



# PREVENTING BULLYING & VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS AND BEYOND

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# Espelage Research Lab

- **SOCIAL-ECOLOGY & SCHOOL-BASED PREVENTION** (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Espelage, 2012, 2014)
- **EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE STUDY** (Espelage, 1998; Low & Espelage, 2014)
- **SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS STUDY** (Birkett & Espelage, 2014; Espelage, Holt, & Henkel, 2003; Espelage, Green, & Wasserman, 2007; Espelage, Green, & Polanin, 2012)
- **SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DATING VIOLENCE, & BULLYING STUDIES** (Holt & Espelage, 2003; Holt & Espelage, 2005; Espelage & Holt, 2006; Espelage, Basile, & Hamburger, 2012, 2014)
- **THEORY OF MIND, EMPATHY, & PEER RELATIONS** (Espelage et al., 2004; Mayberry & Espelage, 2006)
- **SEXUAL VIOLENCE, & BULLYING** (Poteat & Espelage, 2006; Espelage et al., 2008; Espelage et al., 2012)
- **YOUTH & MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES** (Espelage, Aragon, Birkett, & Koenig, 2008; Poteat, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009; Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009; Robinson & Espelage, 2012, 2013)
- **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES - Victimization & Psychological Correlates & SEL prevention** (Rose et al., 2010; Rose & Espelage, 2012; Espelage, Rose, & Polanin, 2015)
- **SCHOOL CLIMATE, ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT** (Espelage et al., 2014, 2015)

Policies &  
Procedures –  
Behavioral  
Expectations  
(PBIS)

Effective Violence Prevention

Social-  
Emotional  
Competences

Ongoing  
ALL Staff  
Training



# Trusting Relationships

**Interconnected Risks**

**Interconnected Protective Factors**

**Bullying/Aggression**

**School Violence**

**Prosocial Peers**

**Supportive Schools**

# **Espelage Mantra:**

## **With Awareness Comes Misperception**

### **Misperception in Media**

- Bullying is an epidemic.**
- Bully-suicide linked.**
- Bully are young criminals.**
- Bullies need to be punished.**
- Bullies – dysfunctional families**
- Bullying is hard-wired in youth**

### **Scientific Evidence**

- Bully Rates Vary**
- Bully Only One of Many Predictors**
- Bullies are diverse in their outcomes**
- Ignores Group Phenomena**
- Good kids get involved in bullying**
- Environment matters – gene expression**

# Definition of Bullying

## (CDC; Gladden et al., 2014)

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:

- 1) 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.

# Components Matter

(Ybarra, Espelage, & Mitchell, 2014; JAH)

- Nationally-representative samples: (1) 2008: 1,157 12- to 17-year-olds; (2) 2010-11: 3,989 13- to 18-year-olds.
- Youth who reported **neither differential power nor repetition** had the lowest rates of interference with daily functioning.
- Youth who reported **either differential power or repetition** had higher rates.
- Highest rates of interference with daily functioning were observed among youth who reported **both differential power and repetition; these youth report highest level of helplessness.**
- Youth were victims of online generalized peer aggression (30%) or both online generalized peer aggression and cyberbullying (16%) **but rarely cyberbullying alone (1%).**



# Bullying Prevalence

Among 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> graders:

15% Chronically Victimized

17% Ringleader Bullies

8% Bully-Victims

60% Bystanders

Only 13% intervene to help victim

(Espelage, 2015)

# Cyber-Bullying Prevalence

- 7% of students in U.S. public schools nationwide reported being cyberbullied in 2013 (Zhang, Musu-Gillette, & Oudekerk, 2016).
- Rate of cyberbullying is lower than the rate of face-to-face bullying victimization (22%), th
- Cyberbullied students were less likely to notify an adult than face-to-face bullying victims (23% vs. 39%; Zhang et al., 2016).
- Review of cyberbullying literature by the rate to be anywhere between 4% and 78% (Aboujaoude, Savage, Starcevic, & Salame, 2015).

# **Transactional Associations Between School-Based Aggression/Bullying & Cyberbullying**

**This research was supported by Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (#1U01/CE001677) to Dorothy Espelage (PI)**

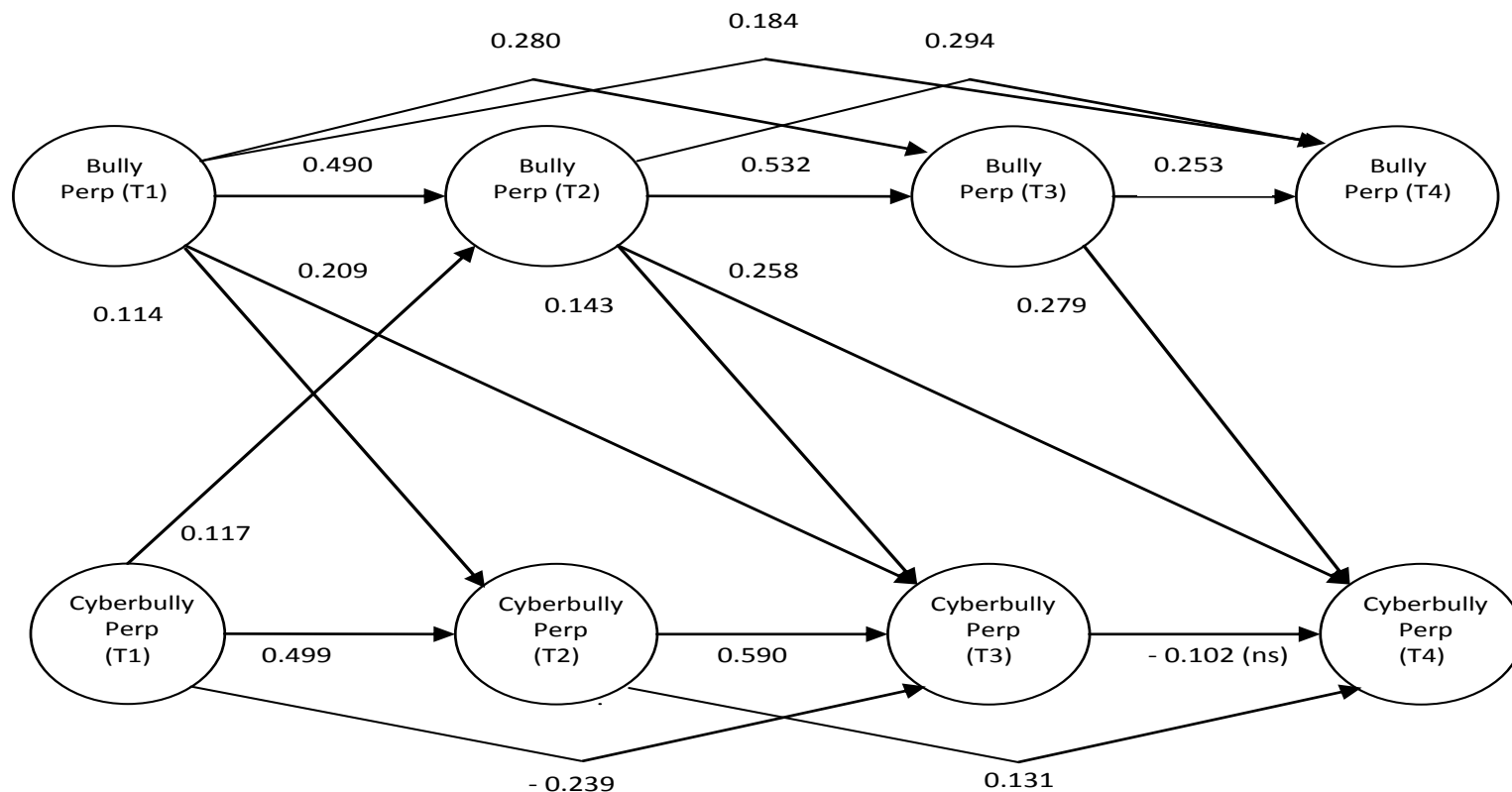
# Method

## Participants

- 1,132 students (49.1% female)
- 3 cohorts (5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> graders)
- Assessed across 4 waves including Spring/Fall 2008, Spring/Fall 2009
- Racially diverse (51% Black; 34% White; 3% Hispanic; 3% Asian; 9% Other)

