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An Analysis of Bullying Behaviors at  
E. B. Stanley Middle School in Abingdon, Virginia

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A dissertation  
presented to  
the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis  
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Doctor of Education

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by  
Elizabeth Wright Litz  
December 2005

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Dr. Jasmine Renner, Chair  
Dr. W. Hal Knight  
Dr. Louise L. MacKay  
Dr. Jack Rhoton

Keywords: Adolescence, Bully, Bullying Behavior, Bystander,  
Middle School, School Climate, Victim

## ABSTRACT

An Analysis of Bullying Behaviors at  
E. B. Stanley Middle School in Abingdon, Virginia

by

Elizabeth Wright Litz

Many stakeholders in American education are concerned about the frequency of reported bullying incidents within schools in general and middle schools in particular. This nationwide problem has manifested itself in many ways over the past few decades. These manifestations include, but are not limited to, increased gang violence, school shootings, and attendance problems due to student concerns over safety.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the bullying behaviors of a single class of students as they progressed through E. B. Stanley Middle School in Abingdon, Virginia. Data were gathered over the course of three consecutive school years beginning in August 2002 and continuing through May 2005. Reported bullying incidents were analyzed based upon gender of students, grade level of students, frequency of bullying behaviors, types of bullying behaviors (verbal, physical, or emotional), and location of incidents (bus, classroom, hallway, or other).

The study offers a valuable insight into the bullying incidents that occur within E. B. Stanley Middle School. It also offers a number of recommendations to combat this problem in middle level schools. Effective implementation of bullying prevention programs will need to involve all school stakeholders in order to be successful. Students have a right to feel safe at school as they grow and mature into adulthood. It is the duty of all schools to provide them that safe and secure atmosphere.

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my entire family, both genetic and extended. I have had the good fortune to be married to Steve for the past eight years. He has been my “cheerleader” through two different sessions of graduate work. When I became a principal, I am sure he was certain that the tuition bills would stop; he was incorrect in this assumption. However, with the completion of this dissertation, we may be through with tuition until Andrew begins college. Andrew is my “mama’s boy”, who made me giggle and smile even though I may not have felt like it in the midst of this research. He, and other boys and girls like him, are the reason I am an educator. I want to make the world a better place for all of them.

My “genetic” family has been with me through the trials and tribulations of growing up, gaining employment, and becoming a wife and mother. I could not have accomplished all of my educational dreams without their support. My Mom and Dad are the best role models I could have had; both were teachers in public education. My brother Lee and his family gave me the humor to keep going with this enormous project. My aunt Nancy Carter, an educator for over 30 years, gave me a love of reading and all things related to school.

My extended family includes my in-laws. Their willingness to feed Steve and Andrew on many Thursday evenings when I had class saved me countless nights of worry. Also, my school family, which includes all those faculty, staff, students, and parents at E. B. Stanley Middle School; you are all truly the reason I come to school each day with a smile on my face.

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A special thank you goes to all of the students, faculty, staff, and associates of mine at E. B. Stanley Middle School and in the Washington County Public School System. Without their support, this work would never have been completed.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

*The first day of school is a time of excitement, reunion with friends, and nervous energy for students and teachers alike. As Tyler entered the large double glass doors of his new middle school, his eyes widened with fearful anticipation. He had attended the new student orientation with his parents the previous night and was prepared to meet the challenges that lay ahead of him. He knew that the classwork would be more intense than in elementary school but as a high achieving student, this did not bother him. He was ready to face the day.*

*Unknown to Tyler, a larger sixth grade boy was entering the building close behind him. He had ridden a different bus to school and was just as excited to be there as the rest of his peers. However, this boy had a different reason to anticipate the day. This student was known as the bad boy of his elementary school. He was academically poor and physically larger than his classmates. As he entered the long hallway, he was scouting out potential victims. He would become the bully of the sixth grade.*

*The first day of school passed unceremoniously and the students left feeling a great sense of accomplishment. In fact, the rest of the first week of school passed without incident. Tyler was excelling in his classes, as usual. His classmates learned they could ask him for help with difficult concepts and he would gladly assist them. They appreciated his kindness and willingness to be their tutor. Although he was physically smaller than the rest of the class, they quickly bonded with his winning personality and boyish charm. At least the students on his team felt that way.*

*During class changes, in the hallway, during lunch, in PE, at recess, and in exploratory classes, all students from the five sixth grade teams came together. This helped them to learn the names and personalities of their peers from all three feeder elementary schools and to begin to interact with the students with whom they would share the next seven years of public education. This also gave the bully a chance to spot his prey. During the first few days of school he had maintained a low profile. This helped establish him with his teachers and classmates. During restroom breaks and class changes, he began enlisting others of similar personality to become a part of his clique. Although these boys were not as large physically as the bully, they were good followers and would complete any instruction he gave them. Tyler became their favorite target for terror.*

*As the year progressed, the students became more familiar with each other. They realized they could turn to Tyler for academic help in class but they needed to stay far away from him during interactions with other teams. They had to do this for their own survival. Tyler had become the favorite victim of the bully and his gang. He was pushed into walls, tripped, called names, chastised for using a rolling backpack, and laughed at because he brought his lunch, as well as any other means of degradation the gang could dream up.*

*Tyler soon began to dread going to school each day. His grades began to fall. His teachers noticed that he was not as popular with his classmates because of his withdrawn nature. His parents noticed that he was eating more at home, while the teachers on lunch duty realized that he would not eat at all during lunchtime. Tyler was exhibiting the classic symptoms of a bullying victim. Something had to be done to combat this problem or he would be scarred for life.*

*Tyler's older sister Haley had entered the same middle school two years earlier. She was now in the eighth grade and had finally come to be respected by her peers. When she came through the double glass doors on her first day of sixth grade, she was the bully looking for a victim. She began her reign of terror much the same way the bully in her brother's class had. She started the year quietly and soon was popular with a large group of girls. She then began to include or exclude others from her clique based on her personal whims.*

*Haley would write notes in class that she kept well-hidden from her teachers. She was a bright girl and wanted to maintain a low profile with adults. She completed all her assignments, both in class and at home and soon became a teacher favorite. This increased her popularity with her peers and also made her actions as a bully more devastating to those around her. If Haley were mad at a student or told someone not to be a his or her friend; if she wrote a note about someone or sent one to chastising someone's behavior, looks, or clothes; that child's social life was doomed and feelings were crushed.*

*Now that Haley was in the eighth grade, she had established her popularity within her peer group and with the adults in the building. She stopped her bullying practices as her middle school years passed because she came to realize the devastation she had caused to others. As a result of her changed attitude, she was even more popular with the entire eighth grade class. Consequently, she knew that she had to do something to protect her younger brother. She soon enlisted the help of the school administration and together they worked to begin a Bully Busters program in the school. Only time would tell if they had been successful.*

The scenario of Tyler and Haley could occur in any middle school. Researchers showed that classic bullying behavior peaks during the middle school years and then began to decrease as students became more mature (Banks, 1997). Although this is a relatively large problem in all

middle schools, little is being effectively done to curtail or even stop this educational crisis. There are two significant reasons that bullying behaviors in adolescents must be addressed: first, the prevalence of bullying and the harm that it causes are seriously underestimated by many children and adults, and, second, the nature of bullying does not lend itself to the same interventions that may effectively reduce other types of conflict among children (Limber & Nation, 1998).

Bullying in schools has often been referred to as a part of growing up. During the transition from elementary school into middle school, bullying incidents tended to increase due to student desire to fit in with new peer groups (Espelage & Holt, 2000). In the past, bullying was defined as an evaded curriculum in schools (Sjostrom & Stein, 2002); everyone knew that the behavior was present but it was rarely discussed in an age-appropriate manner. Bullying is a learned behavior that occurs across all demographic groups at the middle school level (Espelage & Holt). These behaviors reach their peak in intensity and occurrence during the middle school years and then level off or decline as students mature and find their niches with their peers.

Traditionally, males and females tend to use different methods to bully peers. Colorosa (2003) stated that these differences were largely due to the socialization tendencies of the genders. According to Colorosa, males tended to surround themselves with like-minded associates and generally used physical aggression as a means of establishing themselves as leaders with other male peers and with females. Females tended to gather closely knit groups together and used relational aggression as a form of bullying toward other females. Both males and females employed verbal abuse as a method of intimidation.

Students identified as bullies as early as elementary school often continued antisocial behaviors as they reached adulthood and most had criminal records by their 30s (Hoover &

Oliver, 1996). By age 24, approximately 60% of identified bullies had criminal convictions (Coy, 2001). Students who were known as bullies were not the only ones who suffered the consequences of their actions. The victims of school bullying may become violent themselves, as in the case of the Columbine shooters (Luce, 2000), they may become truant to school (Lumsden, 2002) or they may even drop out of school as a result of their terror. Bystanders to the act of bullying may seem unaffected by these behaviors but by witnessing such actions, their self-confidence and self-esteem might become eroded until they no longer feel a moral responsibility to act in defense of their peers (Colorosa, 2003).

#### Statement of the Problem

Bullying incidents in schools have led to several changes in policy in many school districts (Espelage & Holt, 2000). E. B. Stanley Middle School is the largest middle school in Washington County, Virginia. It has a varied student population and combines students from three feeder elementary schools as they enter the sixth grade. This merging of students creates a new social dynamic for these adolescents, and many socially inappropriate and bullying behaviors are observed by the adults in the school. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate reported bullying behaviors of a single class of students as they progress through E. B. Stanley Middle School in Abingdon, Virginia.

#### Significance of the Study

Bullying behaviors can take place whenever two or more students interact. However, bullying does not occur when there is a conflict between people of equal or similar power (Rigby, 2003). Student aggression can hinder the learning and social development of all those

who participate or are witness to the event. Bullying behaviors in this middle school were tracked for a single class of students as they progressed through the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. By selecting useful information from school-collected data, determinations of appropriate actions, circumstances, and consequences were readily available for all those involved directly in the education of the students at E. B. Stanley Middle School.

This study gives insight to the administration, teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders of the school regarding the predictability of student behaviors in relation to grade level peers. This provides baseline information that can assist in making school-based changes, if necessary, in teacher in-service about bullying behaviors, adult responses to student behavior, disciplinary actions by administration, student counseling topics, and improvement in student safety. It can assist in administrative policy-making and implementation of new policies regarding middle school bullying behaviors. In addition, this study suggests an environment more conducive to student learning, increased feelings of student safety while at school, and personal growth and development for all those within the school.

#### Limitations, Delimitations, and Assumptions

A limitation of this study was that not all bullying behaviors are witnessed by adults or reported by students. In addition, some bullying behaviors might have been identified as other student aggression problems and not classified primarily as bullying. These factors could have affected the recording of bullying behaviors throughout the three year period.

This study was delimited to a single class of students at E. B. Stanley Middle School in Abingdon, Virginia. The data were gathered over the course of three consecutive school years

by the same administration and a relatively stable teacher population. Discipline methods remained consistent over the three years of the study.

It was assumed that all discipline records remained confidential and that none were changed as a way to skew the findings of this study.

### Research Questions

Question 1: Do males and females differ in the number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors?

Question 2: Do males and females differ in the number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors at certain grade levels?

Question 3: Do grade levels differ in their frequency of discipline referrals for bullying?

Question 4: Are the frequencies of discipline referrals for bullying incidents related to student location?

These four research questions are associated with the following null hypotheses:

HO1: There is no difference in the number of verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors exhibited by males and females.

HO2A: There is no difference in the number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors exhibited by males and females in the sixth grade.

HO2B: There is no difference in the number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors exhibited by males and females in the seventh grade.

HO2C: There is no difference in the number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors exhibited by males and females in the eighth grade.  
by grade level.

HO3: There is no difference in the frequency of reported bullying behaviors by grade level.

HO4: There is no difference in the number of reported bullying incidents as related to student location.

