

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past 30 years, clinicians and researchers have come to understand that bullying is a serious threat to healthy child development and a potential cause of school violence (Olweus, 1978). The recent school shootings in the United States have prompted many professionals to consider bullying and its impact on students. In working with children, teachers and parents need to be aware of bullying behaviors, their potentially damaging consequences for victims, and school-based interventions for preventing bullying, coercion, and violence.

Definition

Bullying is usually defined as a form of aggression in which one or more children intend to harm or disturb another child who is perceived as being unable to defend himself or herself (Glew, Rivara, & Feudtner, 2000). Often, the perpetrator uses bullying as a means to establish dominance or maintain status (Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999; Roberts, 2000). In addition, bullying behaviors tend to occur repeatedly (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Raun, Simons-Morton, & Scheidt, 2001). Such behaviors include name-calling, physically assaulting, threatening, stealing, vandalizing, slandering, excluding, and taunting (Beale, 2001). Regardless of which behavior is chosen, bullying is marked by intense intimidation that creates a pattern of humiliation, abuse, and fear for the victim (Roberts, 2000). According to an article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, there is a growing consensus that bullying has three components: (Nansel et al., 2001).

- Bullying is aggressive behavior or intentional “harm doing” by one person or a group.
- It is carried out repeatedly and over time.
- It is targeted towards someone less powerful.

How common is Bullying?

Bullying represents a significant problem in our nation's schools. The National School Safety Center (NSSC) called bullying the most enduring and underrated problem in U.S. schools (Beale, 2001). One study found that approximately 10 percent of children in the United States experienced extreme victimization by bullying (Perry, Kusel, & Perry, 1988). In a more recent national study, nearly 30 percent of the students surveyed reported being involved in bullying in the current term as either a perpetrator or a victim (Nansel et al., 2001). This translated to 3, 708, 284 students reporting bullying and 3, 245, 904 students reporting victimization (Nansel et al., 2001).

Bullying can be considered the most prevalent form of youth violence and may escalate into extremely serious forms of antisocial behavior. For example, the surgeon general's task force on youth violence examined several longitudinal surveys of violent offending. They reported about 30 percent to 40 percent of male and 16 to 32 percent of female youths committed a serious violent offense by age 17 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS, 2001). A study by Brockenbrough and colleagues (2002) also helps link bullying and violence. These authors conducted a survey of nearly 11,000 seventh, ninth, and eleventh grade students and found that one-third of bullying victims had aggressive attitudes. The group of victims with aggressive attitudes was more likely to report that they had carried weapons to school, used alcohol, and engaged in a physical fight at school. These highly troubled aggressive victims may be at significant risk of becoming school shooters or engaging in serious long-term delinquent behavior.

The majority of bullying incidents occur in or close to school; playgrounds and hallways are two of the most common "hot spots" for altercations (Beale, 2001;Glew et al., 2000). Generally,

bullying occurs in areas where adult supervision is minimal. Whereas some studies show that bullying peaks during middle school years, others show that the percentage of students who are bullied is greatest around the second grade and declines steadily through the ninth grade (Banks, 1999; Olweus, 1993).

Generally, researchers identify four types of bullies (Beale, 2001). Physical bullies, well known in schools, are action-oriented and use direct bullying behaviors such as hitting and kicking. This is the least sophisticated type of bullying because of the ease in identifying these bullies. Physical bullies are most commonly boys. Over time, physical bullies become more aggressive and may continue to manifest bullying into adulthood.

Verbal bullies, on the other hand, use words to hurt or humiliate their victims. Bullying by this type of bully happens rapidly, making it difficult to detect and intervene. Although there are no visible scars, this type of bullying can have devastating effects.

Thirdly, there are Relational bullies who convince their peers to exclude certain children. This type of bullying happens most often with girls and can lead to feelings of rejection at a time when social connection is critical (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995).

The final type, Reactive bullies can be the most difficult to identify. These bullies tend to be impulsive, taunting others into fighting with them. Reactive bullies will fight back, but then claim self-defense.

