for
 understanding the relation between bullying perpetration and involvement in anger, alcohol
 use, and delinquency as predictors of externalizing sexual harassment and teen dating
 violence behavior (Espelage et al. 2014; Rinehart, Espelage, & Bub, 2020; Espelage et al., 2022).
- Gendered Harassment (sexual harassment, homophobic name-calling) reinforces
 traditional masculinity that is emotionally restrictive, competitive, and aggressive (Levant, 1996;
 Meyer, 2008).

CDC; Gladden et al., 2014

Review from Building a Safer Future: Insights on Youth Violence and Bullying Prevention Webinar



Definition of Bullying

Bullying is unwanted aggressive behavior(s) among school-age children that has a high likelihood of causing physical or psychological harm or injury and is characterized by:

- An imbalance of real or perceived power that favors the aggressor(s);
- 2) Is repeated or has a high likelihood of being repeated;
- 3) The victim(s) of bullying may feel **intimidated**, **demeaned**, **or humiliated** as a result of the aggression.

13

13

Espelage et al., 2022

Definition of Sexual Harassment/Violence

- SV refers to any sexual act, verbal or physical, that one (or more) individual(s) enacts against another who does not or cannot freely and enthusiastically consent (Basile et al., 2020).
- SV is harmful behavior exhibited by and against adolescents all over the world (Vanwesenbeeck, 2008).
- Examples of SV include lewd or harassing remarks about one's body or sexuality, sharing nude
 or intimate photos of someone without their consent, sexual threats, and unwanted, forced, or
 coerced sexual contact (Espelage et al., 2016).
- Homophobic teasing or taunting is a form of SV, as it is intended to call attention to a queer or a
 perceived queer sexual orientation in a pejorative way, that asserts heteronormativity and thus
 dominance for those nearby to witness (Rivers, 2011; Poteat & Espelage, 2005).

Prevalence of SH/SV

- A review of research also found that in 27 European Union countries, the lifetime prevalence rate
 of SV victimization involving females (excluding child sexual abuse) ranged from 9% to 83%,
 and the rate of SV victimization of males ranged from 2% to 66% (Krahe et al., 2014).
- 20% for physical Adolescent Dating Violence (ADV) and 9% for sexual ADV, with great variabilities across studies (Wincentak et al., 2017).
- Ybarra and Mitchell's (2013) findings indicated that in the United States, nearly 1 in 10
 adolescents nationwide have reported experiencing some type of SV.
- Decker et al. (2014), which comprised a sample of adolescents (15–19 years of age) in five countries (United States, India, Nigeria, South Africa, and China), reported that the prevalence of SV victimization ranged from 10.2% in China to 36.6% in South Africa.

15

15

Definition & Prevalence of Teen Dating Violence

- TDV can include **physical, verbal, or psychological violence** enacted within the context of the intimate relationship (Exner-Cortens, 2014; Exner-Cortens et al., 2016).
- Like SV, identity and social context are critical data points in understanding how SV and TDV affect youth and communities.
- Wincentak et al.'s (2017) meta-analytic study of the literature on the prevalence of TDV in several countries found that about 20% of teens experience violence in a romantic relationship and about 9% experience sexual forms of TDV.

Espelage, Merrin, & Espelage, 2018

Dating Violence Among LGBQ+ Youth

	LGBQ (n = 761) M (SD)	Non-LGBQ (n = 11,033) M (SD)	Significant Mean Differences
Between-Person Measures			
Perceptions of school violence and crime	.824 (.908)	.493 (.610)	p < .001
Peer Victimization	.708 (.918)	.315 (.554)	p < .001
Teen Dating Violence	.206 (.322)	.066 (.174)	p < .001
Between-School Measures			
Perceptions of school violence and crime	.544 (.166)	.512 (.146)	p < .001
Peer Victimization	.345 (.061)	.340 (.064)	p = .060
Teen Dating Violence	.080 (.025)	.075 (.018)	p < .001
Dependent Variables			
Anxiety	1.65 (.935)	.968 (.803)	p < .001
Suicidal ideation and attempts	.523 (.759)	.089 (.318)	p < .001

