Adolescents and bullying

Emily Griffin

Longwood University

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Professor Shayla Walker, LCSW

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Bullying is a national issue that affects thousands of adolescents each year. In recent years with the expansion of technology, bullying has made a significant impact in schools affecting students negatively through signs of aggression. It is vital to consider the efforts of all the factors involved when it comes to bullying, whether it be prevention or intervention, to reduce the effects of bullying on the emotional, physical, and well-being of the adolescents that are involved (Mogonea, 2021). It is essential to consider the implications for practice and discuss treatment modalities and conceptual frameworks. This paper will discuss these and how intervention techniques can help the bullying problem within schools.

**Conceptual Framework**

## Theory 1: Conceptual framework for bullying victimization and substance misuse

This conceptual framework explains the association between being a victim of bullying and how that can lead to possible substance misuse. Bullying affects adolescents in many different ways. This is one of the ways it can negatively affect the student. Several risk factors for victimization and substance misuse can be linked to interpersonal factors, according to a study by Jun Hong. A victim of bullying can have several risk factors, beginning at the family level, such as neglect or abuse at home and negative experiences with the caregiver. There may be peer rejection and peer affiliation issues on the peer level, resulting in difficulty making good friendships. According to this conceptual framework, age, sex, social support, and school connection can all be moderators. Internalized problems, traumatic stress, low academic achievement, and truancy can also mediate substance misuse.

Behavioral maladaptations like victimization and substance misuse are reinforced by one another according to the concept behind this conceptual framework based on a developmental psychopathology structure. The correlation between adolescence and certain substances is primarily found among adolescents who have access to certain substances because they are older (Hong, 2014). Although it is unknown if this is true for elementary and middle school students, it is evident that bullying victimization and substance misuse are prevalent due to the immense pain students who have been victimized experience.

This article provides school and policy officials with a conceptual framework for addressing bullying and associated risk behaviors. Based on this research, zero-tolerance policies have been implemented (Hong, 2014), but they do not account for the overall problem and do not work well within schools due to a lack of resources and involvement.

## Theory two: Bullying involvement and witnessed intimate partner violence

This study attempted to identify the direct correlation between adolescents witnessing intimate partner violence and becoming the bully or being victimized. It was also hypothesized that the relationship between witnessing parental intimate partner violence, bullying, and peer victimization in childhood would be mediated by increased psychological problem behavior, school absences, and problematic peer interactions (Hong, 2021). Two different articles pointed to victimization and witnessing intimate partner violence. Research from the Journal of Family Violence has documented Intimate partner violence exposure as a potential mechanism for bullying perpetration and victimization. It is reported that there is an increased risk of bullying behaviors and victimization for youth exposed to violence compared to non-exposed youth (Voisin & Hong, 2012). An association between maltreatment of the child and witnessing violence correlates with bullying among youth (Lee, 2021). Theory suggests that violent and aggressive behaviors may be imitated through observations of violence they see within the home or in their daily lives. When an adolescent witnesses violence within the house, the child may be influenced to think that violence is the only way to control and handle conflict and gain their position within the relationship. When violence is accepted and followed through observations of violent caregivers, it can result in the victimization against peers, such as bullying, to gain a sense of control that they may feel they do not have within the home (Lee, 2021)

To conclude, the results of this review demonstrate the need for further intervention and research on the relationship between intimate partner violence exposure and bullying outcomes. It would also be essential to examine the types of bullying that seem most prevalent such as verbal, physical, cyber, etc. Other forms of abuse and neglect need to be considered as well. If a child is in a home where there is violence, it is possible that violence could be implicated in the child (Lee, 2021)

**Theoretical Framework**

This study's theoretical model suggests that individuals are the producers and products of their environment and social systems. It indicates that within the social context, there are contributing factors and consequences of involvement in bullying. Single theories help to understand risk and protective factors and the social conditions that promote, maintain, or suppress bullying (Thomas, 2017). This study evaluated the systems theory and individual-level theoretical frameworks to explain the problem of bullying. These systems explain the role of understanding and what contributes to bullying and have provided theoretical foundations for interventions. It is important to note that not one single theory can fully comprehend or explain bullying being that it is so complex and can look very different depending on the locality and the adolescent, while the individual-level frameworks attempt to explain the personal processes that may contribute to the decision to engage in bullying perpetration (Thomas, 2017)

The family unit is essential to understanding the behavioral patterns of adolescents. Family systems theory understands the inter-relationships, mutual influences, and relationship dynamics within the family that affect children and adolescents’ behavior with their peers (Thomas, 2017). This leads to stating aggressive behavior is a systemic product rather than a product of individual psychopathology which differs from previous research, saying that it could be psychologically based on home life factors and possible abuse or neglect in the home or witnessed violence.