Characteristics of Bullies

Although bullies may differ in the type of aggression they use, most bullies share common characteristics. According to the NSSC, bullies are overly aggressive, destructive, and enjoy dominating other children (Carney & Merrell, 2001; NSSC, 1995). They also tend to be hot –

tempered, impulsive, and have a low tolerance for frustration (Olweus, 1993). Bullies tend to have difficulty processing social information and often interpret other's behaviors as being antagonistic, even when they are not (Dodge, 1991; McNamara & McNamara, 1997). Although peers generally dislike bullies in adolescence, bullies tend to be popular with other aggressive children in earlier grades (Pellegrini, 1998). In fact, one study found that bullies reported greater ease in making friends than did other children (Nansel et al., 2001). Some researchers have identified popular aggressive and unpopular aggressive bully subtypes (Farmer, Leung, Pearl, Rodkin, Cadwallader, & Van Acker, 2002). Popular aggressive bullies socialize with other popular children and do not appear to encounter significant social stigma stemming from their aggression. Unpopular aggressive bullies are typically rejected or neglected by other children and may use aggression as a way to get attention. However, with their teachers and other adults, both types of bullies tend to act aggressively and may actually frighten some of these adults because of their physical strength and defiant attitude (Olweus, 1993).

Most bullies have a positive attitude toward violence, particularly as a means to solve problems or get what they want (Carney & Merrell, 2001; Glew et al., 2000). Often, bullies are “rewarded” with money and prestige as a result of their aggression (Olweus, 1993). They also use bullying behaviors to gain or maintain dominance and tend to lack a sense of empathy for their victims (Beale, 2001). Many bullies do not realize the level of their aggression (NSSC, 1995). Researchers have also found that bullies are more likely to be involved with other problem behaviors, such as drinking and smoking (Nansel et al., 2001). In addition, bullies usually lack problem-solving skills and tend to externalize their problems as a means of coping (Andreou, 2001). They also show poorer school achievement and demonstrate a dislike of the school environment, particularly in middle school (Nansel et al. 2001, also see DHHS, 2001).

Finally, a debate exists in the literature as to whether bullies suffer from low self-esteem. Some researchers suggest that bullies have average levels of insecurity (Glew et al, 2000). In contrast, other studies show that bullies have significantly lower self-esteem scores than children who had not bullied others (O'Moore & Kirkham, 2001).

Family Background of Bullies

Research suggests that the families of bullies are often troubled (Olweus, 1994). Generally, bullies' parents are hostile, reflecting, and indifferent to their children. The father figure in these homes is usually weak, if present at all, and the mother tends to be isolated and may have a permissive parenting style (Curtner-Smith, 2000; Olweus, 1978); thus, supervision of the children's whereabouts or activities tends to be minimal (Roberts, 1988). When parents are aware of their child's aggressive behaviors many dismiss them as a rite of passage or a "boys being boys"(McNamara & McNamara, 1997). Research suggests that the bully's level of aggression will increase if the caretaker continues to locate aggressive behaviors toward the child's peers, siblings and teachers (Olweus, 1993).

Discipline in these homes is usually inconsistent (Carney & Merrell, 2001). Parents of bullies tend to use power-assertive techniques to manage behavior (Pellegrini, 1998; Schwartz, Dodge, & Coie, 1993). Punishment is often physical or in the form of an angry, emotional outburst and is often followed by a long period of time in which the child is ignored (Roberts, 2000). As a result, these children learn that aggression can be used as a means to an end. Bullies imitate the aggressive behaviors they see at home to obtain their goals (Patterson, Capaldi, & Bank, 1991; Roberts, 2000). Some researchers refer to this coercive cycle of violence to explain the "continuous, intergenerational perpetuation of aggressive behavior" (Carney & Merrell, p.370).

Effects of Bullies

Many bullies experience mental health difficulties. One study found that, among bullies, nearly one-third had attention-deficit disorder, 12.5 percent had depression, and 12.5 percent had oppositional-conduct disorder (Kumpulainen, Rasanen, & Puura, 2001; see also, Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpela, & Rimpela, 2000). Also, highly aggressive bullies have been found to possess personality defects such as having a positive attitude toward physical aggression (Andreou, 2001; Olweus, 1978). Furthermore, one study found that bullies tend to engage in frequent excessive drinking and other substance use more often than victims (Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2000). Research has found that, as adults, bullies often display hyperactivity (Kumpulainen & Rasanen, 2000). Finally, being a bully has been associated with antisocial development in adulthood (Kaltiala-Heino et al.; Olweus, 1994; Pulkkinen & Pitkanen, 1993).