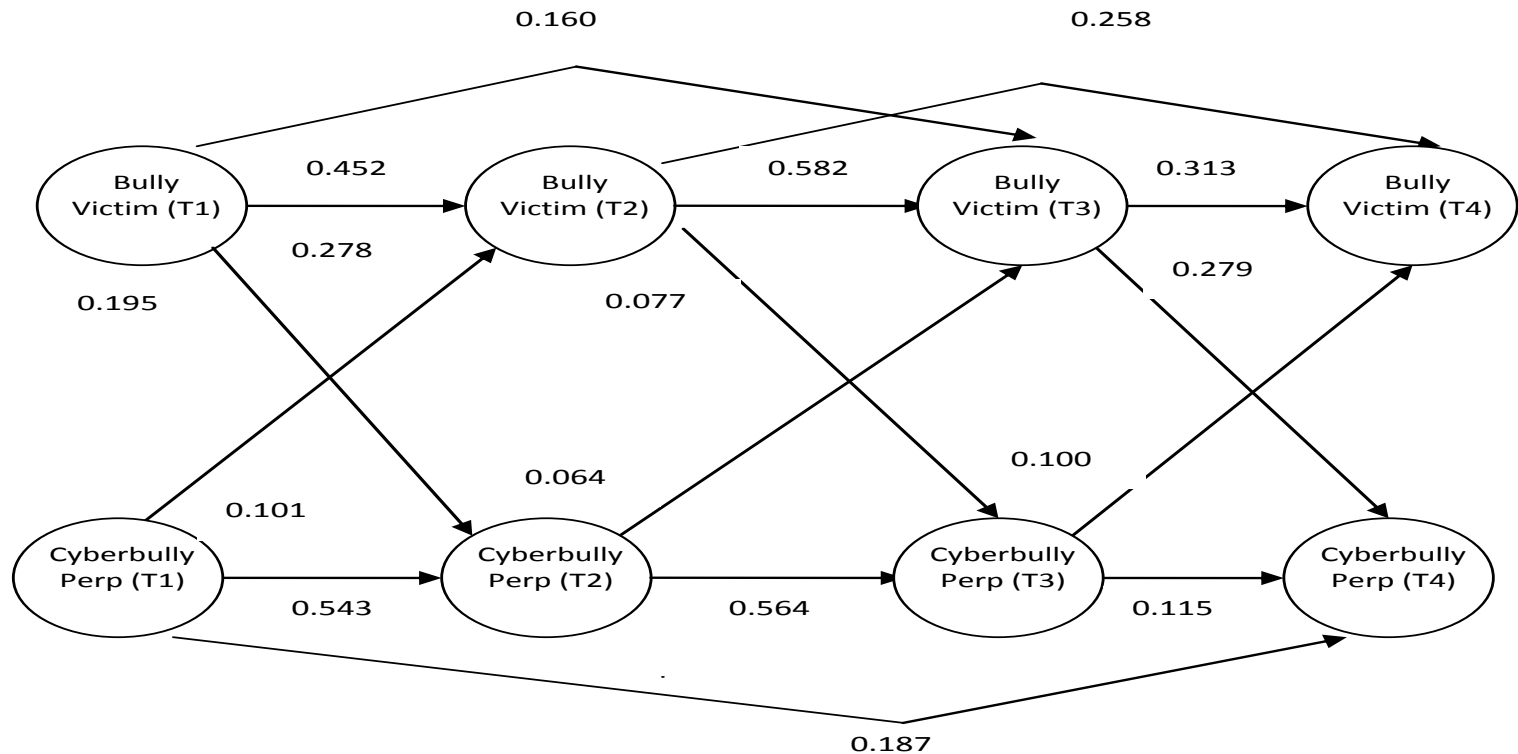


# Bullying Perpetration & Cyberbullying Perpetration



**Figure 1.** Model Fit:  $\chi^2_{(219, n=1132)} = 945.318$ ; RMSEA = 0.0542 (0.0506 ; 0.0577); NNFI = .0975; CFI = 0.980

# Bullying Victimization and Cyberbullying Perpetration



**Figure 2.** Model Fit:  $\chi^2_{(222, n=1132)} = 854.147$ ; RMSEA = 0.0486 (0.0453; 0.0525); NNFI = .0965; CFI = 0.972

# Bullying-Sexual Violence Perpetration Pathway Among Middle School Students

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*Journal of Adolescent Health (2012), Journal of  
Interpersonal Violence (2014)*

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

# 2008-2015 CDC-NIJ Study Participants

## ▶ Demographics:

- 3549 students (49.1% female)
- 3 cohorts (5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> graders)
- Racially diverse (51% Black, 34% White)
- 60% Free/reduced lunch

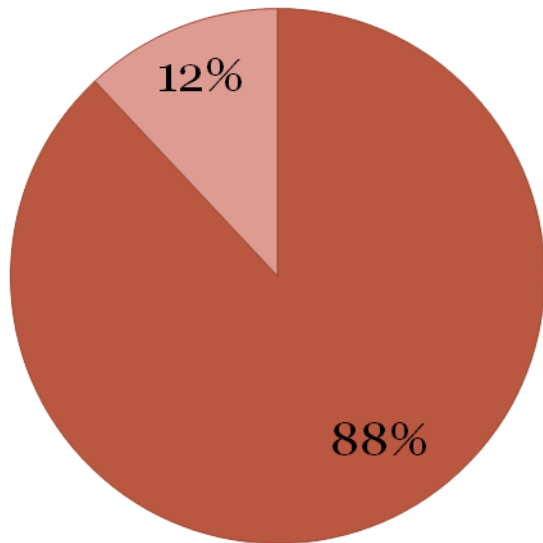
7 waves of data collection  
(from spring 2008-spring 2015)