17

17

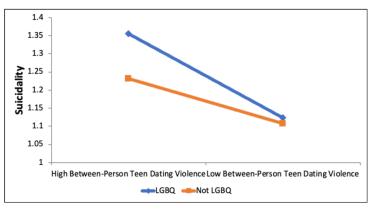
Espelage, Merrin, & Espelage, 2018

Dating Violence Among Transgender Youth

	Transgender (n = 197) M (SD)	Non-Transgender (n = 11,597) M (SD)	Significant Mean Differences
Between-Person Measures			
Perceptions of school violence and crime	1.36 (1.22)	.500 (.614)	p < .001
Peer Victimization	1.09 (1.28)	.328 (.565)	p < .001
Teen Dating Violence	.371 (.428)	.070 (.179)	p < .001
Between-School Measures			
Perceptions of school violence and crime	.525 (.152)	.514 (.148)	p = .289
Peer Victimization	.337 (.054)	.341 (.064)	p = .420
Teen Dating Violence	.078 (.022)	.075 (.019)	p < .034
Dependent Variables			
Anxiety	1.61 (1.15)	1.00 (.819)	p < .001
Suicidal ideation and attempts	.782 (1.05)	.105 (.345)	p < .001

18

Teen Dating Violence and LGBQ+ Identity: Suicidality

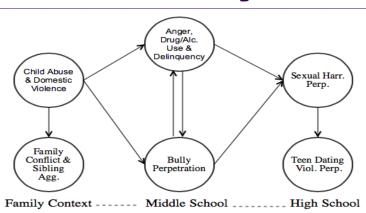


Simple Slopes: LGBQ: β = .61, SE = .05, p < .001; Non-LGBQ: β = .33, SE = .02, p < .001.

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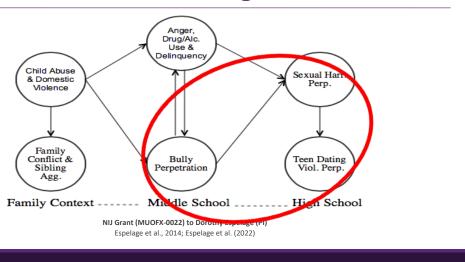
Developmental Model of Bullying, Sexual Harassment and Dating Violence



NIJ Grant (MUOFX-0022) to Dorothy Espelage (PI) Espelage et al., 2014; Espelage et al. (2022)

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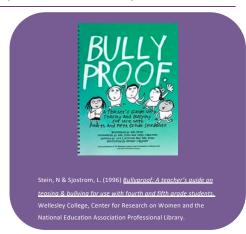
Developmental Model of Bullying, Sexual Harassment and Dating Violence



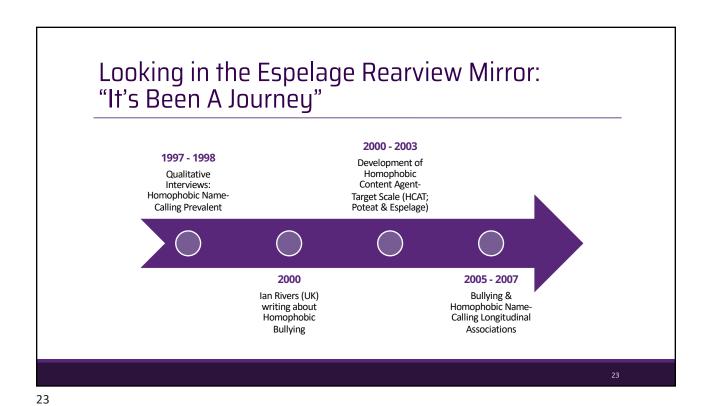
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Nothing New: Expect Respect Elementary School Project (1997-2000)

- To prevent dating abuse by reducing social acceptance of bullying and sexual harassment
- Multi-level intervention
 - o Classroom curriculum
 - o Staff training
 - o Policy development
 - o Parent education
 - o Support services



22



Patience & Persistence 2010 - 2023 Bully-Sexual Violence Pathway studies across Globe (Gender-enhanced SEL, Peer-led programs) 2008 2023 Rape Prevention **Bully-Sexual Violence** Educators in U.S. -Pathway extended to **Bully Prevention** 2009 2023 CDC commissioned Decade in paper on research -Review Bully & Sexual (Espelage Harassment/Violence et al.) (Basile, Espelage et al.)

Longitudinal Study Participants

- Longitudinal data drawn from 4 Midwestern middle schools and 6 high schools from spring 2008 to spring 2013
 - o Waves 0-3 (middle school) and waves 4 and 5 (high school) used in analysis
 - o n = 3,549; M age = 12.8 years
 - 32.2% white, 46.2% black, 5.4 % Hispanic, and 10.2% other; 50.2% female
- Parent and student assent collected
- Teams of researchers administered self-report surveys

25

25

Bullying & Sexual Violence Among Early Adolescence: Gender-Based Bias Matters

Dorothy L. Espelage, Ph.D.