Children who bully others often experience long-term effects and consequences as a result of their bullying. According to NSSC, a disproportionately high number of bullies underachieve in school and later perform below potential in employment settings (Carney & Merrell, 2001; NSSC, 1995). In addition, studies have found that by age 30 bullies were likely to have more criminal convictions and traffic violations than their less aggressive peers (Roberts, 2000). A 1991 study found that 60 percent of boys who were labeled as bullies in grades 6 through 9 had at least one criminal conviction by age 24, 40 percent of these boys had three or more convictions by age 35 (Glew et al., 2000; Olweus, 1995). These adults were also more likely to have displayed aggression toward their spouses and were more likely to use severe physical punishment on their own children (Roberts, 2000). In addition, research suggests that adults who were bullies as children tend to have children who become bullies (Carney & Merrell; NSSC). Thus, aggressive behaviors may continue from one generation to the next.

Characteristics of Victimization

Victims, in contrast to bullies, are the recipients of peer abuse. The majority of bullying victims, about two –thirds, are passive or submissive; the remaining one-third appears to have aggressive attitudes (Brockenbrough et al., 2002). Physically, victims tend to be small in stature, weak, and frail compared with bullies; thus, victims are often unable to protect them from abuse (McNamara & McNamara, 1997). These physical characteristics are particularly poignant for placing boys at risk of victimization. In addition, victims may have “ body anxiety,” fear of getting hurt, and have a negative attitude toward violence. They also may be unsuccessful at sports or other physical activities (Olweus, 1993). When attacked, many victims react by crying or withdrawing, especially those in lower elementary school grades.

Victims also tend to be more quiet, cautious, anxious, insecure, and sensitive than most other children and have rather poor communication and problem – solving skills (Glew et al., 2000). As a result, these children tend to initiate conversation less than other children and lack assertiveness skills (Schwartz et al., 1993). Consequently, many victims are abandoned by other children, have few to no friends, and are often found alone on the playground or at lunchtime (Olweus, 1993). One study found that victims of bullying demonstrated poorer social and emotional adjustment, greater difficulty making friends, and fewer relationships with peers, and greater loneliness (Nansel et al., 2001). Another study found that many victims relate better to adults such as parents and teachers than their own peers (Olweus, 1993).

In addition, victims tend to suffer from poor self esteem (O’Moore & Kirkham, 2001). They often see themselves as failures-unattractive, unintelligent, and insignificant. Because of these negative cognitions, victims may wrongly blame themselves for the bullying. This unwillingness to disclose their victimization may act as a signal for bullies and may cause these

victims to be targeted repeatedly. Academically, victims may perform average or better in elementary school, but usually tend to be less successful than other children in middle school (Olweus, 1993). This deterioration in academic performance may be due to the negative impact of the bullying experience on the victim's sense of bonding or engagement with school.

Family Background of Victims

Generally, victimized children come from families that tend to be overprotective and sheltering because they realize that the child is anxious and insecure. As a result, parents may avoid conflict because they believe their child would not be able to cope. However, by avoiding conflict parents fail to teach their child appropriate conflict resolution skills (McNamara & McNamara, 1997). Many parents become overly involved in their child's activities to compensate for their child's social deficiencies. Researchers believe that the family's tendency to shelter their child may serve as both a cause and a consequence of bullying (Olweus, 1993).

Short-Term Effects of Victimization

Victims may gradually see themselves as outcasts and failures. Studies suggest that victimization has a significant positive correlation with several internalizing disorders, such as anxiety and depression (Brockenbrough et al., 2002; Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2000). This link between victimization and internalizing disorders is particularly strong for adolescent girls and may contribute to the development of eating disorders (Bond, Carlin, Thomas, Rubin, & Patton, 2001). One study found that attention-deficit disorders were common among victims (Kumpulainen et al., 2001). This connection with attention-deficit disorder is understandable considering that these children may feel the need to constantly monitor their environment, anxiously anticipating the next victimization episode.

Victims of bullying often suffer from one or more of the following: chronic absenteeism, reduced academic performance, increased apprehension, loneliness, feelings of abandonment, and suicidal ideation (Beale, 2001; Roberts & Coursol, 1996). Because the bullying most often occurs at school, many victims are reluctant or afraid to go to school and may develop psychosomatic symptoms such as headaches or stomach pains in the morning. One study found that 7 percent of U.S. eighth graders stayed home at least one day a month because of bullying (Foltz-Gray, 1996). Other researches reported that more than one in five middle school students said that they avoid restrooms at school out of fear of being bullied, and another study suggested that at least 20 percent of all students are frightened during much of their school day (Glew et al., 2000; Hazler, Hoover, & Oliver, 1992).