### Definition of Terms

**Bullying:** Occurs repeatedly over an extended period of time and may include a wide variety of negative behaviors among peers (Olweus, 1993).

**Bullying Activities:** Include incidents defined as physical, verbal, or psychological/emotional bullying.

**Bullying Behaviors:** Include actions that occur over a period of time that may be defined as physical, verbal, or psychological bullying.

**Bystander:** Any student or adult who witnesses the act of any type of bullying (Colorosa, 2003).

**Disciplinary Action:** Includes warnings, after school detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or one-on-one class administration (only available for some special education students) as assigned by school administration at E. B. Stanley Middle School.

**Discipline Referral:** A written report presented by a teacher to the school administration for the primary purpose of disciplinary action at E. B. Stanley Middle School.

**Emotional Bullying (Relational Aggression or Psychological Bullying):** The act of using a relationship to harm others, this may include exclusion from social groups, defensive body language, eye-rolling, and pointing out differences to close associates of peers (Colorosa, 2003).

**Frequency of Bullying Behaviors:** Describe how often specific types of bullying activities are reported to the office within a single school year (as reported in the data).

Middle School (or Middle Level): Includes students in grades six, seven, and eight, generally ranging in age from 10 to 15.

Other Locations: Include outside recess, cafeteria, bus duty, and class changes.

Physical Bullying: Any act that involves direct physical contact among students and may include tripping, pushing, shoving, hitting, pinching, or fighting (Colorosa, 2003).

School Administration: Includes the principal and the assistant principal.

Uniform Responses: Include the consistency of disciplinary actions assigned to students from school administration based upon reported bullying incidents.

Verbal Bullying: The most common form of bullying that includes the use of words and/or notes to degrade, demean, or intimidate peers, as well as name-calling and the start of slanderous information, typically referred to as rumors (Colorosa, 2003).

Victim (or Target): A student who is repeatedly involved in the reception of bullying behaviors by their peers (Olweus, 1993).

### Overview of the Study

This study is organized and presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 included an introduction to the problem and provided background information on the concept of school bullying. The problem was stated, the purpose and significance were explained, the limitations, delimitations, and assumptions were addressed, and specific terms to the study were defined. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature supporting the need for the study and characteristics of student bullying. Chapter 3 presents a description of the school environment in which the study took place as well as the methods and procedures used for gathering data and the procedures used to obtain and process the data. Chapter 4 includes a presentation and analysis of

the data. Chapter 5 presents a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for practice and future consideration.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction to Bullying Behaviors

Nationwide, an average of 160,000 children stayed home each school day in order to avoid being the victim of a bully (Coy, 2001). Nearly 86% of students from age 12 to 15 claimed they had been teased or bullied at least one time at school, while 11% of United States students claimed they were bullied frequently (Colorosa, 2003). A 2003 study indicated that public school students were more likely to be bullied than students attending private schools and students in rural schools were bullied more often than their counterparts in urban or suburban schools (DeVoe et al., 2004). According to Ericson (2001), bullying was common in schools, neighborhoods, and homes worldwide and encompassed a variety of negative acts carried out repeatedly over time. Bullying was considered a serious form of abuse that might lead to more severe violence and delinquency later in life (American Medical Association, 2005).

Students identified many different hurtful actions as bullying; these included physical attacks, name-calling, social exclusion, taking and damaging belongings, extortion, spreading of nasty rumors, and verbal threats (Espelage & Asidao, 2000). Bullying could be identified as a proactive aggression used to achieve a mean, usually dominance among peers (Pellegrini, 2002). It was identified as a subset of aggression and is a significant problem that may impact the physical and psychosocial health of those who are frequently bullied and those who bully their peers at an early age (Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2000a). A hostile or threatening school environment might help to explain why large numbers of students are not achieving their full potential (Preble, 2003).

Bullying had long been regarded and tolerated by adults and students alike as a way of school life or rite of passage but at the core of bullying behaviors was a larger issue of either acceptance or rejection by peers (Garbarino, 2002). America's culture made macho showdowns the socially accepted norm (Foltz-Gray, 1996). Because the tragedy at Columbine in 1999 was triggered by bullying, this method of peer terrorism was no longer being brushed off as standard teenage lore (Macy, 2003).

The American Medical Association (AMA) adopted a new anti-bullying policy that stated bullying was not just another childhood behavior that would eventually be outgrown, but rather a public health problem that could have long-term effects for both the bully and the victim (Barnett, 2002). Not only was bullying a precursor to greater and more dangerous violence, it also fostered intense misery among students (Hoover & Oliver, 1996). Spurling (2004) stated that bullying occurs at an early age and in all grade levels. Involvement in bullying might be an indicator that something was wrong in a child's life (Spivak, Prothrow-Stith, & Siddiqi, 2001).

### Environmental Issues Related to Bullying Behaviors

Bullies were not born, they were made, and students who exhibited bullying behaviors usually were victimized when they were younger (Cohen-Posey, 1995). Students who bully usually learned this tactic from observing the adults around them (Webster-Doyle, 1991). Bullies were impressed by observing someone get ahead by using power, so they try the same thing (Giannetti & Sagarese, 1997). As a learned behavior, bullying could be examined and it could be changed (Colorosa, 2003). Because students tended to learn behaviors from role models, either adults or peers, they might consider aggressive behaviors as a means of achieving their goals. These behaviors might be entrenched within peer groups, classrooms, schools,

families, and society as a whole (Espelage, 2004). Research indicated that a complex mix of individual, social, and environmental risk and protective factors interacted to foster a bullying behavior within students (American Medical Association, 2005).

Garbarino (1999) reported that there was a physiological difference between children based upon the family environment in which they lived. He stated that within “low-risk” families, in which there were few stressful events and a high effective functioning of the family unit, the children had an average heart rate of approximately 70 beats per minute. On the other hand, victims of bullying activities had a heart rate of 75 beats per minute, while bullies in had a heart rate of 62 beats per minute.

Garbarino also stated that within “high-risk” families, where there were many stressful events and a low overall effective functioning of the family unit, the majority of children exhibited a mean heart rate of 70 beats per minute. Bullying in some students could simply be an imitation of aggression shown at home (American Medical Association, 2005). In addition, Garbarino (2002) stated that some children were more vulnerable to showing their emotional violence to others due to their sensitive temperaments, as evidenced by their heart rates. Thirty-five percent of children who were abused would actually become violent at some point in their lives (Garbarino, 1999).

A large number of bullies stemmed from families where parents spend little time with children and where discipline was inconsistent and episodic (Davis, 2003). The manner in which parents dealt with their own conflicts influenced adolescent behavior (Spurling, 2004). The method in which a child was disciplined at home helped establish a pattern for his or her interaction with other children (National Education Association, 2005). Also, parents who

punished their children for not “fighting back” physically added to their social interaction problems (National Education Association, 2005).

Just as wolf packs had their alpha males and females and chickens had their pecking order, schools had their bullies (Jordan, 2000). There were many combinations of both peer and school level factors that contributed to bullying behaviors (Pellegrini, 2002). Causes of bullying included, but were not limited to, aggressive and impulsive personalities, physical size, environmental factors, poor adult supervision, lack of violence-prevention programs, not being held accountable by authorities, home environments, and exposure to violence, either through media sources or actual harm to students (Langan, 2003). Research indicated that if children were exposed to media violence they were prone to expect and anticipate violence in their own lives, therefore, becoming more desensitized to it over time (American Medical Association, 2005).

Educators discovered that children without emotional security and models of good behavior at home took longer to “train” to become civil toward their peers (Vincent, Wangaard, & Weimer, 2004). In fact, many adults bolstered themselves in the eyes of children by portraying harmful media role models (Sandmaier, 2005). Olweus (1995) found that arguments, discord, and conflicts within the family unit created insecure relationships for children. These children tended to be bullied four times more often than children living in a more peaceful home environment (Olweus).

The “at-risk student” label could be placed upon 70-80% of students (Rubinstein, 1994). Any student who received a type of special service based upon academic, physical, mental, or familial impairment (such as divorced parents, single-parent homes, loss of a parent, or living with step-parents) qualified as being at-risk (Rubinstein). Children and teens from homes with

little emotional support, involvement, or monitoring of activities from parents were at greater risk of being bullied (McCartney, 2005). Children who were abused also qualified as being at-risk. Victims of abuse had many different responses to society, these responses included: hypersensitivity to negative social cues, being oblivious to positive social cues, developing a repertoire of aggressive behaviors that were readily accessible and easily invoked, and drawing a conclusion that aggression was a successful method of getting what they wanted (Garbarino, 1999). Many student bullies were actually punished over and over and then later passed on that punishment to their peers (Cohen-Posey, 1995).

School size, location, or demographics did not seem to be distinguishing factors in predicting the occurrence of bullying behaviors (Jordan, 2000). When compared to private schools, public schools had a larger number of peer-reported bullying incidents; however, this could be attributable to larger enrollments (Nolin, 1995). There seemed to be an inverse relationship between the school psychosocial environment and cultural attitudes and the prevalence of bullying at those schools (Meyer-Adams, 2002).

### International Perspectives on Adolescent Bullying

Research indicated that although there was a high degree of international variability, bullying was a prevalent problem in public schools, affecting anywhere from 15% to 20% of students (Spivak et al., 2005). Several nations investigated the nature, prevalence, and effects of adolescent bullying behaviors among school children (Limber & Nation, 1998). Olweus (1993) reported that students tended to suggest that bullying behaviors typically occurred when groups of 2 or 3 students rallied against another student, creating an imbalance of power. These actions often occurred away from the eyes of teachers or other responsible adults in the school.

The students classified bullying as a negative action when someone else planned to intentionally inflict, or attempts to inflict, injury, or discomfort upon others. Bullying was determined to be harmful and to produce frequently enduring effects on its victims, leading to chilling effects on the overall school climate (Limber & Nation, 1998). Olweus (1993) found that bullying was a component of a more generally anti-social and rule-breaking (conduct-disordered) behavior pattern among adolescents.

Problems associated with bullying were identified wherever formal schooling environments existed (American Medical Association, 2005). Bullying was a worldwide problem and a significant problem in American schools (MacNeil & Newell, 2004). Researchers stated that much work was done internationally on this topic, but the United States was just beginning to catch up (Crawford, 2002). Bulach, Fulbright, and Williams (2000) stated that bullying behavior in the United States was more severe than in any Western European country that conducted research in this area with the possible exception of Great Britain. Formal research was conducted in Scandinavian countries, Italy, Ireland, Canada, Japan, and the United States (American Medical Association).

Olweus (1993) found that 15% of students in Norway were involved in bullying behaviors, 9% were victims, while the remaining 6% of students acted as bullies. Research from Finland stated that males who were frequently bullies were over five times more likely to suffer from moderate to severe depression, while females were over three times more likely to suffer this; in addition, males were four times more likely to be suicidal than males who were not bullied and females were eight times more likely to be suicidal than their non-bullied peers (Fox, Elliott, Kerlikowske, Newman, & Christeson, 2003). Gini (2004) stated that in Italian schools 42% of primary school children and 28% of secondary school children reported they had been

bullied over a three-month period. Gini also stated that in the Italian culture, laughing at someone seemed to be more frequent in the Northern areas of the country and that children there did not consider laughter to be a serious form of bullying. Problems reported in this Italian study indicated that the bullies tended to receive more understanding from peer groups, while the victims were dealt with by the adults in the school (Gini).

Students in Ireland reported that bullying incidents were not always intentional and were sometimes provoked (Guerin & Hennessy, 1998). Irish students also felt that a behavior did not need to be repetitive to be considered bullying; over 40% of them claimed that if a behavior occurred two or three times, then it could be bullying (Guerin & Hennessy, 1998). Craig and Pepler (1997) found in Canada that 12%-15% of students were victimized every school term and 7%-9% of students acted as bullies. Webster-Doyle (1991) stated that bullying was a major problem in Japan, where violence, vandalism, and general delinquency among adolescents was on the increase. Ando, Asakuro, and Simons-Morton (2005) indicated that bullying in Japan was a major concern and that the psychosocial influences of bullying were not fully understood.