University of Florida Lisa De La Rue, Ph.D. University of San Francisco

&
Kathleen C. Basile, Ph.D.
Division of Violence Prevention
Centers for Disease Control &
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Merle E. Hamburger, Ph.D.

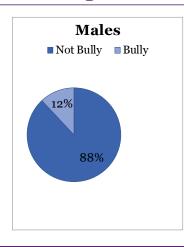
Journal of Adolescent Health (Espelage et al., 2012, Journal of Interpersonal Violence (Espelage et al., 2015);

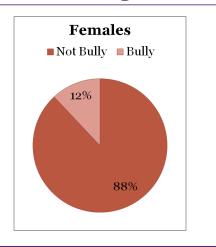
Journal of Youth & Adolescence (Espelage et al., 2018)

This research was supported by Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (#1u01/ce001677) to Dorothy Espelage (PI)

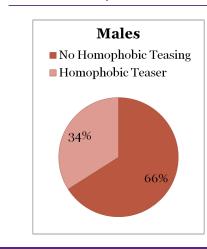
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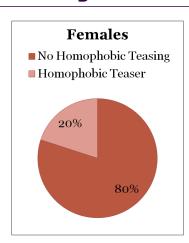
Percentages of Youth Who Bully





Percentages of Youth Who Engage in Homophobic Name-Calling





Espelage et al., 2018; Little, 2013

Bullying - Homophobic Teasing

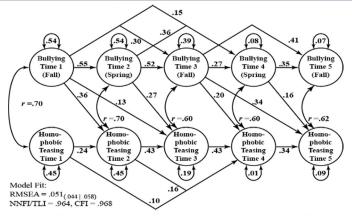


Figure 1. Standardized parameter estimates from the panel model of the relations among bullying and homophobic teasing.

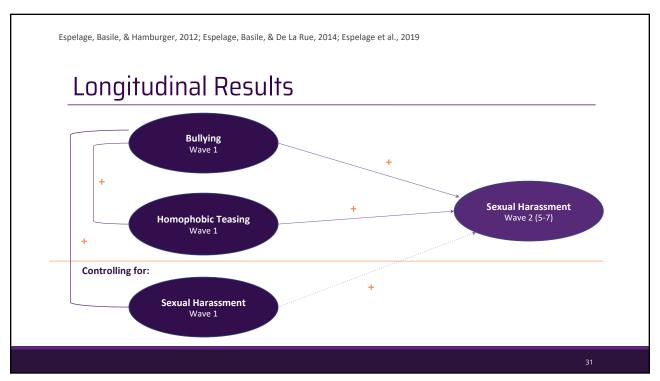
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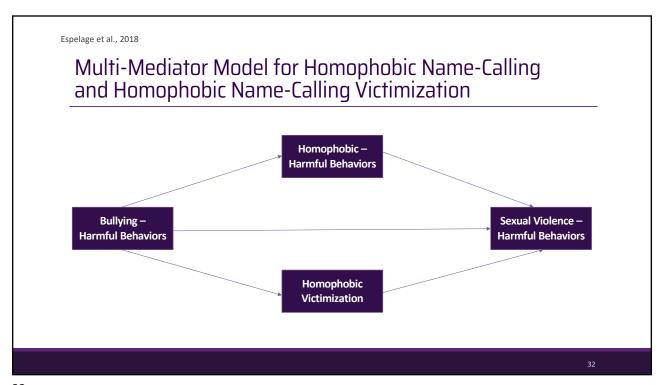
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Take-Away Messages

- Homophobic name-calling is prevalent in middle school (Meyer, 2009, 2010, 2019, 2022).
- Youth who bully resort to homophobic name-calling over the middle school years.
- Bully prevention programs should include a discussion of language that marginalizes gender non-conforming and lesbian, gay, bisexual (LGB) youth.

30







Psychology of Violence

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2023, Vol. 13, No. 2, 136-148 https://doi.org/10.1037/vio0000460

Examining Bullying Perpetration as a Predictor of Later Teen Dating Violence Perpetration: Do Gender-Based Biases Affect This Pathway?