Victims may also experience physical injury (bruises, cuts, and scratches), torn clothing, and damaged property as a result of the bullying. To appease bullies and avoid injury, victims may request or steal extra money from family members. At night victims may experience difficulty sleeping and have nightmares (McNamara & McNamara, 1997). Victims are more likely than non-victims to bring weapons to school to feel safe or to retaliate (Brockenbrough et al., 2002). It is more common, however, for victims to internalize their problems. Unfortunately, victims sometimes attempt suicide (Olweus, 1993).

Long-Term Effects of Victimization

Victims also experience negative long-term effects as a result of childhood bullying. Because victims tend to miss many days of school, their achievement level tends to be lower than their peers and many do not achieve their academic potential (McNamara & McNamara, 1997). In addition, at age 23, former victims tend to be more depressed and have poorer self-esteem than non-victimized young adults (Olweus, 1993). Hugh-Jones and Smith (1999) found that one-

half of former victims reported long-term effects of being bullied as a child, mostly affecting their personal relationships in adulthood. Researchers have indicated that male victims experience psychosocial difficulties such as inhibition with women during adulthood and may have problems in their sexual relationships (Gilmartin, 1987). In extreme cases, former victims have carried out acts of retribution, including murder, against former bullies (Carney & Merrell, 2001).

When former victims have their own children, they may overreact to behaviors that they perceive as bullying, contributing to an intergenerational cycle of overprotection (McNamara & McNamara, 1997). This may inhibit the development of conflict resolution skills in their children, placing the children at heightened risk of becoming the next generation of victims.

Common Myths

Several common assumptions about the causes of bullying receive little or no support when confronted with empirical data. These misconceptions include the hypotheses that bullying is a consequence of large class or school size, competition for grades and failure in school, or poor self-esteem and insecurity. Many also believe erroneously that students who are overweight, wear glasses, have a different ethnic origin, or speak with an unusual dialect are particularly likely to become victims of bullying.

All of these hypotheses have thus far failed to receive clear support from empirical data. The accumulated research evidence indicates that personality characteristics or typical reaction patterns, in combination with physical strength or weakness in the case of boys, are important in the development of bullying problems in individual students. At the same time, environmental factors such as the attitudes, behavior and routines or relevant adults- in particular, teachers and

principals- play a crucial role in determining the extent to which bullying problems will manifest themselves in a larger unit, such as a classroom or school.

Proven Programs

Bullying has been with us forever. That may lead some people to conclude there is nothing that can be done to prevent it. While eliminating all bullying may be unrealistic, research shows that as much as half of all bullying can be prevented (Olweus, Limber, & Mehalic, 1999) and that the young people with the most severe aggressive behaviors can benefit the most from efforts to reduce bullying and aggression (Stoolmiller, Eddy, & Reid, 2000).

Anti-bullying programs strive to put more young people onto a trajectory that sends them in the direction of success in school, strong social ties, and productive lives. This is a trajectory that also lifts them above failure, violence, and ultimately prison (Olweus, 1993). This is not easy, and overly simplistic programs are unlikely to be effective. Research should be continually employed to design, test, and replicate new and existing anti-bullying programs so they can have the greatest impact on protecting young people and the larger community. However, listed below are some anti-bullying programs which schools could implement with already proven results.

Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers (LIFT)- LIFT is an anti-aggression program that research shows produces long-term results from a ten-week intervention. LIFT is not yet as widely replicated as the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, but it has already been evaluated with both first and fifth-grade students. LIFT intervenes on three levels. Instructors offer classroom-based training in social and problem-solving skills to students. LIFT instructors also offer six training sessions to all parents so they can reinforce these skills at home. The newly learned skills are then tested on the playground where adult monitors reward individuals and groups when they practice positive behaviors, and reduce children's privileges when they fail to

control aggressive behaviors. The goal is to instill social coping strategies in the students and to create an environment that surrounds each child with parents, teachers and peers who are working together to help prevent aggression and bullying. The research results are very encouraging. Aggressive playground behavior was more than a third higher in schools that did not receive the LIFT program compared to schools that were randomly assigned to receive the LIFT program (Eddy, Reid, Fetrow, 2000). The researchers also reported, “the most aggressive children improved the most” (Stoolmiller, Eddy, & Reid, 2000). The results were just as impressive three years after the intervention. First graders who did not receive the intervention were shown in fourth grade to have dramatically higher levels of inattentive, impulsive and hyperactive behaviors than LIFT participants (Eddy, Reid, Fetrow, 2000). The fifth graders who did not receive the program were 59 percent more likely by eighth grade to have established a pattern of drinking alcohol, and were twice as likely to have been arrested during middle school as those who received the LIFT program (Eddy, Reid, Stoolmiller, Fetrow, 2000).