# Percentages of Youth who Bully

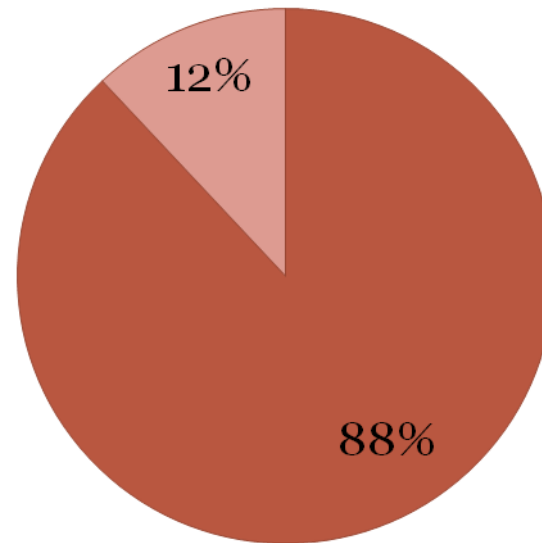
## Males

■ Not Bully ■ Bully



## Females

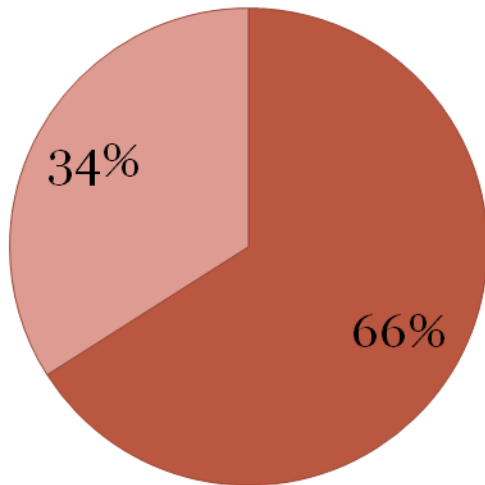
■ Not Bully ■ Bully



# Percentages of Youth Who Engage in Homophobic Name-Calling

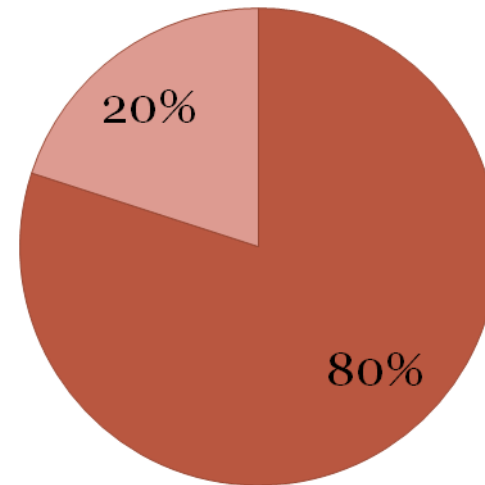
## Males

- No Homophobic Teasing
- Homophobic Teaser

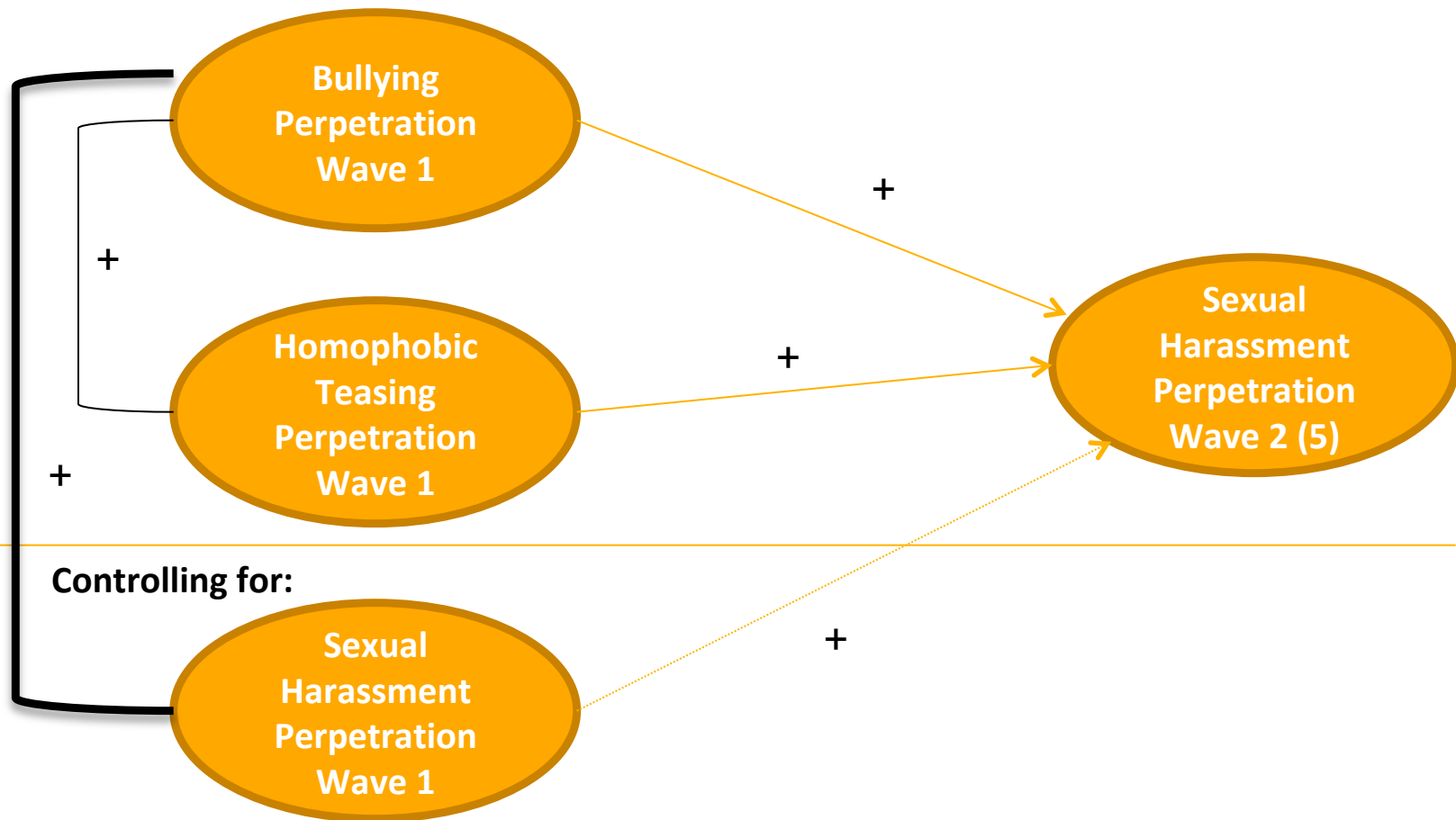


## Females

- No Homophobic Teasing
- Homophobic Teaser

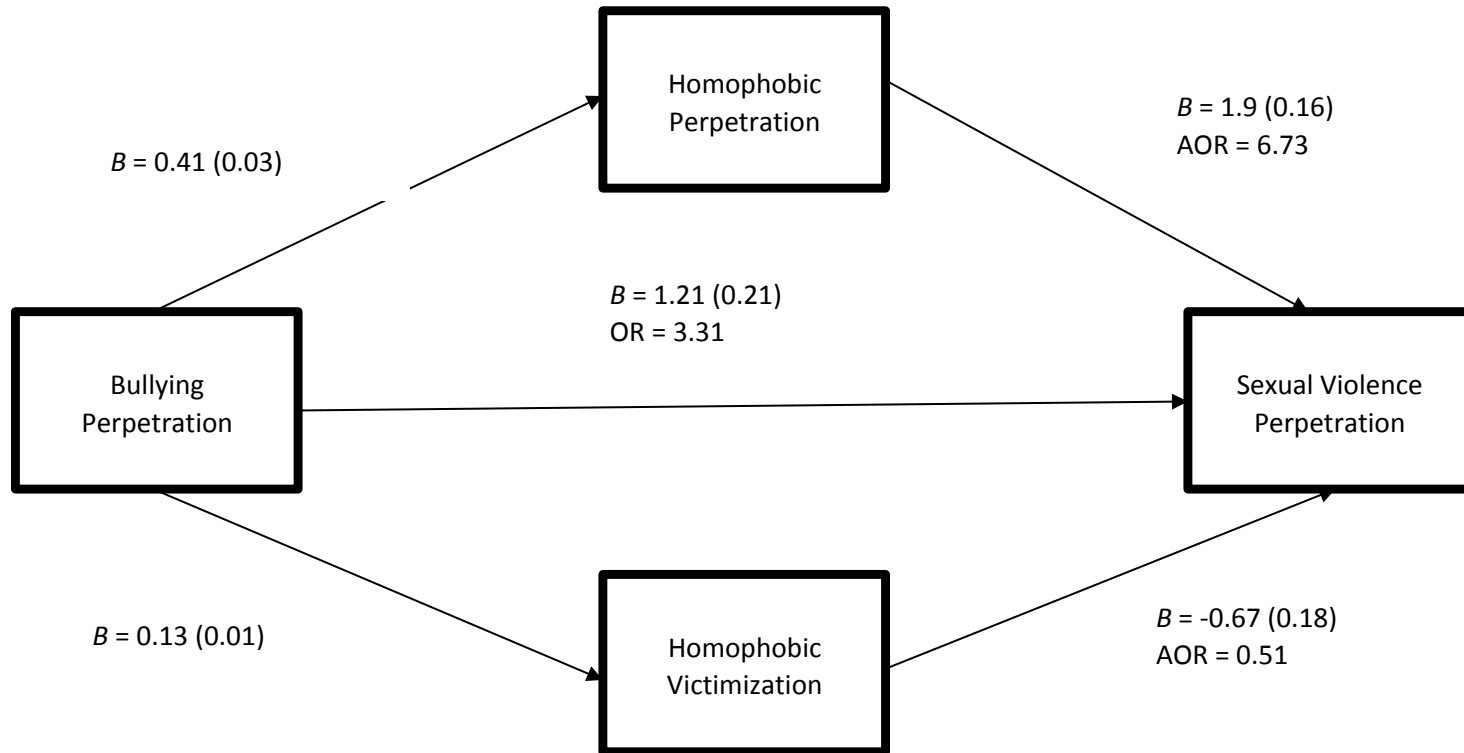


# Longitudinal Middle School Results



(Espelage, Basile, & Hamburger, 2012;  
Espelage, Basile, & De La Rue, 2014)

# Longitudinal High School Results (Mediator – Homophobic Name-calling)



(Espelage, Basile, et al., 2018)



# MODERATORS

(ESPELAGE ET AL., UNDER REVISION)

- Traditional masculinity ideology – Linked to gender-based harassment (Horn, 2007, Parrott, 2009, Pleck, 1995)
  - High rates of **bullying in middle school and high levels of traditional masculinity predicted sexual violence perpetration six years later**, effect stronger for males than females.
- Dismissive attitudes toward sexual harassment – Associated with greater sexual violence perp and victimization (Charmaraman, Jones, Stein, & Espelage, 2013; Rogers et al., 2017)
  - High rates of **bullying in middle school and high levels of dismissiveness of sexual harassment predicted sexual violence perpetration six years later**, effect stronger for males than females.

# DISCUSSION

- A comprehensive approach that addresses the climate that may give potential perpetrators the license to perpetrate is important and may diffuse risk for sexual violence perpetration later in high school and emerging adulthood.
- Another important piece of prevention programming suggested by this research is counteracting perceptions of gender non-conformity (Messerschmidt, 2000; Meyer, 2008).

# Protective Factors for Sexual Violence: Understanding How Trajectories Relate to Perpetration in High School

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Dorothy L. Espelage, PhD<sup>b</sup>

Jordan P. Davis, PhD<sup>c</sup>

***Prevention Science (2018)***

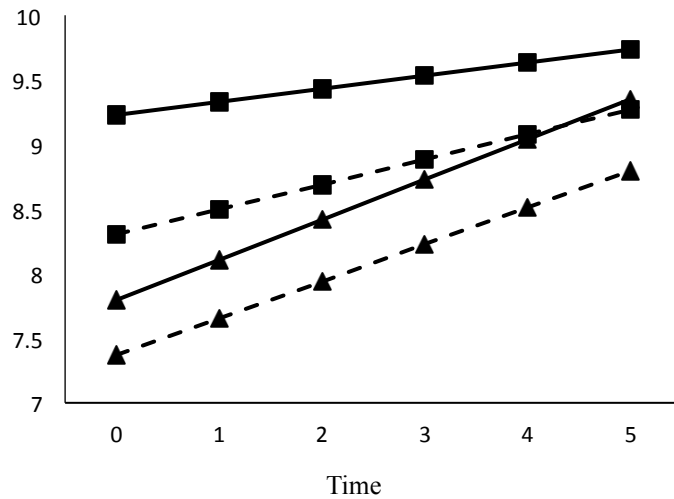
<sup>a</sup>CDC

<sup>b</sup>University of Florida

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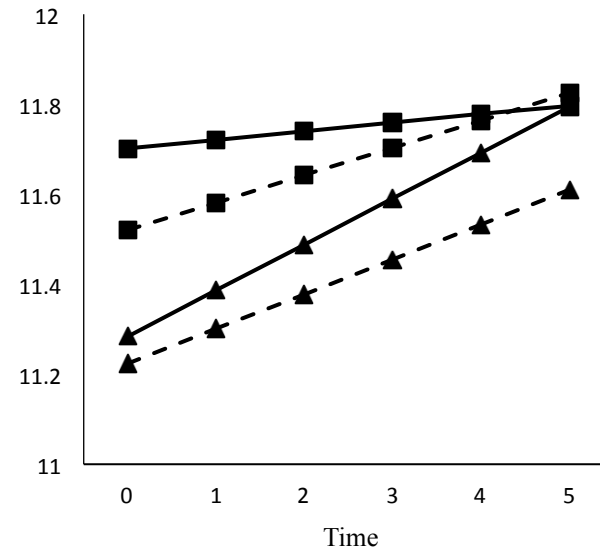
# Interaction between Biological sex and Sexual violence (SV) perpetration