According to Simmons (2002), bullying was an epidemic within American schools and it was both distinctive and destructive. Walker (1995), summarizing a survey by the National League of Cities, stated that 89% of respondents in 700 cities and towns throughout America agreed that school violence was a problem in their community. Research indicated that nearly 30% of American school children reported that they have been involved in some aspect of bullying (American Medical Association, 2005). The American Medical Association reported that 13% of students self-reported that they had been bullies to peers, 10.6% reported being victimized, and 6.3% reported being both a victim and a bully in some circumstances.

School violence could be classified as any of the following: disrespect, theft, competitiveness, quarrels with peers, verbal assaults, or physical assaults (Alexander, 1995). In the past, the primary focus of research in the United States was on physical aggression (Crawford, 2002). Children in the United States led all industrialized nations of the world in violence, crime, teen pregnancy, child abuse, and drug and alcohol abuse (Rubinstein, 1994).

In recent years, bullying came under close scrutiny amid reports that it might have been a contributing factor in several school shootings (American Medical Association, 2005). Research from the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Education indicated that in 37 school shooting incidents, nearly three fourths of student shooters felt bullied, threatened, attacked, or injured by others (Crawford, 2002). In this same study, several of the shooters also expressed concern about long-term and severe bullying and harassment from peers. Other findings on the same shootings (Crawford) indicated:

1. attackers were not impulsive; they planned their actions;
2. in more than 80% of the cases, someone knew the attacker had formulated a plan;
3. although all school shooters were male, they varied by age, family background, ethnicity, academic achievement, popularity, and disciplinary records;
4. most attackers did not threaten victims beforehand; and
5. most attackers exhibited behaviors that caused concern to others

Sjostrom and Stein (2002) stated in *Bullyproof* that bullying was a matter of social injustice and that it was an affront to democracy and democratic institutions. Bullying deprived children of their rightful entitlement to go to school in a safe, just, and caring environment. The act of bullying created a climate of fear and disrespect in schools and had a negative impact on student learning. Bullying was identified as one of the leading social problems facing young

people today (Voors, 2003). Bullying could lead to declining grades, depression, and even suicidal tendencies; on January 25, 2005, the Virginia House of Delegates endorsed legislation that would require schools to report bullying incidents to the parents of the victims (“Panel Backs Bill,” 2005).

### Specific Types of Bullying

Bullying manifested itself in many different forms. It was usually a well planned and organized attempt to lower the self-esteem of one student in order to make the bully feel more powerful and in control of his or her peers (Barone, 2001). A bullying incident was reported to occur one time every seven minutes students were present in school (Clifford, 2001). In actuality, bullying was a social interaction that was a result of complex interactions between individual characteristics such as student impulsivity, social context of situations, peer groups, and school social system (Espelage, 2004).

Bullying behaviors could be direct, resulting in open attacks on the victim (Bosworth, Espelage, & Simon, 1999). Direct bullying included: teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, and stealing (Banks, 1997). Indirect bullying involved social isolation, exclusion from groups, or non-selection for activities (Bosworth et al.). Bullying occurred when a student was targeted for abuse or threatened with abuse over a long period of time (Barone, 2001). Approximately 90% of victimized students claimed that bullying caused significant problems, including loss of friends, feelings of isolation, and hopelessness (Espelage & Holt, 2000).

## Verbal Bullying

Verbal bullying was the most common type of bullying for both males and females (Colorosa, 2003). Approximately 75% of reported bullying cases fell into this category combined with psychological bullying tactics (Barone, 2001). Verbal bullying included name-calling, taunting, belittling, cruel criticism, personal defamation, racial slurs, sexual harassment, extortion, phone calls, e-mails, notes, false accusations, rumors, and gossip. Incidents of name-calling based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, appearance, social class, disability, or sexual differences could be classified as discrimination and harassment (Saxon, 2004). This type of bullying was relatively easy to get away with; it was quick and painless for the bully but dehumanizing and very harmful for the victim (Colorosa, 2003).

Children teased each other in order to get attention, to imitate others, to feel superior or powerful, to be accepted by peers, or because of misunderstanding differences among peers or due to media influence (Freedman, 2000). Teasing of others might be fun but only if feelings were not hurt (Freedman). Verbal bullying was more than simply “child’s play” (Saxon, 2004). The act of teasing could be classified as harassment if it were prolonged or repeated or if it threatened to or resulted in direct bullying or violence toward others (Freedman). The main intent of verbal bullying was to harm another person’s self-esteem, usually accomplished in front of an audience of peers (American Medical Association, 2005).

## Physical Bullying

Historically, there were three main types of bullying behaviors exhibited by adolescents: physical, verbal, and psychological (Ericson, 2001). According to Colorosa (2003), physical bullying was the most visible and easily identifiable form of bullying. It might take the form of a

slap, hit, poke, punch, kick, bite, scratch, spit, or damage of personal property. Research indicated that physical bullying encompassed only one fourth of all reported bullying incidents (Colorosa).

Physical bullying involved harm to another person's body or property (American Medical Association, 2005). In most cases, physical bullying did no great harm to the victim because physical damage would generate sympathy for the victim and place significant blame upon the bully (American Medical Association). Inappropriate forms of touching as well as destruction of clothing with signs or symbols were meant to degrade the victim in front of peers (American Medical Association).

### Emotional Bullying

Emotional bullying was also referred to as relational aggression or psychological bullying (Colorosa, 2003). This method of bullying was a systematic diminishment of a child's sense of self that included ignoring, isolating, or exclusion from peers. This was the most damaging form of bullying (Davis, 2003). There was a common misconception that relational aggression was a uniquely female form of bullying. However, Mullin-Rindler (2003) stated that levels of relational aggression were relatively equal between both males and females. While this type of bullying was usually exhibited at an earlier age in females, males caught up as their verbal skills increased. Significant growth in cognitive development and social areas occurred in middle school; these changes affected interpersonal relationships in both quality and structure (Yoon, Barton, & Taiariol, 2004).

Bullying behaviors harm others through damage, or threat of damage, to relationships or feelings of acceptance, friendship, or group inclusion (Yoon et al., 2004). Research stated that

the most common type of bullying behaviors students in Washington state experienced was emotional bullying with students being ridiculed and called names (“Bullying and Bias-Based,” 2002). Emotional bullying did not always occur face-to-face. The phenomenon of “cyberbullying” had been reported at great length in many school districts (Chu, 2005). This on-line bullying provided an anonymity that emboldened the bully and increased the fear factor for the victim (Chu).

Researchers in developmental psychology identified a set of interpersonal behaviors and attitudes among students that inflicted serious emotional harm but went largely unnoticed by teachers or other adults this was emotional bullying (Yoon et al., 2004). Relational or emotional bullying was the most powerful type of bullying that occurred during the middle years of adolescence (Colorosa, 2003). Emotional bullying in middle school age students might be more salient than other types of bullying because of developmental milestones during this period (Yoon et al.).

Emotional bullying was actually a form of social manipulation done in order to harm another person’s acceptance by a peer group (American Medical Association, 2005). Relational aggression included behaviors that harmed others by damaging or threatening to damage relationships with peers (McKay, 2003). It featured the systematic diminishment of a child’s sense of self and involved subtle gestures like aggressive stares, rolling eyes, sighs, frowns, sneers, snickers, and hostile body language. This was used to alienate the victim from his or her peers, to reject a peer, or to ruin relationships (Colorosa, 2003). Social bullies tended to try to convince their peers to reject a certain person, thus, effectively cutting off the victim from all social connectedness (American Medical Association). However, these bullies were more likely

to be disliked and to lack acceptable social behavior skills when compared to their peers (Yoon et al., 2004).

### Gender Roles in Bullying

The school shootings in Columbine altered students' sense of security while at school (Garbarino, 2002). The majority of school shooters in the past decade was male and claimed that they were either teased or rejected by their peers ("CNN," 1999). Reports indicated that 18% of boys carried weapons to school on a daily basis, while only 5% of females carried weapons daily (Weiler, 1999). Males were more likely to bring a gun to school as compared to females who carried knives (Weiler). Many different types of social isolation or intentional exclusion occurred in school. Males isolated others primarily by direct methods, while females used more indirect or subtle methods of exclusion (Banks, 1997).

### The Male Perspective vs. The Female Perspective

Bullying in school had many forms but male bullies tended to hit, slap, or push others and target both males and females, while female bullies tended to start rumors or make sexual comments, mainly about other females (Safe Youth, n.d.). Male and female bullies were perceived differently by their peers and the adults around them. In an online study, Kass (1999) stated that male bullying was viewed as "typical" male behavior and not as bullying and that 67% of male bullies were not actually identified as such. On the other hand, Kass stated that female bullying behaviors were identified as opposite of the expected "passive" behavior and 67% of females were identified as bullies.

Colorosa (2003) found that both males and females used verbal bullying equally, while males tended to use physical bullying more often and females used relational bullying more frequently. She stated that these differences were mainly due to the socialization tendencies of the genders. Males tended to establish a “pecking order” in loosely defined groups, while females surrounded themselves with smaller peer groups that had clear boundaries. In general, females tended to have a more negative attitude toward bullying than males, but they used relational aggression toward their peers (Pellegrini, 2002). Research showed that females were more relationship oriented and placed a higher value on intimate friendships; therefore, the experiences of emotional bullying posed a greater threat to other females, resulting in a more negative outcome in their functioning (Yoon et al., 2004).

Barone (2001) found that males tended to use physical bullying, exclusively, 10.8% of the time as compared to 0.6% by females, while females exclusively used verbal or relational bullying 77.1% of the time as compared to 39.7% by males. Abrahams and Ahlbrand (2002) reported that 38.7% of males claimed to have been involved in a physical fight within the past 12 months. Males used both physical and verbal bullying 49.5% of the time as compared to 22.3% by females in self-reported behaviors (Barone, 2001). In findings with similar results, McKay (2003) found that males used relational aggression or emotional bullying outside of their established peer groups, while females used this type of bullying only within their selected groups.

Studies indicated that males were more often both the perpetrators and the victims of direct, physical bullying (Olweus, 1993). Researchers found that males from across all age groups were more likely to be involved in bullying and violent behaviors than were females (National Institute of Health, 2003). From elementary grades through high school, males were

more likely to be physically threatened than females; males are generally threatened by other males (Mullin-Rindler, 2001). Males tended to be overt in their actions and chose to bully others in highly visible locations (Owens, Shute, & Slee, 2004). They chose to bully mainly in hallways while in plain sight of others. Males also tended to classify their bullying behaviors as “harmless horseplay” (Gamliel, Hoover, Daughtry, & Imbra, 2003).

Bulach et al. (2000) stated that there were significant gender differences in the way that students perceived each other as being treated. For examples, males were more likely to believe that discipline was not administered fairly, that students were not held accountable for their actions, and that they received less respect than their peers. In this same study, females reported that they had more favorable relationships with both teachers and their friends. They also reported that teachers helped them to feel good at school.

Female involvement in bullying, delinquency, and crime has increased (Weiler, 1999). Females were using more overt methods of relational aggression, such as “death stares” or “daggers” when excluding peers from their tightly knit groups (Owens et al., 2004). Female friends who were highly intimate and exclusive often behaved more aggressively within the friendship than they did toward peers who were merely acquaintances (Yoon et al., 2004). When asked why this behavior was preferred, females stated they chose relationally aggressive behaviors because they were bored, because it created excitement, and because it assisted in the friendship or group bonding processes (Owens et al.,). However, females also tended to display more non-violent attitudes and have a stronger tendency to act in favor of bullying victims than their male counterparts (Gini, 2004). Relationally aggressive females were more likely to experience outward symptoms associated with both oppositional defiant and conduct disorders (Yoon et al.).