The Incredible Years- it may seem premature to say some pre-school or first grade children are serious bullies or are suffering from an excess of aggression. However, University of Washington professor notes that various studies show seven to twenty percent of preschool and early school-age children have levels of disruptive, aggressive behaviors severe enough to qualify for a mental health diagnosis (Webster-Stratton, Mihalic, Fagan, Arnold, et al. 2001). The Incredible Years program was originally designed for children aged two to eight with high levels of aggressive behavior, including but not limited to bullying. The program recognizes that to reach the children, you also have to reach their parents, so it trains parents and children in problem-solving skills and non-aggressive social skills so children can learn to get along with others and make friends. Webster-Stratton reports that this program has “been able to stop the

cycle of aggression for approximately two-thirds” of the targeted families receiving help (Webster-Stratton, 2001).

The Aggressors, Victims and Bystanders- This program has been chosen by the Department of Education as a promising program for its Safe and Drug Free Schools Program (U.S. Department of Education, Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools Expert Panel, 2002). An evaluation of the program found that it significantly reduced bystander support for aggression through either passive acceptance (e.g. letting a fight start without doing anything to stop it) or active encouragement (e.g. encouraging other kids to fight) (Slaby, Wilson, Devos, 1994). This program, typically delivered in 12 classroom sessions, puts a special emphasis on the role of bystanders in preventing school violence or bullying.

Peter Yarrow, of the music group Peter, Paul, and Mary founded *Operation Respect*- This program. Former Maryland Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend has recently joined the effort as president. A preliminary survey showed that a high percentage of teachers/counselors reported lessened bullying (92 percent), name calling (86 percent), and hostility, hitting and angry explosions (85 percent in their classrooms as a result of the anti-bullying program. The survey also indicated this program may be especially effective with elementary school children (Metis Associates, Inc., 2002). Operation Respect has already provided workshops for 20,000 educators (Operation Respect, 2003).

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program-The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program was first developed in Norway, following the suicide of three 10-14 year old boys who had been bullied (Olweus, Limber, & Mihalic, 1999). It has now been implemented in several hundred schools in the United States and around the world, including an evaluation that included 39 schools in six school districts in South Carolina (Limber, 2003). The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

begins with a school survey to determine how common bullying is, so parents, teachers and especially principals and administrators can begin to assess the extent of bullying. Next training is held before the school year starts with the school principal, the anti-bullying coordinator for that area or school district, other school personnel (including non teaching staff), and selected students and parents. This further raises awareness and begins the education process on what works to prevent bullying. Regular school rules against bullying are established, class meetings on bullying are held, and teachers are encouraged to establish positive consequences for those who help prevent bullying and negative consequences for those who engage in bullying. Adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways and other specific areas where the bullying is likely to take place is implemented and adults are also urged not just to be present, but also “ to intervene quickly and decidedly in bullying situations.” Parents are included in the school-wide effort. Finally, individual interventions are initiated with individual bullies and victims. The talks with bullies often include their parents and reinforce the message that bullying will not be allowed. The victims are typically reluctant to get adults involved, so in the meetings with victims and their parents the key message is that there are adults at the school who “ are both willing and able to give (the victim) any needed help. “ The goal of the program is to ensure that the whole school, and not just a few teachers, will come together and act to make sure students know that “ bullying is not accepted in our class/school, and we will see to it that it comes to an end” (Olweus, Limber, & Mihalic, 1999).

Advice from the Justice Department

- For schools testing new programs, the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) office in the Department of Justice offers some advice in its report, *Bullying in School* (2002), by Rana Sampson. The report makes a number of suggestions, including:

- The school principal should be actively involved in the anti-bullying efforts. Without the principal's support the program is likely to have only limited impact.
- A "whole school" approach such as the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program should be used. Such an approach enlists the entire school in a number of ways and therefore is more likely to be effective than programs that address bullying from only one or two directions.
- Clear, anti-bullying rules need to be established and publicized.
- Adequate supervision of young people is essential. This is especially necessary on playgrounds and in hallways where most incidents of bullying take place. Often the problem is that adult supervisors do not intervene routinely to prevent bullying and teach positive social skills. In other cases, enough supervisors are not available to adequately protect children from bullying. If that is the case, that also needs to be addressed.
- These efforts should be maintained over time. This cannot be a one-time effort. Some aspects of the program should be repeated once a year, while others, such as closer supervision of hallways and playgrounds, should continue throughout the school year (Sampson, 2002).