## EMPATHY



—▲— Female Perp      —■— Female Non Perp  
-▲- Male Perp      -■- Male Non Perp

## SCHOOL BELONGING

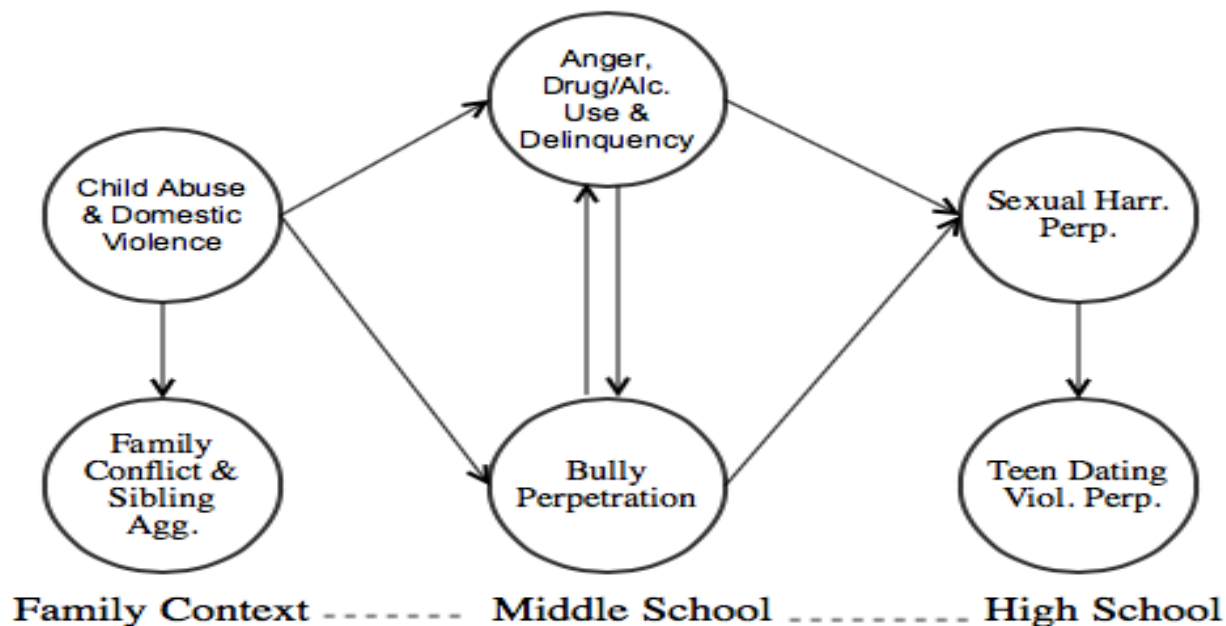


—▲— Female Perp      —■— Female Non Perp  
-▲- Male Perp      -■- Male No Perp

# Implications for Prevention

- Protective factors are important to identify in order to prevent sexual violence among middle and high school students.
- Addressing empathy and school sense of belonging would be a fruitful area of investigation.

# Developmental model of bullying, sexual harassment and dating violence



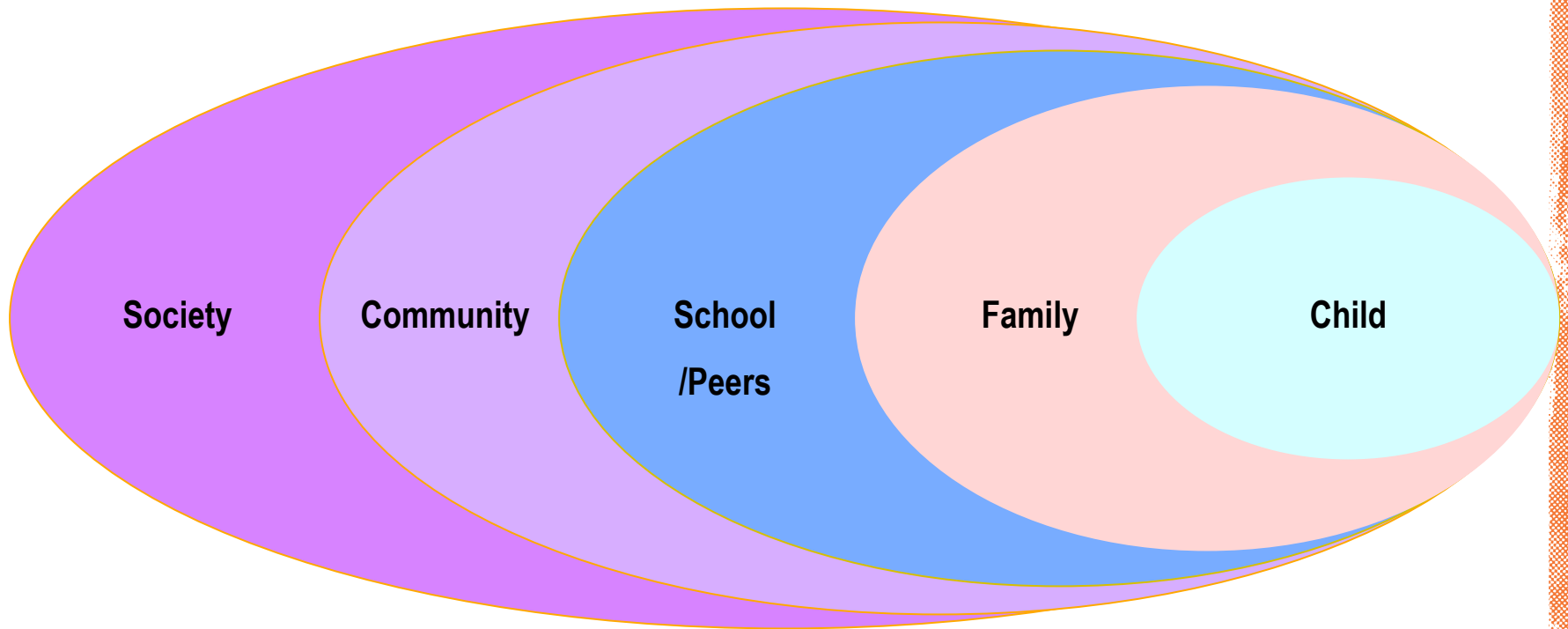
NIJ Grant (MUOFX-0022) to Dorothy Espelage (PI)  
Espelage, Low, Anderson, & De La Rue, 2014



# Implications for Prevention

- Research must consider multiple contexts to identify longitudinal predictors, mediators, moderators associated with outcomes for youth who bully and 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, 2009, 2010; Espelage, 2016).

# Social-Ecological Perspective



(Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Espelage, 2014; Hong & Espelage, 2012)

# Individual Correlates of Bullying Involvement

- Depression/Anxiety
- Empathy
- Delinquency
- Impulsivity
- Other forms of Aggression
- Alcohol/Drug Use
- Positive Attitudes toward Violence/Bullying
- Low Value for Prosocial Behaviors
  - For review (Espelage & Horne, 2007; Espelage & Holt, 2012)

# Family & School Risk Factors

## ■ FAMILY

- Lack of supervision
- Lack of attachment
- Negative, critical relationships
- Lack of discipline/ consequences
- Support for violence
- Modeling of violence

## ■ SCHOOL

- Lack of supervision
- Lack of attachment
- Negative, critical relationships
- Lack of discipline/ consequences
- Support for violence
- Modeling of violence

For review (Espelage, 2012; Espelage & Horne, 2007)

# Family X School Interactions

(Merrin, Espelage, & Hong, 2016)