Females used relational aggression within their close peer groups making it harder to identify, thus, intensifying the damage to their victims (Simmons, 2002). This type of aggression focused mainly on damaging or manipulating peer groups (Espelage & Asida, 2000). Because silence was deeply woven into the fabric of female experiences with bullying, many incidents of relational aggression were unreported (Simmons, 2002). Males tended to pair relational aggression, or emotional bullying, with physical aggression (Mullin-Rindler, 2003). Research regarding cyberbullying indicated that the gender patterns in off-line bullying were opposite to those found on-line. Males tended to bully in person, while females conducted the largest percentage of on-line bullying activities (Chu, 2005). Chu also found that nearly 33% of eighth grade females surveyed reported being bullied on-line in the two months before the survey, compared to 10% of males; 17% of females admitted that they had been online bullies, while only 10% of males reported they had.

Relational aggression could also be termed “emotional violence” and was one of the ways that females used to identify their relationships with others (Dellesaga & Nixon, 2003). An adolescent’s environment might also lead to emotional bullying toward peers. Parental conflict, coercion, and psychological control were examined by researchers as possible links to the development of relationally aggressive children (Yoon et al., 2004). If a parent invalidated a child’s feelings, threatened to withdraw love or affection, or used sarcasm and power-assertive discipline, that child was more likely to act emotionally aggressive toward peers (Yoon et al.).

### The Issue of Harassment

Harassment could refer to any number of behaviors in which one person was treated with disrespect or abusively due to age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or other reasons (Voors,

2004). Voors stated that there are three ways that social cruelty could manifest itself, including: normalization (one person accepts a certain offensive behavior, expression, or attitude as “normal”), minimization (an offensive behavior or comment is ignored or treated as inconsequential), and denial (refusal to recognize individual prejudicial attitudes or beliefs). Students and adults tended to believe that incidents of harassment were simply “normal behavior.”

Adolescents are exposed to sexuality in music, television, movies and pornography, this led to sexual innuendo becoming a common event in schools (Pipher, 1994). Society tended to blame children for the maladjusted behaviors that they displayed; however, the role of the students’ home environment and social influences, most notably the media, should be recognized as part of the problem (Spivak et al., 2005). Middle school students were particularly sensitive about their bodies and comments related to their growth and development, or lack thereof (Giannetti & Sagarese, 1997). Sexual harassment is about the feelings of the person who receives the sexual advances, it is unwanted attention (Abrahams & Ahlbrand, 2002).

Simple teasing became harassment when it was prolonged or repeated, threatened or resulted in violence, or involved physical contact (Freedman, 2000). Sexual harassment could be classified as an offensive act of hostility, domination, or violence toward both males and females (Packer, 1997). The act of sexual harassment included name-calling, locker room jokes, love triangles, and many other manifestations (Giannetti & Sagarese, 1997). Research stated that 34% of students reported harassment as a type of abuse; females tended to report harassment 48% of the time, with males reporting only 20% of the time (“Bullying and Bias-Based”, 2002). This same study indicated that if a student reported suffering harassment from peers, that student

was almost three times more likely to carry a weapon to school than peers who did not suffer from this type of abuse.

If left unchecked and unchallenged, bullying could lead into a form of sexual harassment (Stein, 1997). Upon the completion of middle school, 81% of students claim to have been sexually harassed in some form by their peers; 76% of males reported being victimized, while 85% of females made this report (Giannetti & Sagarese, 1997). The more ways a student had been harassed, the more likely he or she was to report feeling unsafe at school, carry a gun to school, attempt suicide, or not get help when needed (“Bullying and Bias-Based,” 2002). Adolescent sexual harassment tended to increase during the high school years and was usually perpetrated by males to females (Stein).

#### Adolescence: A Time of Transition

There was a marked difference between puberty and adolescence. Puberty was a biological process, while the time of adolescence was marked by social and personal experiences to form a mature adult (Pipher, 1994). Cohen-Posey (1995) stated that adolescence begins a time of transition for many youth as they begin to break ties with their parents as the primary figures in their lives and establish new ties with their peer groups. This could lead to confusion because parental love and acceptance were certain for most children, but when they began to compete with their peers for the same acceptance, it could lead to feelings of insecurity (Cohen-Posey). As adolescents sought autonomy from their parents, they turned to their peers to discuss problems, fears, and concerns; this increased reliance on peer groups led to pressure to attain social status (Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2000b).

Adolescents faced a daunting primary task as they passed from childhood into adulthood, that of individuation (Nelson & Lott, 2000). Nelson and Lott stated that individuation included the following:

- Teens struggling to find out who they are
- Going through huge physical and emotional changes
- Exploring and exercising personal power and autonomy
- Appearing rebellious to their parents and most other authority figures
- Peers taking precedence over family
- A great need for privacy and a sense of their “own space”
- Seeing parents as an embarrassment
- Seeing themselves as omnipotent and all knowing

There were four mistaken goals of inappropriate student behavior that could be witnessed as children pass through adolescence, including: the need for attention, power, revenge, and assumed inadequacy (Nelson, 1987). If adolescents were viewed as misbehaving, in reality, they might be discouraged and feeling inadequate (Nelson, 1987). Developmentally, adolescents used negotiation and bargaining to resolve interpersonal conflicts because their social understanding and conflict resolution skills were continuing to develop (Yoon et al., 2004).

### Student Growth and Development

Several changes occurred in adolescence on a daily basis. These changes were more rapid and profound between the ages of 10 and 15 than at any other time in a child’s life (National Middle School Association, 2003). Changes might be in the form of physical, emotional, intellectual, academic, social, and spiritual or moral developments but seldom did

they occur in tandem (Pipher, 1994). More often, these areas of growth are intertwined (National Middle School Association).

Early adolescence was marked by an average increase of 12 inches in height and an average weight gain of 20 to 30 pounds, usually with a gain of 10 pounds per year (Giannetti & Sagarese, 1997). Physical changes were largely due to changing levels of hormones. These hormonal surges caused a redistribution of body fat, increased weight and height, abrupt bone and muscle growth, and changes in voice, hair, and complexion (National Middle School Association, 2003). This time period was marked by periods of intense energy followed by stretches of compelling fatigue known as “energy swings” (Giannetti & Sagarese).

Early adolescence was a time of great variability among peers of the same gender and age (National Middle School Association, 2003). Dissimilar rates of growth were common in all areas of development (National Middle School Association). Females tended to begin adolescence two years before males but males grew at a faster rate, usually four to five inches per year, and for a longer time period (Giannetti & Sagarese, 1997). Physically, nerves myelinate, or become more mature in females sooner than in males, generally leading to greater emotional maturity in females; this myelination did not equalize among the genders until the age of 30 (Brownlee, 2004).

Females remained in adolescence longer in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century than their counterparts of the 1950s and 1960s (Pipher, 1994). During that period, females tended to leave home soon after graduation from high school. In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, females tended to return home after college and remained there in a safe haven and for economic security (Pipher). Adolescence for females might range from age 10 until age 22 (Pipher). Males tended

to leave home soon after graduation from high school or college and not return (Garbarino, 1999).

Adolescents did not seem to fit in anywhere (Pipher, 1994). As toddlers, they distanced themselves from their parents physically; as teenagers, they were working to distance themselves from their parents emotionally (Pipher). Adolescents tended to believe everyone was watching them, a concept known as the “imaginary audience syndrome” (Pipher). Simultaneously, they were working to overcome two large concerns, how to assert themselves appropriately and how to shift goals and adjust to new situations without losing self-confidence and without suffering ridicule from peers (Rubinstein, 1994). In order to accomplish these goals, adolescents had to test or manipulate their behaviors to see what would result (Rubinstein). Adolescents had important status considerations to overcome within their peer groups; males felt the need to appear tough and aggressive to be considered acceptable, while females felt their appearance would lead to their popularity (AtHealth.com, n.d.).

Academically, most adolescents felt challenged and even frustrated by their lack of achievements. This might be due, in part, to the fact that brain growth slowed during adolescence due to hormonal changes (Rubinstein, 1994). Many students found themselves unable to think abstractly and needed concreteness to understand their schoolwork as well as to understand their peers (Pipher, 1994). Cognitive growth was gradual and irregular during adolescence so both concrete and experiential learning were needed to increase intellectual development (National Middle School Association, 2003). During this time period, males gained attention in school on a regular basis, while females became quieter in class and might even be criticized for intellectual inadequacy (Pipher).

As a whole, adolescents, or middle school students, needed several key elements to succeed socially, including: socialization with peers, the need to be liked and appreciated, the right to express personal opinions, and the right to be treated fairly (Rubinstein, 1994).

Adolescents also had several growth needs, including: aliveness, individuality, perfection, necessity, justice, order, simplicity, richness, playfulness, effortlessness, self-sufficiency, and meaningfulness (Rubinstein).

Adolescents constantly struggled for increased leeway and privacy along with later bedtimes and curfews (Giannetti & Sagarese, 1997). They also worked to decrease parental intrusions into their academic and social lives (Giannetti & Sagarese). They were searching for a way to be in control of their own lives, choose their own paths, and feel valued by others (Rubinstein, 1994). A “normal” teenager might appear messy, self-centered, and defiant of authority; he or she might listen to loud music, prefer friends to family, value cars and independent lifestyles, conform to clothing styles of peers, and decorate his or her room with posters (Nelson & Lott, 2000).

A classic middle school student could appear to be distracted, disorganized, and disinterested in school. Most males at this age were able to sit still and pay attention for 14 minutes, while females attended to this task for 16 minutes (Giannetti & Sagarese, 1997). On the surface, adolescents were awkward, energetic, angry, moody, and restless, while deep down they were struggling to find themselves, working to integrate past with present, and find their place in a larger culture (Pipher, 1994).

Most teenagers were not adept at reading social cues or signals such as facial expressions. The inability to discern attitudes of others coupled with a tendency to act impulsively was genetic in 60% of teens (Brownlee, 2004). Adolescence began the stratification of peer groups

and issues of acceptance and popularity became important to students (At Health.com, n.d.). This action among peers was only temporary (Nelson & Lott, 2000). However, it engendered destructive behaviors at the already difficult time of adolescence (Harris & Petrie, 2004). Cognitively, adolescents might be best suited for engaging in emotional bullying because they were most able to perceive manipulative and hurtful methods of interacting with peers; this might explain the shift to more relationally aggressive behaviors in middle school (Yoon et al., 2004).

Bullying prevented student learning and decreased social skill development needed later in life (Vincent, Horner, & Sugai, 2002). Bullying behaviors tended to peak in early elementary school, ages 7-8, and then again in middle school, ages 11-14 (National Association of School Nurses, 2003). Bullying incidents increased as students moved from the fifth grade to the sixth grade, when students typically entered middle school, because they were working to develop new relationships. As these relationships solidified, the behaviors decreased (Kass, 1999). These bullying behaviors might be considered a type of coping strategy to help students manage the emotions of anger, impulsivity, and depression seen in early adolescence (Espelage et al., 2000b). In fact, bullying might be identified as a deliberate tactic to achieve peer status (Pellegrini, 2002).

### Anger and Associated Behaviors

One of the last parts of the teenage brain to mature was the part that dealt with making sound judgments and calming unruly emotions (Brownlee, 2004). Serious forms of aggression began in early childhood and continue through adulthood, but mild aggression started in adolescence (At Health.com, n.d.). Anger had three chief components: physiological response,

cognitive process, and behavioral response (Feindler & Starr, 2003). Middle school students had to come to terms with anger and then turn it into an asset (Ferejohn & Hoover, 2000).

Adolescents were not able to discern the differences between real and perceived anger from peers. This was one of the causes of increased emotional and academic difficulties seen as students moved from elementary school into middle school (At Health.com).