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Department of Human Development and Family Studies, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

School of Education, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Objective: Teen dating violence (TDV) is a prevalent form of interpersonal violence that profoundly impacts lifelong physical and mental health. To support the prevention of TDV perpetration, the present study examined whether an early occurring form of interpersonal violence, bullying perpetration, was longitudinally associated with later TDV perpetration and whether gender-based biases may influence this relationship. Method: This study used a longitudinal high school sample (N = 2,301) to examine the relationship. Method: This study used a longitudinal high school sample (N = 2,301) to examine the relationship between bullying and TDV perpetration across 3 years. Five types of TDV outcomes were included: relational, physical, verbal-emotional, sexual abuse, and abuse involving threatening behavior. We examined sexism and homophobic name-calling (HNC) as moderators between bullying and TDV perpetration. Bullying perpetration at Time 1 was used to predict TDV perpetration at Time 3. Sexism and HNC were introduced as moderators to this path analysis at Time 2. Results: Our findings revealed several significant pathways that supported the longitudinal association between bullying and forms of TDV. In addition, sexism and HNC significantly moderated some of these pathways, respectively, especially among boys. Conclusions: Our results suggest that gender-based biases may be mechanisms through which the likelihood of TDV is bolstered among adolescents who engage in bullying behaviors. We critique the influences of systemic gender norms, and pressures to adhere to masculinity in particular, as related to the perpetration of TDV. We call for comprehensive sex deutacint to be mandated at the policy level and for biased-based aggression based on widespread gender inequities to be addressed in society.

33

33

Review Manuscript

Bullying as a Developmental Precursor to Sexual and Dating Violence Across Adolescence: Decade in Review

TRAUMA, VIOLENCE, & ABUSE 2022, Vol. 23(4) 1358–1370 © The Author(s) 2022



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\$SAGE

Dorothy L. Espelage 1 , Katherine M. Ingram 1, Jun Sung Hong 2 , and Gabriel J. Merrin 3

Abstract

Adolescent bullying continues to be a major focus of scholarship across the globe. This article reviews research from 2010 to 2021 with a particular focus on longitudinal studies of the bully-sexual violence pathway (BSVP), where bullying serves as a precursor for sexual violence (SV) (e.g., sexual harassment, sexual coercion, and sexual assault) and teen dating violence via individual and socio-contextual mediators. Articles reviewed consisted of a total of 505, which included 17 meta-analyses and systematic reviews. Databases used for the search were Academic Search Complete, Education Full Text (H. W. Wilson), ERIC, National Criminal Justice Reference Service Abstracts, PsycINFO, PubMed (Medline), and Social Sciences Abstracts (H. W. Wilson). In total, 107 peer-reviewed articles were included in this review. Potential mechanisms underlying the BSVP include social dominance orientation, exposure to sexual education, and alcohol use. Several school-based intervention approaches have evidenced marginal success in reducing rates of bullying and SV by targeting factors undergirding both behaviors. The efficacy of international prevention approaches is summarized. Gaps in the literature are identified and future research is proposed.

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34

Espelage et al., 2021

Moderators

- Traditional Masculinity Ideology Linked to gender-based harassment (Espelage et al., 2018; Basile et al., 2009).
 - High rates of bullying in middle school and high levels of traditional masculinity predicted SV and TDV harmful/problematic behavior(s) years later, effect stronger for males than females.
- **Dismissive Attitudes Toward Sexual Harassment** Associated with greater displaying of sexually harmful behavior (Charmaraman, Jones, Stein, & Espelage, 2013; Espelage et al., 2022)
 - High rates of bullying in middle school and high levels of dismissiveness of sexual harassment predicted SV and TDV six years later, effect stronger for males than females.

35

35



What is something new you have learned so far in this webinar?

Share in the chat-pod

36

Proxies of Emotion Dysregulation and Teen Dating Violence: A Latent Profile Analysis

Courtney M. Medina, Katherine M. Ingram, M.S., & Dorothy L. Espelage, Ph.D. Journal of Adolescent Health (2023)



3.

37

Methods

- Latent profile analysis of 4 self-reported variables related to emotion regulation (anger regulation, depressive symptoms, impulsivity, and alcohol use) was conducted among a sample of 1,508 students.
- Regression analyses were used to test the relation between latent profile membership and self-reported TDV behaviors across two time points.

N = 3,064 students across 6 Midwestern U.S. high schools

n = 1,508 students reported that they had been in a relationship

 \rightarrow 49% of total sample

 \rightarrow Female: n = 757

38

Results

This study found that a group of adolescents who exhibited TDV-behaviors self-reported moderate levels of anger dysregulation, depressive symptoms, and impulsivity, while an even smaller group reported significantly elevated levels of recent alcohol use.