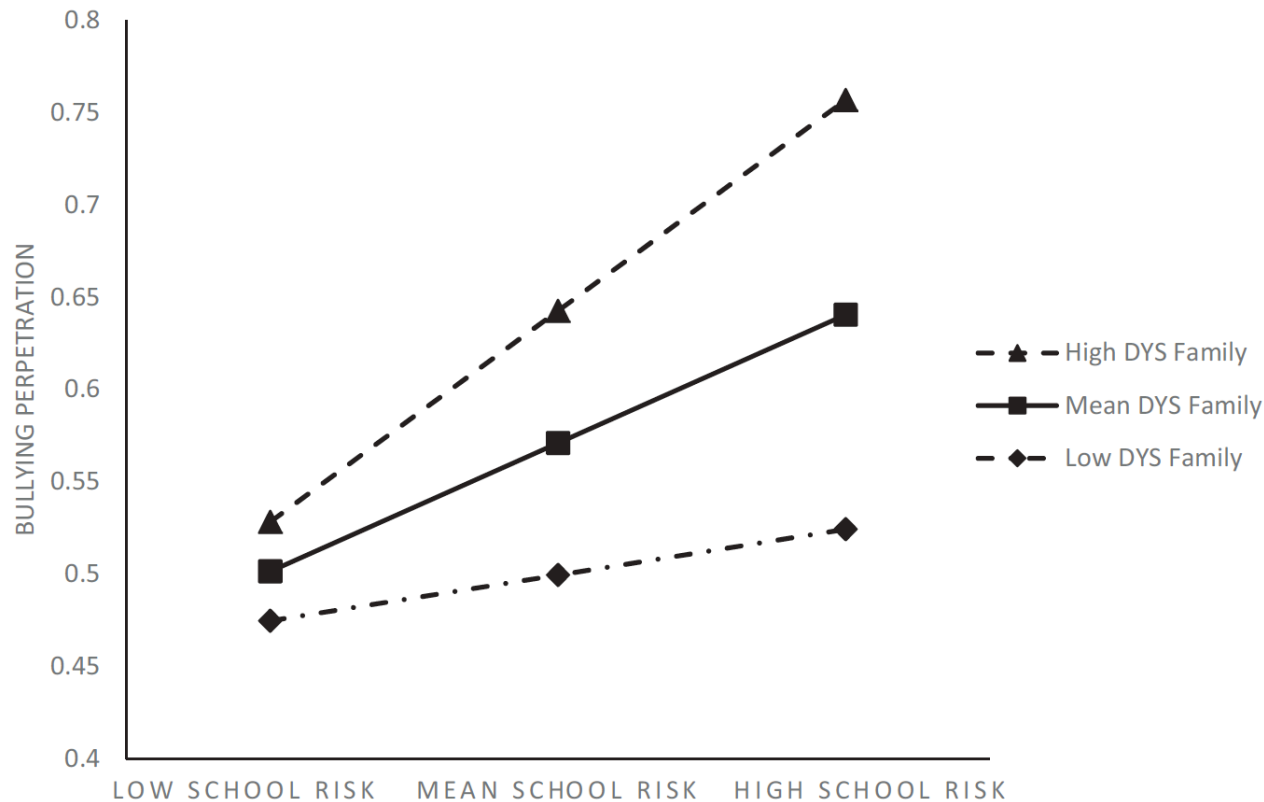


Figure 1. Interaction among between-person dysfunctional family and between-person risky school. High = +1 SD, M = average, low = -1 SD. Simple slopes: High:  $\beta = .18$ ,  $SE = .01$ ,  $p < .001$ ; M:  $\beta = .11$ ,  $SE = .01$ ,  $p < .001$ ; and low:  $\beta = .03$ ,  $SE = .01$ ,  $p < .003$ .

# Meta-Analytic Study

Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek (2010)

- Reviewed 153 studies since 1970
- Youth who bully other students: have significant externalizing behavior, social competence and academic challenges, negative attitudes toward others, family characterized by conflict
- Peer Status & Bully varied by age: Adolescents who bully have higher peer status than children who bully others



# Meta-Analysis of Bully Prevention Programs

Ttofi & Farrington, 2011

*Journal of Experimental Criminology*

- Most comprehensive meta-analysis that applied the Campbell Systematic Review procedures.
- Reviewed 44 rigorous program evaluations and randomized clinical trials (RCT) (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011).
- Almost 2/3 of the studies were conducted outside of the US or Canada.
- 1/3 of the programs were based on the Olweus Bully Prevention Program (Olweus, 1999).
- Found that the programs, on average, were associated with a 20% – 23% decrease in bullying perpetration, and a 17% – 20% decrease in victimization.
- However, smaller effect sizes were found for RCT designs in comparison to non-RCT designs.

# Meta-Analysis of Bully Prevention Programs

Ttofi & Farrington, 2011

*Journal of Experimental Criminology*

- Decreases in rates of *victimization* were associated with the following special program elements:
  - Non-punitive disciplinary methods
  - parent training/meetings
  - use of videos,
  - cooperative group work
  - greater duration and intensity of the program
- However, work with peers (e.g., peer mediation) was associated with an increase in victimization
- This iatrogenic finding is not new. Scholars have argued for a decade that peer mediation is contraindicated for bully prevention (Espelage & Swearer, 2003).

# Meta-Analysis of Bully Prevention Programs

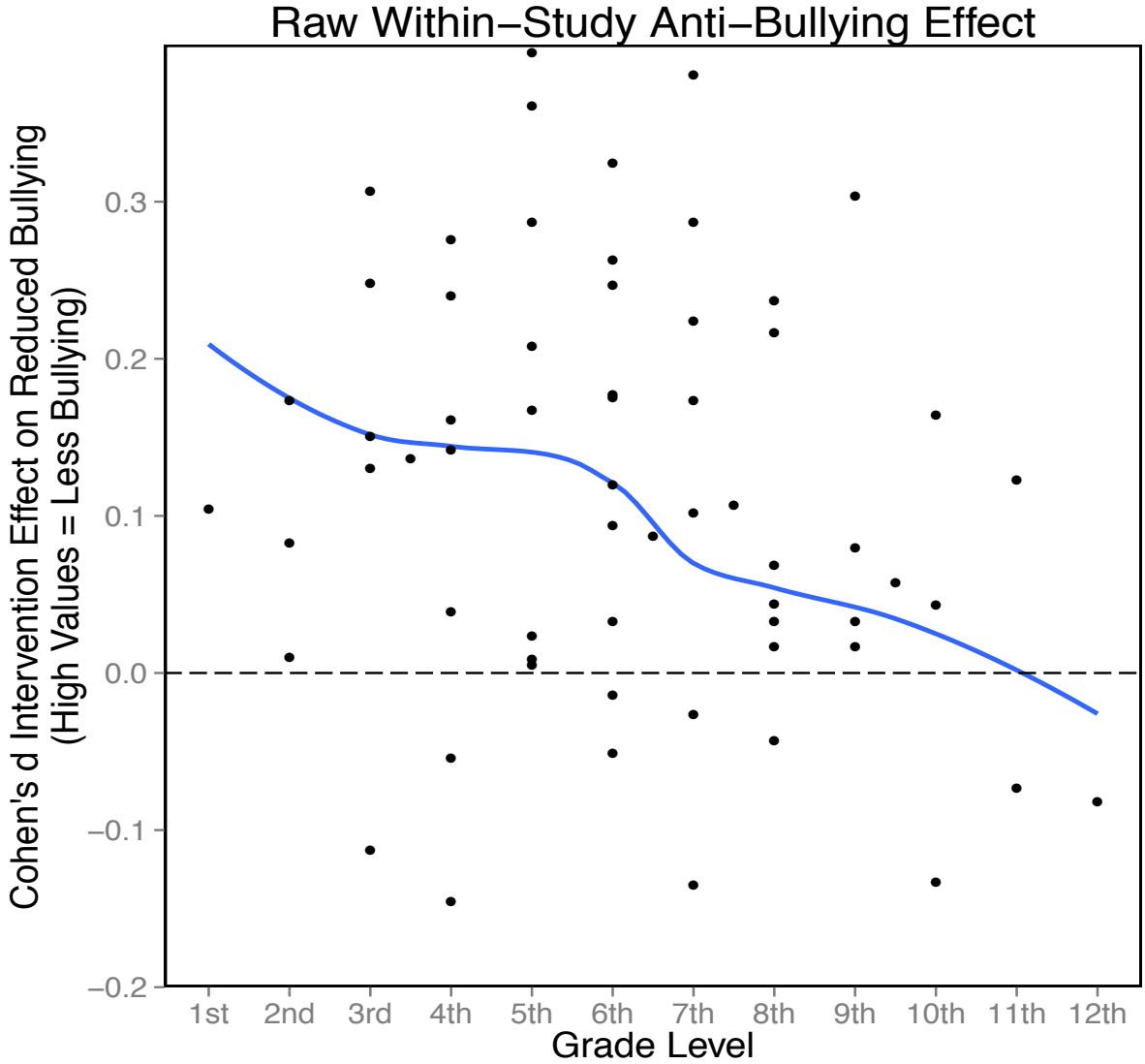
Ttofi & Farrington, 2011

*Journal of Experimental Criminology*

- Decreases in rates of *bully perpetration* for programs that included:
  - parent training/meetings
  - improved playground supervision
  - Non-punitive disciplinary methods
  - classroom management
  - teacher training
  - classroom rules
  - whole-school anti-bullying policy
  - cooperative group work
  - greater number of elements and the duration
- Programs - less effective in the US and in Canada

# Developmental Lens

Meta-Analysis:  
Yeager, Fong, Lee, &  
Espelage (2015)



# Bullying Prevention – Pushing The Field Forward

- Bullying co-occurs with other types of aggression and other risky behavior (delinquency, AOD).
- Overlapping risk and protective factors need to be targeted in school-based programs in order to address spectrum of problem behavior (Cataliano et al., 2002).

# Social-Emotional Learning

- **Self-awareness:** Ability to *accurately* recognize one's own own emotions/thoughts and how their emotions/thoughts influence their behavior.
- **Social awareness:** Ability for *perspective taking* and *empathy* with others of diverse cultures and backgrounds in one's own family, school, and community.
- **Self-management:** Ability to *regulate* one's own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors *effectively* in different situations.



# Social-Emotional Learning

- **Relationship skills:** Ability to *establish* and *maintain* healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups.
- **Responsible decision-making:** Ability to make *constructive* and *respectful* choices about personal behavior and social interactions.
- The core five social emotional learning competencies as identified by the **Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning** (CASEL, 2013). See: <http://www.casel.org>

# Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

- SEL focuses on the systematic development of a core set of social and emotional skills that help youth more effectively handle life challenges, make better decisions, and thrive in both their learning and their social environments through a climate that supports the practicing of skills.
- A meta-analysis of 213 programs found that if a school implements a quality SEL curriculum, they can expect better student behavior and an 11 percentile increase in test scores (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).