As a mixture of complex feelings, anger was made up of different reactions that caused humans to be irritated, annoyed, furious, frustrated, enraged, and hurt (Luhn, 1992). Luhn stated that the human body had many different responses to anger that helped to control behaviors and thought processes. These processes led to the human appraisal of events that might cause a shift in the physiological arousal of the body, leading to a change in the way adolescents viewed provocation.

The human body's response to anger was complex and might include tension, increase in heart rate, increase in blood glucose levels, increase in blood pressure, shallow or difficult breathing, back or head pain, sweating, difficulty concentrating, poor performance, sleeplessness, and lack of focus (Luhn, 1992). Prolonged anger could also lead to drug use, overeating, alcoholism, smoking, restlessness, impulsiveness, compulsiveness, or withdrawal and isolation (Luhn). In order to manage anger, adolescents must learn to manage their responses to anger (Luhn).

Anger was prevalent in our society. The media message to adolescents was that anger is cool, in other words, the media culture tolerated escalating levels of aggression (Sandmaier, 2005). The good guys in movies and television perpetrated 40% of the violence (Sandmaier, 2005). These violent acts were performed by attractive perpetrators who seemed to act without pain or remorse (Vincent et al., 2004). Studies showed that for every one hour of television that

four year-olds watched per day, their risk of becoming bullies by age 6 to 11 increased by 6-9% (Sandmaier). Bullies tended to have their aggressive temperaments inadvertently rewarded by kids who gave in to them and by adults who either tolerated or actively encouraged such angry behavior (Garbarino, 1999).

By the age of 8, a boy's pattern of aggressive behavior and attitude was already crystallizing (Garbarino, 1999). Pre-violence signs to look for in males included: lack of connection with others, masking of emotions, withdrawal, silence, rage, trouble with friends, hypervigilance, cruelty to other children, and possible cruelty to animals (Garbarino). Females, age 6 to 10, who watched television shows with aggressive protagonists were more likely to develop into angry adults (Sandmaier, 2005). Females expressed anger by cattiness and teasing toward those who did not fit into society's accepted standards (Pipher, 1994). However, not all youth who experienced risk factors for aggressive behaviors actually displayed aggressive or violent tendencies (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2001).

### Childhood Depression

Psychological distress in middle school students could be seen on a daily basis (Giannetti & Sagarese, 1997). Gianetti and Sagarese found that adolescents acted despondent, isolated, acted out, and appeared lonely or angry when, in fact, they were suffering from adolescent depression. According to this research, there were between three and six million children in the United States who are classified as clinically depressed. Several warning signs of adolescent depression could be identified by adults, including: inability to sleep or chronic listlessness; no interest in friends, school, or activities; marked changes in grades, concentration, or eating habits; risky behaviors, such as the use of drugs or alcohol, or becoming sexually active;

becoming rebellious toward parents, teachers, and authority figures; writing, singing, or drawing with prevalent themes of violence, death, or suicide (Giannetti & Sagarese).

Adolescent depression in males might be characterized by both the loss of capacity to feel emotions and an externalization of pain, which could be attributed by the adolescent to the actions of others, feelings of victimization, and dealing with distress by acting violently (Garbarino, 1999). Male adolescents might feel psychologically alone and socially vulnerable, thus, creating an emotional isolation within themselves (Garbarino, 1999). They might also feel what is classified as “toxic shame” by feeling fundamentally disgraced, intrinsically worthless, and profoundly humiliated (Garbarino, 1999).

Females felt pain and confusion as they sensed pressure to sacrifice their wholeness during adolescence in order to be loved and popular (Pipher, 1994). Adolescent depression in females had many manifestations and may range from being sluggish and apathetic to being angry and hate-filled (Pipher). Depressed adolescent females might starve themselves, carve on their bodies, withdraw from others, take pills, drink, be promiscuous, or any combination of those characteristics (Pipher). Female depression could not be rated as an absolute quantity, but rather it had to be placed on a continuum, beginning as ordinary adolescent misery and progressing until it reached severe depression (Pipher). Females were placed under enormous stress by the daily changes in their developments toward womanhood and the culture that surrounded them (Pipher).

### Bullying Differences by Age

Bullying peaked in middle school but began to decline with student entrance to high school (Bonds, 2000). As students aged, the incidents of physical bullying tended to decline and verbal bullying increased (Owens et al., 2004).

#### The Age of Middle School

Bullying was a problem for all students at every level of education but it was an especially serious problem in middle schools (Harris & Petrie, 2004). Thirty-four percent of middle school students worried about being victimized at school each day (Nolin & Davies, 1995). This might be because middle school students perceived that denigrating others was the surest way to achieve prominence within a new school (Harris & Petrie). Emotional bullying became more sophisticated and covert during the middle school years (Yoon et al., 2004). The educational transition from elementary to middle school tended to lead to an increase in bullying incidents as students tried to fit in with their new peer groups; many student actually chose to bully others as a way to deal with the stress of their new environments (Espelage & Holt, 2000). Thus, the timing of intervention methods seemed critical during the formative middle school years (Yoon et al., 2004).

Middle school students felt an intense need to be supported and encouraged but bullying made them feel left out, alone, victimized, and abused (Preston, McCubrey, Gratto, & Archer, 2002). Students in early middle school tended to have a less negative view of aggression than their younger peers and more readily accepted and affiliated with aggressive peers (Pellegrini, 2002). There were several characteristics of middle schools that assist in the increase in bullying behaviors, including: larger class sizes than in elementary school, increased stress due to

competition with peers, social comparisons between peers, teacher attitudes toward bullying, and the lack of a school community atmosphere (Pellegrini).

A culture of bullying was a pervasive phenomenon among middle school students (Unnever & Cornell, 2004). Eighty percent to 90% of middle school students claimed to have been victims of bullies (Kass, 1999). Middle school students were constantly searching for their autonomous identity and that often led to an ardent dependence upon peer groups; for this reason, peer rejection and abuse was felt strongly by these students (Hoover & Oliver, 1996). In early middle school, popularity and bullying were directly related (Chamberlain, 2000). In the sixth grade, boys, especially, showed a strong correlation between popularity with peers and bullying behaviors (Chamberlain). Bullying behaviors were found to occur across all demographic groups in middle schools (Espelage & Holt, 2000). However, research conducted in Washington state indicated that bullying behaviors were more common in grades 6 and 8 than they were in grades 10 and 12 (“Bullying and Bias-Based,” 2002).

### The Age of High School

High school students were more likely to bully with ridicule, rejection, and other forms of emotional abuse rather than using physical bullying (Harris, 2004). By the age of 16, students who were repeatedly victimized in elementary and middle schools reported higher levels of internalizing problems than their peers (Youth Violence Project, n.d.). Bullies eventually lost their popularity during high school and many became disliked by the majority of students with whom they associated (Clifford, 2001).

There might be many obstacles to student success once they reach high school. Several of these were established earlier in the students’ academic careers, including: failure by adults to

recognize that student learning takes place at different rates; tracking or prior labeling; low socioeconomic status of the students' family; judgments based upon physical appearance; judgments based upon verbal expression; and gender and race barriers (Rubinstein, 1994). Other problems could manifest in high school due to bullying behaviors. Absenteeism and dropout rates of victims were higher than their non-bullied peers (Lumsden, 2002).

### Possible Lifelong Implications

School bullying incidents produced both immediate and long-term detrimental effects (Youth Violence Project, n.d.). Being a bully or a victim of bullying had long-lasting effects that could actually persist throughout a person's lifetime (Olweus, 1993). Victims suffered most of those tragic effects (Druck & Kaplowitz, 2005). Victimization, if left untreated, could lead to depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, dropping out of school, and even suicide (Macy, 2003). Rigby (2003) stated that stress, if experienced over a period of time, was not only likely to cause anxiety and depression but also likely to undermine the body's immune system.

Research indicated that victims of frequent bullying during childhood were at increased risk of suffering depression and poor self-esteem later in life (American Medical Association, 2005). Several investigations consistently found that there was a strong association between being victimized and manifesting symptoms of poor psychological and/or physical health (Rigby, 2003). Victims of school bullying suffered from lower self-confidence, clinical depression, abnormal fears and worries as well as sleep disorders, nervous tics or habits, and bouts of frequent crying (Voors, 2003). Research revealed that there is a direct relationship between direct bullying (physical bullying) and common health problems in students, such as repeated sore throats, colds, and coughs (Rigby).

Victims of bullying behaviors might have a decrease in academic standing, skip school, or suffer from anxiety (Saxon, 2004). The number one reason for students to drop out of high school and not return to school later in life was the fear of being harassed or attacked (Bosworth et al., 1999). Self-reported victims were frequently found to experience emotions of anger, vengefulness, and self-pity, with the latter being more common in females (Rigby, 2003).

There was a positive relationship between youth bullying and more intense violence later in life (Gamliel et al., 2003). Students who bullied others were more likely to engage in criminal behavior later in life (National Institute of Health, 2003). Up to 60% of boys identified as bullies in grades six through nine had at least one criminal conviction before age 24 (Foltz-Gray, 1996). Bullies identified by age 8 were six times more likely to be convicted of a crime by age 24 and five times more likely than non-bullies to end up with a serious criminal record by the age of 30 (Hoover & Oliver, 1996).

Longitudinal studies indicated that the tendency to bully others at school significantly predicted subsequent antisocial and violent behavior (Rigby, 2003). The attorney general of Maine found that the most severe and brutal hate crimes in that state were almost always committed by someone who had participated in years of bullying behaviors (Voors, 2003). The occurrence of bullying behaviors also affected children of males who were identified as bullies in school. Children of former schoolyard bullies were found to be more likely to behave aggressively toward their peers, suggesting a possible generational continuity (Rigby).

Within the United States, racial and ethnic conflict and violence increased overtime, revealing an inherent lack of understanding and inability to change (Rubinstein, 1994). American society was filled with young people and adults who were deeply wounded by the demeaning words or actions of others (Peretti, 2000). By the onset of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the

society was just beginning to understand the degree of damage that bullying inflicted upon individuals and on their relationships later in life (Garbarino, 2002).

Rigby (2003) stated that research investigating bully-victim problems focused on possible negative mental and/or physical health outcomes with the following four categories of negative health conditions identified:

1. low psychological well-being, which included unpleasant but not acutely distressing states of mind, such as general unhappiness, low self-esteem, and feelings of anger and sadness
2. poor social adjustment, which normally included feelings of aversion toward current social environment, usually expressed through a dislike of school or the workplace, which could manifest itself in loneliness, isolation, and absenteeism
3. psychological distress, which is considered more serious than the first two categories because it included high levels of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation
4. physical unwellness, which might include medically diagnosed illnesses and psychosomatic disorders

#### Participants in the Act

Packer (1997) reported that normal schoolyard hazing has escalated to extortion, emotional terrorism, physical torture, and drive-by shootings. Bullying was referred to as “child peer abuse” (Giannetti & Sagarese, 1997). Colorosa (2003) found that the act of bullying was successful due to a “deadly triad” of participants. The “bully” was the student who terrorized others, the “bullied” were the students who were afraid to tell an authority figure of the incident,

and the “bystander” was the student who watched from the sidelines, participated, or even looked away, but does nothing about the incident. There may also be another participant in this act, the adult who observes but dismisses the incident as normal behavior for adolescents (Colorosa).

### The Bully

A bully was a member of a subset of aggressive students who seemed to derive pleasure from harassing peers (Nelson, 2002). A bully exhibited “conduct disorder” tendencies, or a repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior in which the basic rights of others or major age-appropriate societal norms or rules were violated (Garbarino, 1999). Bullies might be psychologically stronger than their classmates who were not involved in bullying behaviors, which aided in their attainment of higher social status than their peers (Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003).

Research indicated that adults tended to describe bullies as being big, usually slow-witted males, who picked on smaller, weaker, often brighter, defenseless peers (Preble, 2003). However, this was seldom the case. Students described bullies as being popular, smart, successful, and athletic as well as some of the most successful students in school (Preble). Preble also stated that students even described some teachers as the “biggest bullies” in schools because they singled out students for routine public humiliation.