**Empirically based quantitative and qualitative literature**

This qualitative study examines bullying in its entirety. This article describes a pilot study using qualitative methods to investigate bullying from the perspectives of the victimized children, their parents, and educators. Interviews were conducted with children who self-identified as victims, one parent, each child's teacher, and school administrators. Using qualitative research, this article explores the reasons behind bullying, starting with If the victimized child is considered responsible, then what should be done? Several reasons for bullying are discussed, including power imbalances, problematic meanings, and more.

The children and adults highlighted the existence of a power imbalance. Children define bullying as someone older or stronger hurting someone younger or weaker. For instance, one child said, "Older kids think they can overpower the little ones” (Mishna, 2004). This is important because it allows adults to understand how adolescents view bullying and what they believe it means. There is also intended to hurt several children, including hitting and threats. The study pointed out that one adolescent stated that bullies enjoy hurting others. It was found that one teacher and parent felt that bullies might not intend to bully, whereas another teacher felt that bullying is intentional (Mishna, 2004)

Another pattern that emerged previously in the research is the difficulty in identifying bullying because of its complexity especially being that many believe nonphysical bullying is not bullying, in this study, an individual shifted her view but still felt that physical bullying was more serious.

The University of New Hampshire did a quantitative study. While others focus solely on the issue of bullying, this one examines bullying between genders; even though this is done with college students, this can also apply to adolescents. There were 312 undergraduates enrolled in sociology classes. Significant results supported that almost half of UNH undergraduate females who reported experiencing bullying also said they have experienced being emotionally bullied by other females. Additionally, with females, it is hard to pinpoint the perpetrator because rumors are so easily spread amongst girls that they tend to group in hallways, bathrooms, etc. They found that females react differently to bullying, which can affect them more because females tend to have a higher chance of emotional dysregulation. Males tend to hide their emotions and not seek help, whereas females are more likely to speak up, especially when it comes to being victimized by other females.

The undergraduate males stated that a significant incidence of physical bullying is perpetrated by other males and affects them physically more than it does emotionally. Males typically will fight it out and then make up later on, whereas females remain angry at each other and can genuinely hurt one another. UNH undergraduate males also reported a significant incidence of physical bullying perpetrated by others males females 32 14.55%, males 7 8.33%, and all 39 12.83% (Schlieper, 2012)

**Treatment Modalities and intervention techniques**

This paper will be using treatment modality and intervention techniques interchangeably. Despite limitations presented within the schools, there are many implications that are possible for both prevention and intervention within the schools. Having the ability to understand the profile of each student in the classroom enables teachers to engage in certain classroom management activities that target those involved in bullying effectively (Williford, 2018). The article suggests that teachers can directly influence bully-victim groups' composition and play an important role in influencing peer-group structures.

Much of the research found indicated that teacher involvement is of the utmost importance in prevention and intervention strategies, being that many of the issues with bullying start within the classroom, evidence states that in the elementary school setting the students are together all throughout the day therefore allowing more time and opportunity for peer-relations. Typically, teachers prefer authority-based disciplinary interventions against bullying, working with administration to achieve these interventions. Teachers can and should intervene by providing emotional regulation, connecting bullying victims with other peers, and taking non-hostile disciplinary measures to reduce bullying at school (Williford, 2018).

As far as treatment modality, psychological support is important for victims of bullying being that bullying can lead to body dysmorphia, withdrawn behaviors, aggression and low self-esteem. These students need to receive these services to prevent further psychological damage further in life that can lead to criminal activity, unstable and unhealthy relationships, intimate partner violence etc. Having a school psychiatrist and a school social worker is vital for treatment modality.

**Implications for social work practice**

Social workers who are working across child-serving systems (such as child welfare, schools, child mental health, and juvenile justice) are likely to encounter youths who are struggling with the bullying and victimization behaviors (Williford, 2019) As such, schools of social work must adequately prepare students to address experiences with bullying and peer victimization. However, baccalaureate social work degree programs have not examined the extent to which these issues are addressed and the extent to which they prepare students for effective intervention (Williford, 2019)

Educators and parents can benefit from the guidance of social workers in understanding and responding to the perspectives and feelings of their children, being that social workers are trained to identify emotions and empower students. In addition to helping teachers, parents, and other adults understand their own views and attitudes, they can also aid adults in understanding that the child may have a different perspective than they do and that the child may be experiencing more distress than they anticipated (Mishna, 2004) Social work practice can also assist by providing external resources such as psychological resources and family support to help those who have been victimized. The school social worker is in the setting where students can come and speak about their experiences and get a first hand response about what is going on.

In conclusion, bullying is an overall major problem within the school setting with a lot of consequences on students who bully and those who have been victimized. Teachers play a major role within the school system to implement classroom management techniques and the proper disciplinary action being taken right as the bullying occurs or is reported. Social workers can significantly help the issue of bullying by providing interventions for families and reducing barriers.

# References

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