# Taylor et al. (2017) Meta-analysis

- Meta-analysis of 82 school-based, universal social and emotional learning (SEL) interventions involving 97,406 K-12 students
- Follow-up outcomes demonstrates SEL's enhancement of positive youth development, including prosocial behaviors.

# Social Emotional Learning and Future Health

- “Non-cognitive ability to self-control in childhood was predictive of adult outcomes ranging from physical health to crime to substance abuse.”

(Moffitt et al. , 2011, as cited in Jones et al., 2015)

- Jones et al.(2015) found statistically significant associations between teacher’s measured Social Emotional Skills during kindergarten and young adults outcomes in education, employment, criminal activity, substance use, and mental health.

# Impact of SEL programs for early childhood populations

SEL curriculum had the greatest effect compared with controls on:

- Children's skills related to social competence and behavior regulation (effect size range 0.21– 0.41)
  - Emotion understanding (effect size range 0.25– 0.48)
- (Landry et al., 2014).

A Mindfulness program targeting the development of SEL skills resulted in:

- A 24% gain in peer-nominated positive social behaviors.
- A gain of 15% in math achievement.
- A gain of 20% in self-reported well-being and pro-sociality.
- A reduction of 24% in peer-nominated aggressive behaviors.

(Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015 )

**MULTI-SITE EVALUATION OF SECOND STEP:  
STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH PREVENTION  
(SECOND STEP – SSTP)  
IN PREVENTING AGGRESSION, BULLYING, & SEXUAL  
VIOLENCE**

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***Journal of Adolescent Health (2013), Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology (2015);  
School Psychology Review (2015)***

Research supported by Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (#1U01/CE001677)





Committee for Children, 2008

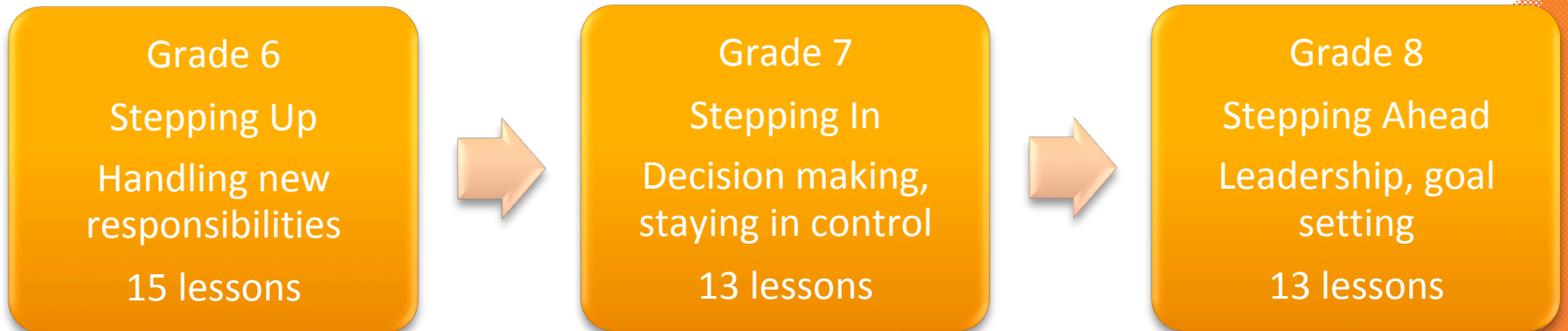
# Program Goals

- Research Foundations
  - Risk and Protective Factors
  - Bullying
  - Brain Research
  - Positive Approaches to Problem Behavior
  - Developmental Needs of Young Adolescents

# Grade Levels & Lessons

50 minutes to teach a complete lesson

Each lesson is divided into two parts that can be taught separately



# Major Study Objective

**To rigorously evaluate the overall effectiveness of the Second Step: Student Success Through Prevention program on impacting bullying behavior, peer victimization, and sexual harassment/violence among a large sample of 6<sup>th</sup> graders in a nested cohort longitudinal design.**

# Study Timeline

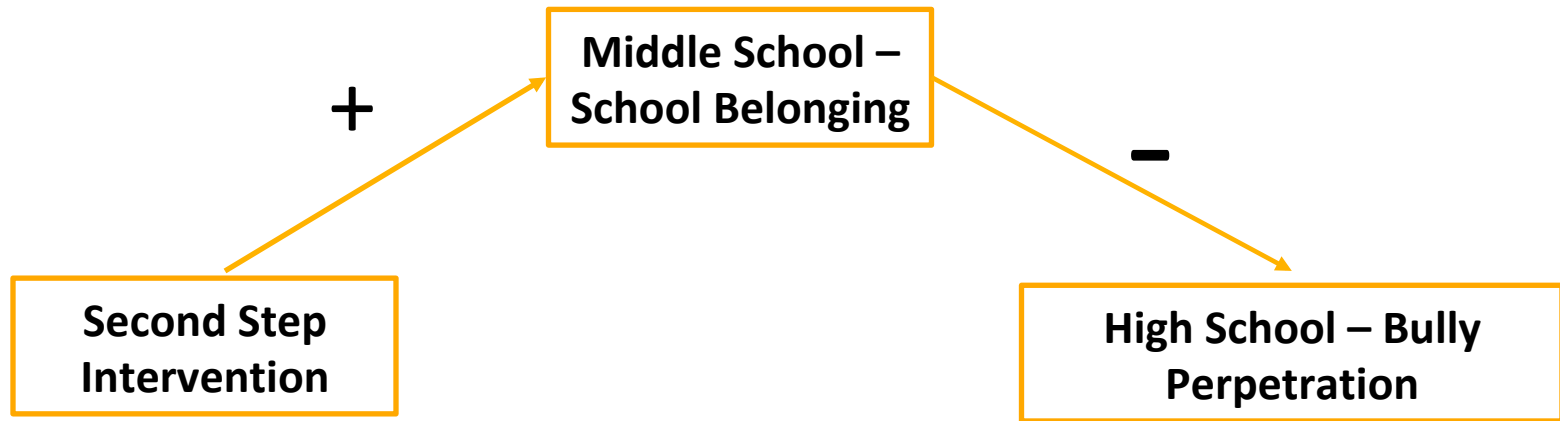
<b>Intervention Schools</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> Graders-----7 <sup>th</sup> Graders-----8 <sup>th</sup> Graders $O_1$ $X_1$ $O_2$ $X_2$ $O_3$ $X_3$ $O_4$					
<b>Comparison Schools</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> Graders-----7 <sup>th</sup> Graders-----8 <sup>th</sup> Graders $O_1$ $O_2$ $O_3$ $O_4$					
	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>
<b>O = Assessment</b> <b>X = Intervention</b>	<b>Year 1</b> <b>(2010-11)</b>		<b>Year 2</b> <b>(2011-12)</b>		<b>Year 3</b> <b>(2012-13)</b>	

# Results – Middle School

- Reductions in physical aggression, bullying, cyberbullying, homophobic name-calling, & sexual harassment across three-year middle school study (Espelage et al., 2014, 2015, 2016).
- Greater reductions when teachers implemented with fidelity & engaged with program as they would academics (Polanin & Espelage, 2015).