Bullies might be classified in a variety of ways. Aggressive bullies were belligerent, fearless, coercive, confident, tough, and impulsive; they had a low tolerance for frustration and a strong inclination toward violence; and they might be identified as leaders; passive bullies seemed to be anxious, did not take the initiative in incidents, often associated with and supported aggressive bullies, and are often identified as followers (Coy, 2001). Webster-Doyle (1991)

classified a bully as either an extrovert or an introvert. Extroverted bullies tended to be outgoing and aggressive, as well as active and expressive, showing a strong desire to be in control (Webster-Doyle). Although introverted bullies also demonstrated a desire to be in control, they did not want recognition; they conformed to society, might be classified as “smooth talking”, and were seen as misleading and deceptive by their peers (Webster-Doyle).

Bullies held a slightly higher social status than their peers but there was no large socio-economic difference between bullies and their victims (Harris, 2004). A bully might have friends and exhibit self-confidence (Packer, 1997). Bullies reported an ease of making friends that indicated they were not socially isolated (Spivak, Prothrow-Stith, & Siddiqi, 2001). Perpetrators might often be the most popular males and females in a group that could wither the self-esteem of others with merely a word or glance (Mullin-Rindler, 2003). According to Harris, bullies were more likely to manifest deviant behavior and have a more outwardly racist attitude than their victims. They might also have poorer academic performance and perceive schools to have a poorer climate than do their victims. There was little or no support to claims that the poor academic performance of a student would lead to aggressive behavior and bullying attitudes (Olweus, 1993).

Students who bully tended to come from homes with little or no emotional support from parents (Safe Youth, n.d.). These students might have parents who did not monitor their activities on a regular basis and who might be either extremely permissive or excessively harsh in their punishments (Safe Youth). Traditional family structure was being redefined by society and situations might exist where students were living in families that varied in number of adults present, gender of adults in the household, and differences between the ethnicities of the adults (National Middle School Association, 2003). Children who became bullies usually did so

because of child-rearing influences, personal characteristics, or factors in their environment (Coy, 2001). Children who bullied had learned that violence and intimidation could get them what they want (Packer, 1997). As a result of hostile home environments, bullies expected others to pick on them so they might attack others before being attacked themselves (American Medical Association, 2005). Students who regularly displayed bullying behaviors actually felt little or no responsibility for their actions and might become defiant or oppositional toward adults when questioned about their behaviors (American Medical Association).

Males who bully tended to be physically larger than their peers, aggressive in nature, and were usually found in the company of others (Barone, 2001). However, bullies should not be classified by their appearance but by their actions (Colorosa, 2003). Bullies came in all shapes and sizes, ages, and nationalities and were rich, poor, educated, ignorant, male, or female (Webster-Doyle, 1991). Bullies might not have excessively high self-esteem, but they gained personal satisfaction from inflicting injury and suffering on others (Jordan, 2000). Often, they did not have empathy toward others and had a strong need to dominate their peers (Olweus, 1993).

There might be several different classifications of the “typical” school bully. Colorosa (2003) stated these included the confident bully, social bully, fully-armored bully, hyperactive bully, bullied bully, bunch of bullies, and gang of bullies. In each of these cases, bullying behaviors created a power imbalance so that it could be difficult or even impossible for the victims to defend themselves (MacNeil & Newell, 2004). Bullying could be a cautionary signal indicating more severe psychiatric problems, such as depression, conduct disorder, and anxiety (American Medical Association, 2005). Bullying behaviors might also be a sign of emotional or psychological problems not yet able to be diagnosed (Chu, 2005).

Bullying as a behavior that is inflicted with the purpose of doing harm to another person seemed to be an important marker for other violence-related behaviors (National Institute of Health, 2003). Research indicated that bullying led to other forms of antisocial behaviors, such as vandalism, shoplifting, skipping and dropping out of school, and the use of illegal drugs and alcohol (American Medical Association, 2005). A study by the National Institute of Health found that among males who stated they bullied others at least once a week, 52.2% had carried a gun to school in the past month, 43.1% carried another type of weapon in school, 38.7% were involved in frequent fighting, and 45.7% reported having been injured in a fight.

Students who believed that aggressive behavior achieved positive or popular results were more likely to engage in those behaviors to assist with self-identification and identification with peers (McConville & Cornell, 2003). Bullies were concerned with their own pleasure; wanted power, position, and fame; wanted revenge for hurt feelings; and were irresponsible toward others (Webster-Doyle, 1991). Research in Germany found that physiologically bullies had a lower resting heart rate than their peers (Garbarino, 1999). This low heart rate was associated with anti-social behavior in adolescents because they showed less likelihood of becoming easily frightened (Garbarino, 1999). Bullies also demonstrated poorer psychosocial adjustment in different situations than those who were not involved in bullying (Spivak et al., 2005).

Bullying behaviors were systematic and planned; the bully carefully selected the location and the victim in order to create an encounter in which he or she would be able to control others (Espelage & Asidao, 2000). Typically, bullies chose a site where they would have an audience to exploit their power imbalance as they controlled and dominated others (Jeffrey, 2004).

Bullying was a behavior based on opportunity (Davis, 2003). Bullies completed their acts of

terror to insure a sense of belonging with peers, to provide a sense of security in their society, and to provide a method of self-protection from others (Nelson & Lott, 2000).

While the child who bullies could feel excited, empowered, or even joyful over the bullying experience, the victim usually felt fear, humiliation, and shame (Voors, 2003). Bullies and victims alike showed specific characteristics to their peers. They did this through facial expressions, body language, verbal language and cues, and behaviors; however, those characteristics were usually in opposition to each other (Webster-Doyle, 1991).

Barone (2001) stated that there were five main reasons that bullying might occur. These reasons applied to both the bully and the victim and included low self-esteem or insecurity; learned behaviors from parents or adult role models; lack of parent attention or involvement; lack of discipline or punishments for inappropriate behaviors; and being different from peers in some way. Studies indicated that students reported that 13% of them are bullies, 11% were victims of bullies, and 6% were both bully and victim (Fox et al., 2003). In the past, bullies and victims were classified as two distinct groups; however, they were now merging into a third group, the bully-victims (Crawford, 2002). Bully-victims were affected by bullying in two distinct manners, that of the bully and that of the victim; as a result these students might experience higher levels of depression and anxiety than the bully-only or the victim-only groups (Crawford).

Bullies chose the locations of their terrorism very carefully. At school, bullying was believed to occur most frequently in areas where there was little adult supervision (Addington, Ruddy, Miller, DeVoe, & Chandler, 2002). In most cases, bullies operated when adults were not looking and the victims would not speak up about the incident (McCartney, 2005). Bullying behaviors occurred both on the way to and from school as well as on the school grounds. Typically, only one adult was present on a school bus and the driver might easily miss incidents

of pushing, shoving, and grabbing others belongings and might definitely miss incidents of emotional bullying (Harrison, 2005).

Bullying occurred more frequently on school grounds than on the way to and from school (Limber & Nation, 1998). Research indicated that there was no significant difference detected in the rates of victimization that occurred in classrooms, hallways, restrooms, or locker rooms (Addington et al., 2002). However, research indicated that 43% of students surveyed did not feel safe using the school restrooms (McCartney, 2005). When questioned, 5.3% of students claimed they feared being attacked or harmed while at school, while 3.9% feared being attacked traveling to and from school (Addington et al.).

### The Victim

Olweus (1993) found that there were two types of victims of school bullying. The passive/submissive victim signaled in some way that he or she felt insecure or worthless as an individual. This student generally would not retaliate if attacked or insulted, would tend to show an anxious reaction pattern to bullying, and might be physically weaker than the bully. A victim, when provoked, would also show an anxious reaction pattern but might become aggressive toward the bully. He or she might cause irritation or tension among peers, might be hyperactive, or might receive negative treatment from classmates and teachers, thus, gaining the attention of the bully.

Targets of bullying behaviors might be students who are new to the building, were victims of past trauma, and were submissive, shy, poor, or rich (Colorosa, 2003). In general, victims of bullies were insecure, overly-cautious, had low self-esteem, did not defend themselves, were socially isolated, and lacked social skills (Safe Youth, n.d.). Victims tended to

demonstrate poor social and emotional adjustments to changes in their environments (Spivak et al., 2005). They might be different and stand out from their peers physically or academically, be classified as the teacher's pet, become easily upset by teasing, mingle with students of different ethnicities, or tend not to follow the codes of gender behavior (Giannetti & Sagarese, 1997). Bullies tended to target individuals who they could upset easily or over whom they could assert power (Bonds, 2000).

Victims felt less connected to the school environment and usually would not participate willingly in extra-curricular activities (Harris, 2004). Victims might also exhibit poor relationships with classmates (Harris). If chronically victimized, these students might display symptoms similar to those of victims of chronic domestic violence (American Medical Association, 2005). Children who were raised in overly protective homes were more likely to become victims of bullies (Macy, 2003). The peer culture of adolescents tended to create a lack of sympathy for certain victims (Pellegrini, 2002). Victims were not only targeted by bullies but they also tended to be socially ostracized by their peers (Juvonen et al., 2003).

Student victimization occurred when there was direct personal experience of threats or harm from another student (Nolin & Davies, 1995). Nolin and Davies found that 17% of middle school students reported being personally victimized at school and another 12% claimed to have been bullied. Victims were chosen because they had little or no social support from their peers (Davis, 2003). These students might present themselves as vulnerable in their relationships with perpetrators, thus, increasing chances of victimization due to a number of reasons, such as a limited number of alternative friends and higher needs for intimacy with peers (Yoon et al., 2004). This led bullying victims to feel fear, humiliation, helplessness, and desperation (Webster-Doyle, 1991).

Research indicated that victims of bullying experienced real suffering that might interfere with social and emotional development as well as academic performance (American medical Association, 2005). Studies showed that children who were repeatedly victimized at school had a strong aversion to the overall school environment (Rigby, 2003). In particular, victims of emotional bullying often reported high levels of conflict and betrayal if they were repeatedly exposed to this type of bullying (Yoon et al., 2004). According to a Washington state study, bully-type incidents were strongly associated with feelings of depression, being unsafe, carrying a weapon to school for protection and attacking others with the intent to do harm (“Bullying and Bias-Based,” 2002).

The American Medical Association (2005) stated there are warning signs for both bullying and other psychological problems in victims of bullying. These were:

1. avoidance of certain people, places, or situations
2. increased frequency in absences from school
3. changes in behavior, such as being withdrawn, passive, overly aggressive, self-destructive, lack of concentration, or unexplained bouts of rage or sullenness
4. frequent crying
5. signs of low self-esteem
6. unwillingness to speak or showing signs of fear when questioned about specific people or situations
7. signs of injuries
8. lack of empathy toward others
9. alcohol or other drug use
10. suicide ideation

11. sudden changes in social and academic functioning
12. recurrent unexplained physical symptoms such as sleep problems, headaches, and abdominal pain

Fear was commonplace for victims of bullies (Hoover, 1997). Hidden from direct scrutiny, victims of bullying often remained silent about their bullying experiences because they feared the bully would intensify the abuse (American Medical Association, 2005). Low self-esteem and depression were common side effects of this type of violence (Foltz-Gray, 1996). Emotional suffering due to being the target of taunts was very common among victims of bullies (Saxon, 2004). Victims might also exhibit physical signs and emotional reactions to their trauma, such as nervousness, worrying, anxiety, stomach-aches, headaches, and fatigue (Bonds, 2000). Victims dropped out of school, committed suicide, and even killed their tormentors (Packer, 1997).