What Doesn't Work?

The COPS report also advised against relying on some strategies such as:

- Peer mediation approaches. As Sue Limber of Clemson University warns "bullying involves harassment by powerful children of children with less power"(Limber, Flerx, Nation, Melton, 1998). Therefore, Limber argues, mediation approaches might even further victimize bullied children by assuming they have the power, without adult intervention, to prevent the bullying.

- Zero tolerance policies. The report (COPS) says that the zero tolerance approach “may result in a high level of suspensions without full comprehension of how behavior needs to and can be changed. It does not solve the problem of the bully, who typically spends more unsupervised time in the home or community if suspended or expelled.”
- Simply advising victims to “stand up to bullies.” This can be unproductive or even dangerous without adequate adult support to prevent bullying in the schools (Sampson, 2002).

Money Well Spent

The proven programs are relatively inexpensive, especially considering the results they deliver. Often, much of the cost of setting up of the programs and the training of students can largely be covered by existing funding streams that already pay for the salaries of coordinators, counselors, and teachers for whom this work becomes part of their jobs (Snyder, 2003).

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program’s one-time training and supply costs total only a few thousand dollars in upfront costs. For example, the cost of training the trainer who can then administer the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program over many years in a large school district or county is approximately \$4,000 dollars (Snyder, 2003). Personnel costs for administering the program can typically be covered by funding for the Safe and Drug Free Schools program. There are Safe and Drug Free Schools coordinators in virtually every school district or county in America who can be drawn on to set up and administer the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. These personnel are already fully funded and the program is already one of the scientifically proven approaches approved for these coordinators to use in keeping schools safe and drug free. Once they are fully trained, they can implement the program in many schools for relatively little additional cost over the years.

These proven programs are relatively inexpensive, but it is important that they be fully implemented as they were designed. This typically requires additional funds for technical assistance and monitoring to insure that the implementation is done well, with the quality and intensity required to achieve expected results.

While the cost of the proven programs is relatively modest, some school administrators may be tempted to fund even less expensive anti-bullying programs that are not as comprehensive. Many of these “bargain” anti-bullying programs do not deliver the same results, and that can be costly. The costs of not adequately addressing problems at the right time can be very high:

- Paying for a child with emotional problems to be in a special education classroom for twelve years can cost \$100,000 dollars over and above the regular cost of educating that one child (Bagnato, Smith-Jones, McClomb & Kilroy, 2002).
- A 1998 study by professor Mark A. Cohen of Vanderbilt University estimated that each high-risk juvenile prevented from adopting a life of crime could save the country between \$ 1.7 million and \$2.3 million dollars (Cohen, 1998).

When proven anti-bullying programs can so effectively reduce expensive problems such as these, it is clear they will easily pay of themselves many times over.

When children are repeatedly victimized and little is done to stop it that is not only sad, but also dangerous. Too many of these children will go on to kill themselves. Some will turn their guns on other students. When bullies are allowed to progress through school without their intimidating and violent behavior being addressed, they often become a danger not only to the school, but also to the whole community. Without intervention, too many of these chronic bullies will begin carrying weapons, and too many will grow up to be chronic criminals.

There is now scientific proof that much can be done to prevent bullying and to help both the victims and the bullies. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is a researched – based program that has been shown to result in:

- A 30 to 70 percent reduction in student reports of being bullied and bullying others; peer and teacher ratings of bully/victim problems have yielded similar results.
- Significant reductions in student reports of general antisocial behavior such as vandalism, fighting, theft, and truancy.
- Significant improvements in classroom social climate, as reflected in students’ reports of improved order and discipline, more positive social relationships, and more positive attitudes toward schoolwork and school. (Olweus, Limber, & Mihalic, 1999).

Two types of evaluation design have been used to assess the program. Several evaluations used what is called an “age-cohort design” with time-lagged contrasts between adjacent but age-equivalent cohorts. One strength assumed of this quasi-experimental design is that several of the cohorts serve both as intervention and control/baseline groups (in different comparisons). In one evaluation project, a traditional control group design was used (Olweus, 2001).

For research done in this study, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is the program chosen for implementation in grades three – eight in an elementary/middle school setting. Chapter 3 will explain the components of the program and how the implementation process took place at the particular school. Chapter 4 will show evidences of findings from administration of the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (1996), school personnel perceptions and comparisons of discipline referral rates. Lastly, Chapter 5 will discuss how important professional staff development should be for teachers on the topic of bullying within school settings.