Wave 1 - 36.7% reported exhibiting TDV at least once

Wave 2 - 51.9% reported exhibiting TDV

39

39

Implications for Prevention

- TDV prevention efforts should consider the differences in the onset and stability of various risk factors of problematic/harmful behaviors, such as the onset of experimentation with substances, so that interventions are targeted at opportune times.
- TDV prevention programs and policies should incorporate social-emotional learning and substance use education into adolescent relationship curricula.
- \rightarrow TDV prevention programs and policies should be inclusive of and address systemic and social TDV risk factors specific to queer and other marginalized youth.
- \rightarrow Risk factors at all socio-ecological levels must be studied and adequately addressed to ensure comprehensive violence prevention for all youth.

OneOp Webinar



oneop.org/learn/141493/



Providing Affirmative Care to the LGBTQ+ Military Community

This webinar focuses on the continuums of identity (sexual orientation, gender identity, biological sex, gender expression), the impact of discrimination, relevant healthcare disparities, and ways to encourage a welcoming care environment for all.

11

41

OneOp Webinar



oneop.org/learn/141496/



Care Considerations for the Transgender and Gender-Diverse Military Community

This webinar focuses on applying affirmative, evidencebased best practices for care delivery for Transgender and Gender-Diverse adults in the military community.

42

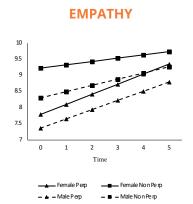
Protective Factors for Sexual Violence: Understanding How Trajectories Relate to High Schoolers

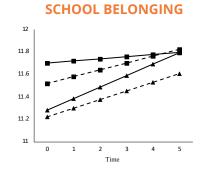
Basile et al., 2018; JRA

43

43

Interaction Between Biological Sex and Teen Dating Violence (TDV)





maie Perp — ■ Femaie No Perp

44

Take-Away Messages

- Given the limited research on protective factors for TDV, more research is needed that can expand our understanding of modifiable factors that promote resiliency and decrease risk for TDV.
- Empathy, parental monitoring, and school belonging were all found to be protective for at least one, if not more, forms of TDV.
- Social support was predictor of all forms of TDV.
- Thus, it's important to implement prevention programs in middle school that focus on teaching empathy skills, promoting parental monitoring and support, promoting school belongingness, and increasing social support.

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Discussion

- A comprehensive approach that addresses the climate that may give children/youth
 potential to exhibit or display harmful behavior is important and may diffuse risk for
 problematic sexual behaviors later in high school and emerging adulthood.
- Another important piece of prevention programming suggested by this research is counteracting perceptions of gender nonconformity (Messerschmidt, 2000; Meyer, 2008).

46

Implications for Prevention

- Research must consider multiple contexts to identify longitudinal predictors, mediators, and moderators associated with outcomes for youth who bully and exhibit later forms of violence.
- Bullying programs need to incorporate discussion of gender-based name-calling, sexual violence, and gender expression (homophobic language; Birkett & Espelage, 2010; Meyer, 2008, 2010; Espelage, 2016).

47

47

Characteristics of Effective Programs

- Involvement/leadership of community members
- Sufficient dosage
- Interpersonal skills
- Bystander approaches
- Multi-level strategies
- Dismantle societal systems of oppression



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Multi-Level Strategies

- 1. Support youth exposed to violence
- 2. Engage youth as leaders and influencers
- 3. Create safer and more welcoming schools and communities



49

49

Sufficient Dosage, Interpersonal Skills

Grades 6-12 (24 sessions)

5 Units:

- 1. Developing connections in group
- 2. Defining personal expectations for relationships
- 3. Making sense of your life story
- 4. Learning skills for healthy relationships
- 5. Strengthening support systems





www.safeaustin.org/ourservices/prevention-andeducation/expectrespect/resources-foreducators/

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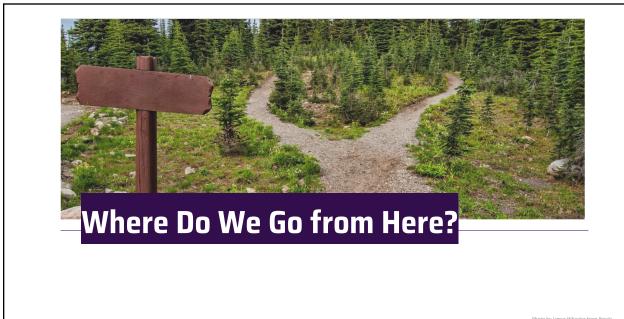
Multi-Level Interventions in the Real World