Extreme reactions to victimization occurred. An analysis by the U.S. Secret Service of 37 school shooting incidents reported that a majority of shooters had suffered bullying and harassment that was longstanding and severe (Lumsden, 2002). Research by the National Institute of Health reported that of students who were victimized by bullies each week, 36.4% carried a gun to school, 28.7% carried another type of weapon to school, 22.6% were involved in frequent fighting, and 31.8% said they had been injured in a fight (National Institute of Health, 2003). In one case of a school shooting, the attacker was described by classmates as “the kid everyone teased”. This same study reported that several peers of this attacker noted that he seemed more annoyed by, and less tolerant of, the teasing than usual in the days preceding the attack (Fox et al., 2003).

Students might intuitively weigh their chances of becoming a victim and maneuver to avoid this type of situation. By making this adjustment, they found relative safety in the bystander position (Jeffrey, 2004). When students observed bullying incidents and watched in silence or even laughed at the action, they were seen by the bully as approving of their inappropriate behaviors (Davis, 2003). Bystanders rarely became involved in the bullying for fear of becoming the bullies' next victim or doing the wrong thing (Harris & Petrie, 2004).

### The Bystander

There was a gap in the literature in the role of peers in promoting bullying and victimization by reinforcing the bully, not intervening, or affiliating with the bully (Espelage, 2004). Little was known about the bystander, other than: he or she usually felt a decreased sense of individual responsibility by standing with a group to observe bullying incidents; guilty feelings were diminished somewhat by being part of a larger body of witnesses; and over time their feelings of self-confidence and self-respect were eroded to a point that they felt no moral responsibility to act in the defense of the victim (Colorosa, 2003). However, there were no innocent bystanders; in fact, the bystanders might be referred to as the "power group" (Barone, 2001). In fact, the presence of a peer audience was positively related to the persistence of bullying episodes (American Medical Association, 2005).

Research from Washington state ("Bullying and Bias-Based," 2002) indicated that students self-reported that if they saw another student bullying someone at school, 36% of sixth graders would tell the bully to stop and 41% of sixth graders would tell an adult about the situation. In the same study, 46% of 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students would tell the bully to stop but only 10% of the same students would report the incident to an adult. This might indicate why

bullying behaviors became less frequent as students age; the incidents were simply not reported to adults in charge.

Peer pressure could encourage or diffuse situations of bullying by the attitudes and reactions of the bystanders (Druck & Kaplowitz, 2005). Peers were present during almost 85% of bullying incidents but they chose to intervene only 10% of the time (Jeffrey, 2004).

Bystanders were sometimes referred to as the silent majority (Bonds, 2000) because they were present for the bullying behaviors but did not assist the victims. Bystanders might actually be classified in the following ways: supporter or passive bully who watched and supported the bullying incident; passive supporter who enjoyed the bullying activity but offered no support; disengaged onlooker who believed that bullying was “not my business”; or possible defender who disliked the bullying action but would not assist the victim (Colorosa, 2003).

Bystanders to the act of bullying most commonly gave four reasons for not intervening, which were: fear of getting hurt; fear of becoming the new target of the bully; fear of doing something to make the situation worse; and not knowing what to do (Colorosa, 2003). Over time, it might be possible that these fears and lack of skill may lead to apathy or even contempt toward the victim of a bully (Colorosa, 1993). In fact, bystanders who witnessed violent behavior but saw no negative consequences for the bully would be more likely to use aggression themselves in the future (Sudermann, Jaffe, & Schieck, 1996).

### The Adult

Adults in schools often played an integral role in assisting students who were “at risk” to become resilient; they did this by providing positive and safe learning environments, setting high and achievable goals, maintaining academic and social expectations, and facilitating student

success (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2001). Teachers had to work proactively to teach both academic and social skills to students, in order to help them achieve goals later in life (Christle et al.). Teachers might need to consider teaching social skills before working to teach core curriculum areas (Katz, 2003).

Many times, school personnel minimized or underestimated the extent of bullying and the harm it could cause (Lumsden, 2002). Adults within the school environment dramatically underestimated their effectiveness in identifying and intervening in bullying situations (Crawford, 2002). Only one in four students felt that adults were aware of anyone making the school unsafe for others, while nearly 70% of teachers believed they were “always” aware of bullying incidents (Garbarino, 2002). Many times adults sought to prevent aggression by invalidating the emotion that preceded it; however, anger was a naturally occurring emotion (Feindler & Starr, 2003). Most adults who talked to students about bullying told them relatively the same thing; ‘Don’t do it’, and ‘Be nice to each other’ (Simmons, 2002). In fact, adults frequently neglected to recognize the fact that many of the bad behaviors students exhibited were actually events of fighting back after being victimized by a bully (Preble, 2003).

Students often felt that adults were ineffective when dealing with bullying issues (Barnett, 2002). The victim might even be told to “quit complaining” in a blame-the-victim mentality (Macy, 2003). It was important to understand that teachers would not be able to identify all bullying incidents all the time (Kass, 1999). Adults tended to underestimate the prevalence of bullying behaviors in most school settings. Relational aggression might also be termed emotional violence and was one of the ways that females used to identify their relationships with others (Dellesaga & Nixon, 2003). However, it was imperative for school leaders to maintain a climate of mutual respect that was conducive to learning for all students

(Nelson, 2002). Research indicated that adults believed that a certain level of interpersonal aggression was to be expected in the normative development of adolescents (Yoon et al., 2004). This sentiment might help to explain why some teachers were indifferent toward emotional bullying behaviors in students and were less likely to intervene in these circumstances (Yoon et al., 2004).

Increasing teacher awareness about bullying could be the key to increasing the frequency of teacher interventions in bullying interactions (Nelson, 2002). The National Middle School Association (2003) identified an inviting school as one that worked proactively to eliminate harassment, bullying, verbal abuse, and name-calling. A growing body of research indicated that failure to combat the bullying problems in schools as they occurred might lead to sadness, despair, and hopelessness in affected children (American Medical Association, 2005).

### Possible Solutions for Bullying Behaviors

Bullying in school was one of the foremost problems on the minds of adolescents (Garbarino, 2002). Many students felt that safety at school was merely an illusion (Garbarino, 2002). Bullying incidents decreased in schools where there was a positive disciplinary climate and strong parental involvement (Ma, 2004). Genuine family and community involvement were fundamental components of successful schools or young adolescents (National Middle School Association, 2003). Anti-bullying programs were supported by federal and state legislation to help provide safer school environments (Spurling, 2004). Thus, schools had to adopt a perspective for prevention and intervention with bullying incidents (Nelson, 2002). In order for intervention to be successful, a change in the attitudes of all those involved was necessary to change the current system of bullying behaviors in public schools (Peretti, 2000).

## Changing the School Climate

Schools that were serious about developing the potential of all students were looking increasingly at the issue of school climate as a means of improving teaching, learning, and safety (Preble, 2003). Bullying was damaging not only to the students involved but also to the school environment (Gini, 2004). The act of bullying sullied school climates and was harmful as well as potentially lethal (Packer, 1997). Perceived school climate affected student psychosocial and academic functioning (Yoon et al., 2004).

Victimization of students increased in schools where there was a poor disciplinary climate (Ma, 2004). Aggressive acts were more likely to occur in schools with low staff morale, high teacher turnover, unclear standards of behavior, inconsistent methods of discipline, poor organization, inadequate supervision, and a lack of appreciation of children as individuals (American Medical Association, 2005). Hoover (1997) suggested a systematic plan to improve school climate by bringing into place rules, rights, and responsibilities for all students followed consistently by all adults.

Students must be brought to a place of mutual respect where the cruel and unusual punishment of bullying could be stopped (Clifford, 2001). Educators must establish standards to act as a guide to help students as they matured from being children to being successful adults (Vincent et al., 2004). Understanding school climate could assist in the development of programs to help all stakeholders better understand what groups of students and individuals were asked to endure as they come to school each day (Preble, 2003).

Bullies might be effectively stopped by engaging them in activities where they were forced to be caring and helpful to fellow students, not by using heavy-handed disciplinary techniques (Giannetti & Sagarese, 1997). Removal of bullies from social interactions with peers

would work for a short while to curtail the problem, but it would not keep the incidents from happening in the future (Walker, 1995). Traditional exclusions and punishments might work as a short-lived reprieve, but they were relatively ineffective and might lead to renewed incidents of disruption and escalating behaviors in the long-run (Vincent et al., 2002). Students rated non-violent aggression the least effective method for them individually to deal with bullies (Gamliel et al., 2003). However, punishment after the fact would always be too little too late to undo the agony such violence left behind; only prevention came in time to keep innocent people from becoming victims (Fox et al., 2003).

### Anti-Bullying Programs

Studies of successful anti-bullying programs in the United States were scarce, but data from other countries suggested that adopting a comprehensive approach in schools might change student behaviors (American Medical Association, 2005). Such programs might also alter student attitudes, reduce adolescent antisocial behaviors, and increase teacher willingness to intervene in bullying incidents (Limber & Nation, 1998). In order for anti-bullying programs to be successful, new information should be periodically collected to reinforce the ongoing need for intervention and to measure the impact of the program (American Medical Association). The best approach was to involve all stakeholders in selecting a mixture of violence prevention strategies designed to meet the needs of individual schools (American Medical Association). School-wide initiatives should include changes in school policies and procedures, staff development, bullying assessments, curriculum support, and programming initiatives (Yoon et al., 2004).

Anti-bullying programs, such as *Second Step*, focused on empathy and impulse control as well as problem solving and anger management (Second Step, n.d.). Students who participated in *Second Step* from pre-kindergarten through ninth grade would be exposed to many conflict resolution programs and skill development (Yoon et al., 2004). *Second Step* worked to reduce impulsive, high-risk, and aggressive behaviors and increase emotional competence of students (Second Step). Another program, entitled *The Incredible Years*, was originally designed for children aged two to eight who showed high levels of aggressive behavior; this program trained both parents and children in problem-solving and other non-aggressive social skills (Fox et al., 2003).

The *Bully B'Ware Program* provided students with bullying prevention classes (Katz, 2003). A curriculum entitled *Quit It*, developed by Educational Concepts, assisted students as they learned to cope with confrontations and learned how it felt to be a victim of bullying behaviors (CNN online, 1999). A program entitled *The Aggressors, Victims, and Bystanders* works reduced attention from bystanders in bullying incidents by training students to become “helpers” to the victim (Fox et al., 2003). The *Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support Program* involved both students and parents and required a collaborative approach between family units and professionals to alter problem behaviors and create support systems (Yoon et al., 2004). The *Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers (LIFT)* anti-aggression program showed positive results in that students who were not engaged in the program are 59% more likely to drink alcohol by the eighth grade, as well as being twice as likely to have been arrested during middle school (Fox et al.).

Other programs were highlighted in national periodicals such as *USA Today*. In one such program, everyone who dealt with “bullies, tyrants, and impossible people” was given insight on

how to be “NICE”; neutralize their emotions, identify the type of personality they were dealing with, control the encounter, and explore their options (USATODAY.com, 2005). *Operation Respect*, founded by Peter Yarrow, proved to be effective as an anti-bullying program; there was a reduction of 92% in bullying incidents, 86% in name-calling incidents, and 85% in hostility, hitting, and angry explosions in schools where this program was implemented (Fox et al., 2003). Spurling (2004) found that the *Bully-Free School Zone* character education program was effective in creating a more positive school environment in five Western North Carolina schools.

A “beeper study” was first instituted during a classic study entitled *Being Adolescent* by Reed Larson and Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi (Preble, 2003). This study paved the way for more current programs, such as *Main Street Academix*, which used snapshots of daily interactions of peers to indicate whether there was a bullying problem in specific schools. This program worked to empower youth and works to bring forth the hidden talents of students and assist them in becoming student leaders (Preble). Yet another study entitled *CAPSLE* (Creating a Peaceful School Learning Environment) added an element of physical education to teach both self-defense and self-control to students (American Medical Association, 2005).