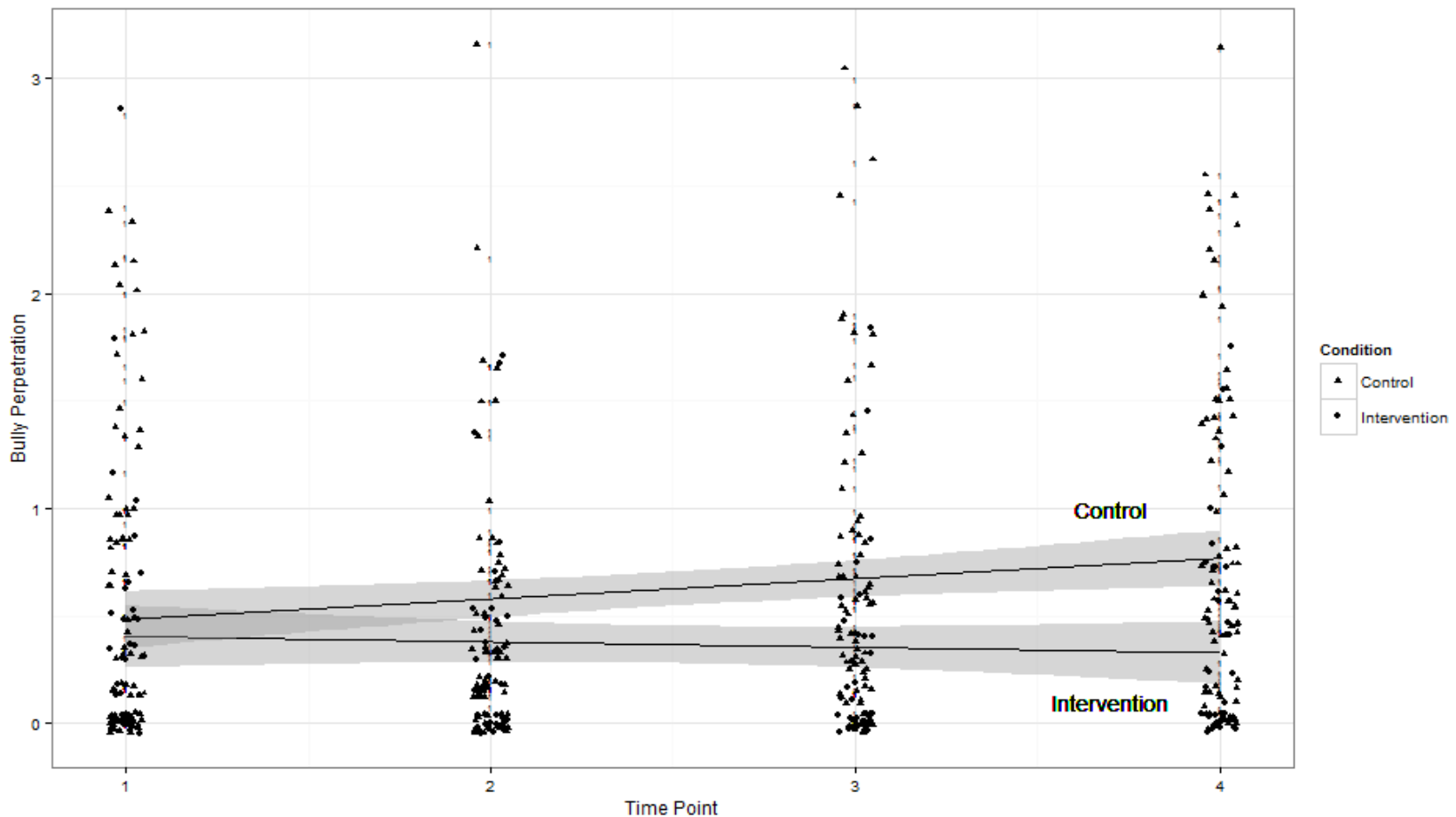


# Results – High School Effects



Individuals in the treatment group reported significantly higher levels of growth in school belonging from T1 – T4 ( $b = .013, p = .042$ ), growth in school belonging was in turn associated with reductions in growth in bullying perpetration from T5 – T7 ( $b = -.147, p = .067$ ); Espelage et al., 2017.

# Students with Disabilities – Bully Perpetration (Espelage, Rose, & Polanin, 2015; 2016)



# Teacher/Staff Perceptions of School Culture: Links to Student Reports of Bullying, Victimization, Aggression, & Willingness to Intervene

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**Joshua Polanin, Ph.D.**

**Sabina Low, Ph.D.**

*School Psychology Quarterly (2014)*

**This research was supported by Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (#1U01/CE001677) to Dorothy Espelage (PI)**

# School Culture Matters

- “school policies, attitudes and behaviors of teachers, administrators and the student body, and the overall atmosphere or school ethos, determine the internal life or social, emotional, and motivation climate of the school.” (Kasen et al., 2004).

# School Environment Scale

**Six scales emerged from factor analyses, measuring teacher/staff PERCEPTIONS OF:**

- **Student intervention (5 items;  $\alpha = .83$ )**
- **Staff intervention (5 items;  $\alpha = .89$ )**
- **Aggression being a problem (5 items;  $\alpha = .80$ )**
- **School is doing professional development/  
administrator support (8 items;  $\alpha = .90$ )**
- **Positive school climate overall (7 items;  $\alpha = .85$ )**
- **Gender Equity/Intolerance of Sexual Harassment (7  
items;  $\alpha = .79$ )**

# Final Multi-level Model

Variable	Bullying Perpetration		Peer Victimization		Physical Aggression		Willingness to Intervene	
	$\beta$ (SE)	B	$\beta$ (SE)	B	$\beta$ (SE)	B	$\beta$ (SE)	B
Intercept	.39 (.03)**	-	.96 (.04)**	-	.96 (.05)**	-	2.03 (.04)**	-
Individual								
Female	-.03 (.02)	-.03	-.05 (.03)	-.05	-.20 (.03)**	-.21	.14 (.02)**	.14
Mother's Education	.01 (.01)	.01	.01 (.03)	.03	-.01 (.01)	-.03	.02 (.01)**	.08
White	.17 (.02)**	-.15	.11 (.05)*	.10	-.51 (.05)**	-.47	.18 (.03)**	.17
Hispanic	-.17 (.02)**	-.17	-.23 (.05)**	-.23	-.47 (.05)**	-.46	.09 (.03)**	.09
Asian	-.22 (.04)**	-.07	-.13 (.07)	-.04	-.64 (.06)**	-.21	.19 (.05)**	.06
Bi-racial	.11 (.03)**	-.08	-.01 (.08)	-.01	-.29 (.05)**	-.2	.12 (.03)**	.08
School-level								
Student Intervention	.15 (.14)	.04	-.03 (.18)	-.01	.19 (.20)	.05	-.07 (.10)	-.02
Staff Intervention	.15 (.10)	.04	.30 (.22)	.07	.02 (.19)	.01	-.02 (.11)	-.01
Aggression Problem	-.07 (.08)	-.04	-.14 (.12)	-.08	.09 (.12)	.05	<b>-.18 (.06)**</b>	-.10
School Commitment to Bully Prevention	<b>-.20 (.06)**</b>	<b>-.13</b>	<b>-.42 (.09)**</b>	<b>-.27</b>	<b>-.17 (.08)*</b>	-.11	.08 (.05)	.05
Positive Teacher-Staff-Student Interactions	-.01 (.11)	.01	.14 (.16)	.04	-.23 (.21)	-.07	-.13 (.08)	.02
Gender equity/intolerance of sexual harassment	<b>-.23 (.10)*</b>	-.08	<b>-.71 (.20)**</b>	-.24	-.13 (.14)	-.05	-.13 (.08)	-.05
State	.05 (.05)	.05	-.04 (.03)	-.04	.05 (.07)	.05	.03 (.04)	.03
Free/Reduced Lunch	.01 (.01)	.05	-.01 (.01)*	-.14	.01 (.02)*	.26	-.01 (.01)*	-.12
% Female	-.66 (.29)*	-.07	-.71 (.32)*	-.08	-.45 (.42)	-.05	.17 (.25)	.02
% White	.17 (.11)	.06	-.49 (.15)**	-.18	.64 (.24)**	.23	-.25 (.11)*	-.09



# Final Multi-level Model

Variable	Bullying Perpetration		Peer Victimization		Physical Aggression		Willingness to Intervene	
	$\beta$ (SE)	B	$\beta$ (SE)	B	$\beta$ (SE)	B	$\beta$ (SE)	B
Intercept	.39 (.03)**	-	.96 (.04)**	-	.96 (.05)**	-	2.03 (.04)**	-
Individual								
Female	-.03 (.02)	-.03	-.05 (.03)	-.05	-.20 (.03)**	-.21	.14 (.02)**	.14
Mother's Education	.01 (.01)	.01	.01 (.03)	.03	-.01 (.01)	-.03	.02 (.01)**	.08
White	.17 (.02)**	-.15	.11 (.05)*	.10	-.51 (.05)**	-.47	.18 (.03)**	.17
Hispanic	-.17 (.02)**	-.17	-.23 (.05)**	-.23	-.47 (.05)**	-.46	.09 (.03)**	.09
Asian	-.22 (.04)**	-.07	-.13 (.07)	-.04	-.64 (.06)**	-.21	.19 (.05)**	.06
Bi-racial	.11 (.03)**	-.08	-.01 (.08)	-.01	-.29 (.05)**	-.2	.12 (.03)**	.08
School-level								
Student Intervention	.15 (.14)	.04	-.03 (.18)	-.01	.19 (.20)	.05	-.07 (.10)	-.02
Staff Intervention	.15 (.10)	.04	.30 (.22)	.07	.02 (.19)	.01	-.02 (.11)	-.01
Aggression Problem	-.07 (.08)	-.04	-.14 (.12)	-.08	.09 (.12)	.05	<b>-.18 (.06)**</b>	-.10
School Commitment to Bully Prevention	<b>-.20 (.06)**</b>	<b>-.13</b>	<b>-.42 (.09)**</b>	<b>-.27</b>	<b>-.17 (.08)*</b>	-.11	.08 (.05)	.05
Positive Teacher-Staff-Student Interactions	-.01 (.11)	.01	.14 (.16)	.04	-.23 (.21)	-.07	-.13 (.08)	.02
Gender equity/intolerance of sexual harassment	<b>-.23 (.10)*</b>	-.08	<b>-.71 (.20)**</b>	-.24	-.13 (.14)	-.05	-.13 (.08)	-.05
State	.05 (.05)	.05	-.04 (.03)	-.04	.05 (.07)	.05	.03 (.04)	.03
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# **Teacher/Staff perceptions of school culture: Links To Student Reports Of Gender- based Bullying**

**Sarah Rinehart, M.A.**

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**Dorothy L. Espelage, Ph.D.**

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***Psychology of Violence (2015)***

**This research was supported by Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (#1U01/CE001677) to Dorothy Espelage (PI)**

# Next Steps

- **Bullydown Text-Messaging SEL middle school program** (Ybarra, Prescott, & Espelage, 2016).
- **Gender-enhanced SEL Middle School Trial** (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention #1RO1CE002340)
- **SEL, Restorative Problem-Solving/Justice, & Student-Led Campaigns** (National Institute of Justice w/Univ. of Oregon # 2015-MU-MU-K003]
- **Sources of Strength High School Suicide Prevention Evaluation for sexual violence outcomes** (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention #CE0002841-01)

# Youth-Driven Interventions

- Student voices - not incorporated into school safety planning efforts in spite of research clearly showing that someone (most often peers) often has prior knowledge of a planned tragic event.
- Students report a variety of reasons for not coming forward beforehand with that information (e.g., distrust, “snitching”).
- To take advantage of this critical information, schools need to:
  - a) involve students meaningfully in school safety planning efforts as co-equal partners along with school staff, administrators, and parents;
  - b) have an efficient, easy mechanism for reporting such information confidentially, &
  - c) assure students that their concern(s) will be promptly acted upon. In our view, such changes are likely to increase student investment and participation in keeping the school safe.