- Long-term approach, relationship-building
- Staff/resource intensive, teamwork
- Highly collaborative, inclusive
- Rely on opportunities, local champions
- Difficult to evaluate



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53



oto by James Wheeler Hom Pexel

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Summary

- In the last decade, scholars have identified a developmental cascade of dominanceoriented aggressive behaviors.
- U.S.-based researchers have called this phenomenon the **Bully-SV-TDV Pathway**, though importantly, it appears to have cross-cultural empirical support.
 - o Researchers have extended this pathway to include TDV, and increasingly researchers are attempting to identify the potential mechanisms underlying bullying, SV, and TDV.
- Interrupting this developmental continuum of aggressive behavior is an important venture.

55

55

Summary

- Prevention programming deployed in schools and other youth-serving settings must disrupt patterns where dominance behaviors (e.g., bullying, SV, TDV) are rewarded, and instead foster cultures of collective care, empathy, and psychoeducation regarding the ways that oppressive systems shape interpersonal.
- Bullies and aggressive youth place importance on dominance, and they seek to acquire it; through a display of dominance, bullies are perceived as popular and powerful by their classmates even if they are not personally liked by many classmates (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; Olthof et al., 2011; Reijntjes et al., 2016).

56

Summary

- Thus, educators must first become aware of such dominance behaviors and disincentivize them in their own contexts.
 - o Part of this process includes bringing awareness to school teachers and other adults that this form of education is part of their role as members of the school community.



57

57

Summary

- Given the importance of the peer ecology and how these behaviors are aimed to establish
 dominance, bystander-focused interventions vary widely in their nature and success but
 demonstrate some efficacy, especially in individualism-based cultures.
- Attention to environmental features and moderators, such as alcohol or skills training, that is conducive to violence occurring may benefit from such interventions.

Summary

- These behaviors are driven the underlying forces of dominance-orientation and systems of misogyny and systemic racism and sexism.
- Efforts to dismantle these forces, however, when they show up in a culture, are much more difficult and require ongoing work for all community members.
- It is worthwhile, as logically follows, that radical approaches can prevent several violent behaviors (rather than only bullying or only SV).

59

59

Translating the Research: Suggestions for Service Providers

- Modeling of healthy relationships and promoting open communication within military families
- Focus on strategies to connect at school during transitions, deployments, etc.
- Implement strategies that are strengths-based, emphasizing the development of socialemotional learning skills and active coping approaches.

60

Translating the Research: Engaging Parents

- It is critical for parents to understand the youth involved in bullying may also experience sexual harassment and unhealthy dating relationships.
- Parents need to have direct conversations with youth about bullying that they experience or see at school.
- Youth should be encouraged to disclose experiences of bullying and sexual harassment.
- Military youth who feel connected at school are less likely to experience bullying and sexual harassment; parents should focus on how youth are integrating into new schools.
- Monitoring by parents through open communication with youth can also prevent these experiences.



61

61



Short Answer Response

What is one thing you can do to integrate preventative strategies into your clinical practice when working with children/youth?

Share in the chat-pod.

6

Resources for Service Providers Supporting Military Families



- Military OneSource Resource Guide for Parents and Caregivers: Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth https://www.militaryonesource.mil/parenting/prevent-harmful-behaviors/problematic-sexual-behavior-in-children-and-youth
- OneOp Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth Series https://oneop.org/series/sexual-behavior-in-children-and-youth-sbcy-series/
- OneOp Military Youth:Protecting and Promoting Resilience and Well-Being https://oneop.org/series/youthresilience/
- DoD Instruction 1342.22, Military Family Readiness
 www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/documents/DD/issuances/dodi/134222p.pdf

63

63

Resources

- Espelage Research Google Scholar of Dr. Espelage's Work and Articles
 https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=p1Gew10AAAAI&hl=en&oi=ao
- CDC Fast Facts: Preventing Teen Dating Violence
 https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teendatingviolence/fastfact.html
- CDC Veto Violence, Tools and Trainings https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/main/tools-and-trainings
- Safe Austin https://www.safeaustin.org/
- Safe Austin Resources <u>www.safeaustin.org/our-services/prevention-and-education/expect-respect/resources-for-educators/</u>

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Questions?

68

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69

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70

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