(Vincent, Espelage, Walker, et al., 2017, 2018)



# Youth-Driven Interventions

- Youth do feel that schools should work harder to establish a positive school climate.
- Adults need to pay attention to **emotional and physical safety**.
- **Youth indicated that fairness & equity issues need to be addressed directly.**
- Research shows that students in schools with positive climates are more likely to report on the situations, individuals and events that endanger a school's safety.
- Such a climate can also improve student bonding and school engagement and serve as a protective factor against a host of negative outcomes over the long term within and beyond the school context.

# Barriers to Open Communication

- Focus groups with students identified key student concerns that participants see as threats to their school's safety & open communication with adults:
  - a) bullying, harassment and aggression,
  - b) weapons, drugs and alcohol on campus,
  - c) lack of supports for students with mental health issues,
  - d) overt discrimination among identified student groups sharing certain characteristics,
  - e) relational aggression and damaging reputation, and
  - f) inequity in all aspects of education.

(Espelage et al., 2018; Vincent, Espelage, Walker, et al., 2017, 2018)

How did this make you feel?

- Frustrated 🙄
- Afraid 😨
- Depressed 😞
- Angry 😡
- Worried 😟
- Other 😐

Tell us more about this:

Type here ...

Submit



# Advocatr


The image shows a browser window displaying the Advocatr website. The browser's address bar shows the URL <https://advocatr.org>. The website's header is teal and contains the Advocatr logo on the left and navigation links for "Parents", "Teachers", and "Sign in" on the right. The main content area has a dark teal background with a pattern of white lightbulb icons. In the center, the word "ADVOCATR" is written in large white letters with a teal swoosh underneath. Below this, the text "Student Self-Empowerment Tools To Build Safe Schools" is displayed in white. At the bottom, there are three circular icons in teal, each with a corresponding title and subtitle below it: a clipboard icon for "Report AND SHARE INFORMATION", a handshake icon for "Restore RELATIONSHIPS", and a flag icon for "Campaign FOR A POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE".


ADVOCATR


Parents Teachers Sign in

**ADVOCATR**

Student Self-Empowerment Tools  
To Build Safe Schools

  
Report  
AND SHARE INFORMATION

  
Restore  
RELATIONSHIPS

  
Campaign  
FOR A POSITIVE  
SCHOOL CLIMATE



*Advocatr*

*<https://advocatr.org>*

# The Impact of Sources of Strength, a Primary Prevention Youth Suicide Program, on Sexual Violence Perpetration among Colorado High School Students

**Dorothy L. Espelage, Ph.D.**

**University of Florida**

**Peter Wyman, Ph.D.**

**University of Rochester**

**Tomei Kuehl, MPH**

**Colorado Dept. of Public Health**

**Todd Little, Ph.D.**

**Texas Tech University**

This research was supported by Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (#1U01CE002841) to Dorothy Espelage (PI)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RanDdvzHkjA>



**SOURCES**  
OF STRENGTH

Sources of Strength employs a radically strength--based approach to prevention. in schools – PEER LEADERS.

Sources of Strength focuses on developing protective factors, using a model that is innovative, interactive, and radically strength-based.

Using an active learning model, incorporating art, storytelling, small group sharing and games.

Sources of Strength explores the eight protective factors, depicted in the wheel of strength, to develop resilient individuals and communities.



**SOURCES**  
OF STRENGTH

## Program outcomes have shown:

- Increase in connectedness to adults
- Increase in school engagement
- Increase in likelihood to refer a suicidal friend to an adult
- Increase in positive perceptions of adult support
- Increased acceptability of seeking help
- Largest increases amongst students with a history of suicidal ideation



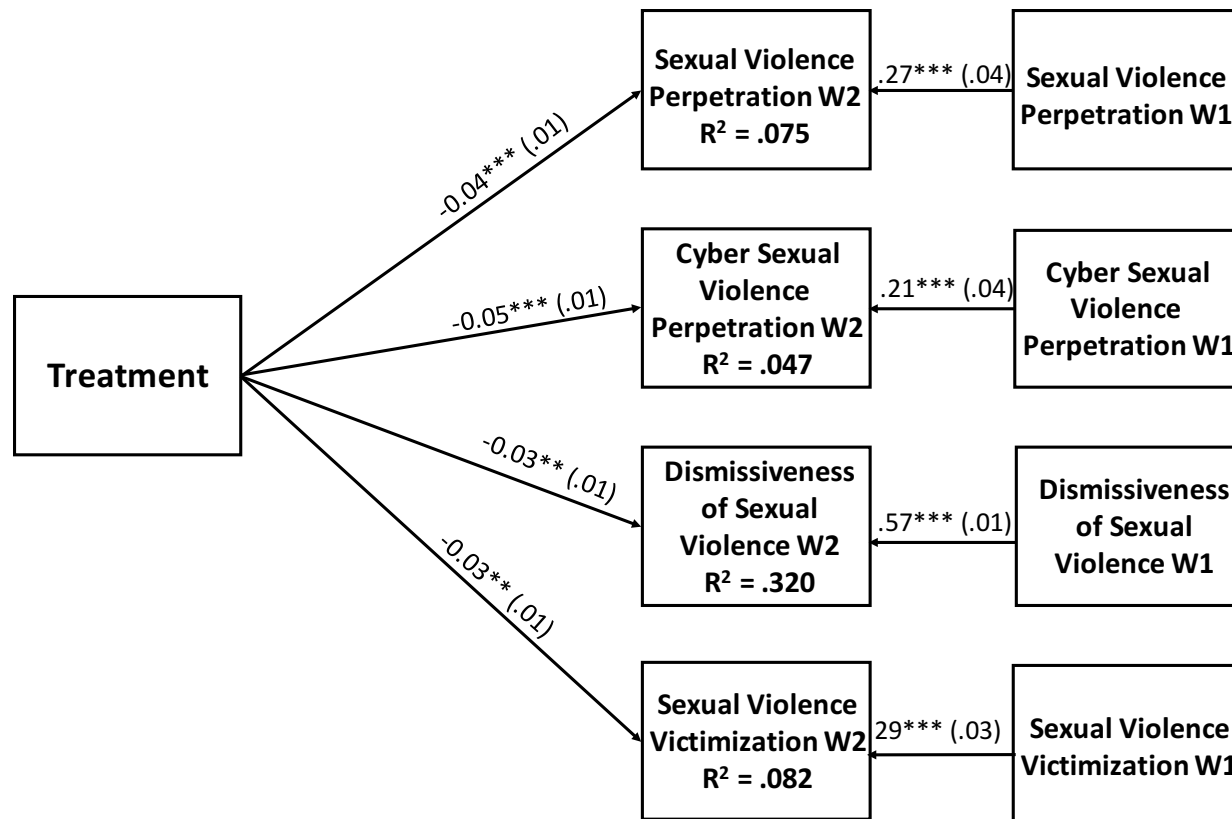
Wyman,, P.. et al.. (2010). An outcome evaluation of the Sources of Strength suicide prevention program delivered by adolescent peer leaders in high schools.. *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 100: 1653--1661.





# Sources of Strength Evaluation: Sexual Violence Outcomes

[(CDC Grant #1 U01 CE002841 - Espelage (PI))]



$N = 4600$



## ENHANCING SCHOOL SAFETY OFFICERS' EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH ONLINE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

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**UF** | Department of Psychology  
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**Funding Source:** National Institute of Justice (January 2018 – December 2021)

# School Resource Officers (SROs) = Police Officers

- SROs receive extensive training to address physical safety concerns and crime.
- Enhancing existing extensive training with training in competencies specific to **child development and youth behavioral and mental health** has potential to pave the way for nationwide progress in SRO professional development.



# Trauma-Informed Approaches to Violence Prevention

## The Paradigm Shift



Cathy S. Harris, MSW, LCSW

# Restorative Problem Solving

Although further research is needed, there are very promising findings endorsing the use of Restorative Problem Solving in our schools (Fronius et al., 2016).



# Conclusions

- Perceptions of staff matter – intolerance for sexual harassment is critical to reduce gender-based bullying and other forms of aggression.
- Social-emotional learning program – promise for reducing bullying and sexual violence perpetration
- Program to build stronger relationships in schools could be promising approach to reduce gender-based aggression.

# Conclusions

- Strong support for the Bully-Sexual Violence Pathway (homophobic name-calling mediator & moderator)
- Traditional masculinity and dismissiveness of sexual harassment – moderators
- Peer norms matter - need to target these in programs



# Conclusions

- Addressing aggression and school violence requires understanding the underlying etiology of this violence.
- Simply “hardening” of our schools has the risk of creating greater inequities, anxiety, and isolation of students, teachers, and families.
- Youth need to be authentically engaged in efforts to promote school safety, social justice, equity, and inclusion.
- All adults who interact with youth can benefit from training in trauma-informed approaches, restorative approaches, social-emotional learning, & cultural competence.