The most effective anti-bullying programs would emphasize students being encouraged to accept responsibility for taking a stand against bullying and reporting it to adults (McCartney, 2005). One of the most widely used anti-bullying programs available was the *Olweus Bullying Prevention* program, initially developed and evaluated in Norway (American Medical Association, 2005). In this program the entire school worked as a community to change the climate of the school and the accepted norms of behavior (Crawford, 2002). The focus of the Olweus program was on school-wide interventions, classroom-level interventions, and individual-level interventions with assistance from the community (Limber & Nation, 1998).

Results from schools using the Olweus program were encouraging because administrations were reporting up to a 50% decrease in reported bullying incidents (Spivak et al., 2005). Students exposed to this anti-bullying program self-reported decreased rates of truancy, vandalism, and theft as well as indicating that the school climate was significantly more positive as a result of the program (Limber & Nation, 1998). After the Olweus program was evaluated in 39 South Carolina schools, there was a 20% decrease in self-reported bullying activities and bullying incidents increased in schools that did not implement the program over the course of this research (Fox et al., 2003).

### Making Positive School Wide Changes

In order to combat bullying effectively, schools must take an active interest in stopping the problem, the adults must work to understand why students bully, and they must provide students with non-violent skills to deal with bullies (Webster-Doyle, 1991). Schoolwide components to stopping bullying included: gathering information about bullying at school from students; establishing class and school rules about bullying; training all adults in school to respond sensitively and consistently to bullying; providing adequate supervision, especially in less-structured areas of the building; and improving parent awareness of and involvement in the solution to the problem (Colorosa, 2003). Bullying occurred in many locations at school but most commonly the playground, classroom, and hallway (Dake et al., 2003).

Antidotes for students to assist in the termination of bullying included building a strong sense of self; being a friend; having at least one good friend; and successfully becoming involved in a group (Colorosa, 2003). Proactive approaches to engage the community at many levels would assist in combating the problem both at school and lead to a personalized community

(Soukamneuth, 2004). Only a combination of prevention solutions could effectively curtail the bullying problems found in most schools (MacNeil & Newell, 2004).

### Summary

Schools must work effectively to combat the bullying incidents students face on a daily basis. Beane (1999) found there were 10 facts about bullying that all schools needed to know:

1. bullying is more than teasing
2. anyone can be a bully
3. anyone can be a victim
4. bullying is not a modern problem
5. bullying affects everyone
6. bullying is a serious problem
7. stakeholders can work together to find a solution to the problem
8. comprehensive plans will provide the best results
9. children at risk can be helped
10. schools are responsible for protecting students.

Hoover and Oliver (1996) stated that bullying prevention programs might be necessary for schools due to the *in loco parentis* legal responsibilities they have. They also stated that bullying may fall under the provisions of Title IX of the Education Act due to sexual harassment issues.

Through the time of 1999 until 2004, there was a remarkable increase in the recognition among scholars, school administrators, and parents that bullying among American students occurred with great frequency (Espelage, 2004). Educators stated that bullying was the second most serious student behavior, after drug use, and that physical bullying was the worst type of

bullying, followed by verbal and emotional (Dake et al., 2003). In schools where bullying pervaded the culture, a change in school climate must occur (Kass, 1999). Bullies needed to have positive behavior modeling, coaching, prompting, and praise to reinforce good behaviors, not just negative consequences for their poor choices in behavior (Lumsden, 2002). Passive or reactive approaches to promoting intergroup relations were oftentimes ineffective and might actually increase the animosity among students (Soukamneuth, 2004).

There were several key components to successfully addressing the bullying culture in schools according to Preston, McCubrey, Gratto, and Archer (2002). Schools needed to be aware and proactive in dealing with bullies; policies should extend to teachers, parents, community, staff, and students. The environment in the school should create awareness against bullying to help students feel safe and secure. Victims and bullies should be addressed equally. Prevention and intervention strategies must focus on changing the behavior of the bully and upon protecting and empowering both the victim and the bystander (Yoon et al., 2004).

There had to be a realization that bullying was real and had a vast array of detrimental affects on children. Spivak et al. (2005) stated that although therapeutic interventions were needed in order to focus on student behaviors, it was even more important that mental health care professionals work to address underlying issues. There were three adaptive systems important for developing youth competence and resiliency, these included: involvement of caring parents and other adult caregivers, development of skills for self-regulation of attention, emotion, and behavior, and development of good cognitive skills and intellectual functioning (American Medical Association, 2005).

The Public Health Data Watch (“Bullying and Bias-Based,” 2002) stated the following recommendations to assist schools as they addressed the problems of bullying and harassment:

1. provide an environment and a curriculum that will prevent all forms of bullying and bias-based harassment
2. improve the handling of bullying and harassment
3. take actions to increase the reporting of bullying and harassment
4. monitor harassment and bullying regularly through incident reports and student surveys
5. collect data about other forms of harassment
6. develop surveys to better understand violence

A positive school environment was consistently found to be effective in the reduction of bullying incidents (Harris & Petrie, 2004). Activities that research showed to be unsuccessful in combating the bullying problem in American schools included: peer mediation approaches, zero tolerance policies, and simply advising students to “stand up to bullies” (Fox et al., 2003). Schools needed to work to develop a culture of social competence in order to have a school climate acceptable to all students (Vincent et al., 2002). Activities that incorporated both classroom and school-wide accountability (the “whole-school” approach) were shown to be the most successful in combating the bullying problem (Dake et al., 2003). In order for anti-bullying programs to be successful, there must be adequate effort and funding to provide needed interventions in United States schools (Spivak et al., 2005). Creating a school environment that guarantees physical safety and psychological security of students was an important task to promote academic, social, and emotional competence (Yoon et al., 2004).

Chapter 2 presented a review of the literature supporting the need for the study and characteristics of student bullying. Chapter 3 presents a description of the school environment in which the study took place as well as the methods and procedures used for gathering data and the

procedures used to obtain and process the data. Chapter 4 includes a presentation and analysis of the data. Chapter 5 presents a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for the school.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the bullying behaviors of a single class of middle school students as they progressed through E. B. Stanley Middle School in Abingdon, Virginia. This study used data available to the school administration upon student completion of three consecutive years in this middle school.

#### Profile of E. B. Stanley Middle School

E. B. Stanley Middle School is the largest middle school in Washington County, Virginia. It has a multicultural student enrollment, which averages 700 per year in grades six, seven, and eight combined. The middle school receives students from three feeder elementary schools in the county: Abingdon Elementary, Greendale Elementary, and Watauga Elementary. These students come from a variety of social and economic backgrounds. The ethnicity of students at E. B. Stanley has remained stable with 96% Caucasian, 2.4% African-American, 0.4% Hispanic, and 1.2% Asian. The percentage of students receiving free lunch, 21.7%, or reduced price lunch, 7.0% has also remained stable.

Within the entire student population of E. B. Stanley Middle School, there are several smaller groups of identified students. Students identified and served as at-risk compose 14.2% of the population. Students identified and served as gifted and talented compose 16.5% of the student body. Students identified and served in the area of special education compose 16.1% of the population. Students have remained constant in their attendance in school, averaging 95.4% attendance for the past three school years.

Sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students receive six hours and 55 minutes of instruction per day. Four hours and 20 minutes are allocated to the core subjects of mathematics, English, science, and social studies. Grades six and seven have a 40-minute exploratory class and grade eight has a 45-minute exploratory class. Students may take exploratory classes in the areas of chorus, band, art, Spanish, fine arts, technology, computer technology, or teen living. All grades have a 45-minute study hall and a 30-minute physical education block daily. Teachers have a duty-free planning period each day in addition to an unencumbered lunch period. Homework is seen as an extension of class time. It is assigned at the discretion of the individual teacher. Guidelines for homework are established by the superintendent of schools.

At E. B. Stanley Middle School, there are 54 teachers all of whom are certified in their teaching area. There are 35 teachers who have bachelor degrees and one who has completed advanced study certification in the state of Virginia. Nineteen teachers have graduated from a master's program and the assistant principal is participating in a doctoral program. Forty teachers have completed state requirements for technology certification. In addition to the faculty, there are two administrators, two guidance counselors, two office secretaries, one bookkeeper, one library secretary, six special education teacher aides, three custodians, and 10 food service professionals in the building. The current teacher to pupil ratio is 24 to one in all grades. There is a much lower ratio in special education resource classes.

### Research Design

The time of early adolescence is wrought with great physical and emotional changes in middle school students. Many of these changes manifest themselves as bullying behaviors in students as they work to form new relationships with peers and strive to form their individual

identities. This study used a single class of middle school age students who attend E. B. Stanley Middle School. Of these students, only those reported to the office for disciplinary action regarding bullying incidents were analyzed. These students became the population of the study.

The following research questions acted as a guide in completing this study:

1. Do males and females differ in the number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors?
2. Do males and females differ in the number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors at certain grade levels?
3. Do grade levels differ in their frequency of discipline referrals for bullying?
4. Are the frequencies of disciplinary referrals for bullying incidents related to student location?

From these four research questions, the following null hypotheses were developed:

HO1: There is no difference in the number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors exhibited by males and females.

HO2A: There is no difference in the number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors exhibited by males and females in the sixth grade.

HO2B: There is no difference in the number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors exhibited by males and females in the seventh grade.

HO2C: There is no difference in the number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors exhibited by males and females in the eighth grade.

HO3: There is no difference in the frequency of reported bullying behaviors by grade level.

HO4: There is no difference in the number of reported bullying incidents as related to student location.

### Population

The population used for this study included middle school students who attended E. B. Stanley Middle School from August 2002 until May 2005. During their sixth grade year, there were 236 students, 122 males and 114 females. During their seventh grade year, there were 240 students, 119 males and 121 females. During their eighth grade year, there were 242 students, 116 males and 126 females.

### Data Collection

Bullying behaviors that were reported to the school administration as disciplinary referrals were used for analysis. The data were subdivided into groups including: student gender, location within the school of each incident, grade of student (sixth, seventh, or eighth) at the time of each incident, bullying type of each incident (verbal, physical, or emotional). Data collected were from August 2002 through May 2005.

Upon reports to the office for disciplinary action, the bullying incidents were recorded by the assistant principal both manually and by computer. The disciplinary computer program available was SASI (used by all Washington County, Virginia Public Schools). Hand tabulation took place to record the grade level of students at the time of the perceived bullying incident as well as the gender of the students, the type of bullying incident that occurred, and the location of the bullying incident. Calculations were made to determine the totals of each subgroup of data. The data were then input into the statistical analysis program of SPSS to determine final results.

## Data Analysis

Nonparametric statistics were used to complete a more comprehensive profile of the student population. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS). Comparisons of results were analyzed by use of chi-square test statistics and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Research Question 1 was analyzed by the use of chi-square test statistics. The number of verbal, physical, and emotional bullying incidents for males and females were input into SPSS. Chi-square test analysis was used to determine whether to reject or fail to reject the stated null hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the mean number of verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors exhibited by males and females.

Research Question 2 was analyzed by the use chi-square test statistics. The number of verbal, physical, and emotional bullying incidents for males and females were categorized by grade level and input into SPSS. Chi-square test analysis was used for each grade level and student gender to determine whether to reject or fail to reject the stated null hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the mean number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors exhibited by males and females at certain grade levels.

Research Question 3 was analyzed by the use of a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The total types of bullying incidents were categorized by grade level of students and input into SPSS. Descriptive statistics and a one-way ANOVA were used to determine whether to reject or fail to reject the null hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the frequency of reported bullying behaviors by grade level. The partial eta-squared value was determined in order to state the strength of the relationship between the variables. A post hoc follow-up test was not needed due to the lack of significance.

Research Question 4 was analyzed by the use of a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The locations of bullying incidents were categorized by grade level of students and input into SPSS. Descriptive statistics and a one-way ANOVA were used to determine whether to reject or fail to reject the null hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the number of reported bullying incidents as related to student location. The partial eta-squared value was determined in order to state the strength of the relationship between the variables. The homogeneity of variances tests was not found to be significant so equal variances were assumed. Levene's test of equality of error variances was not significant. A Tukey HSD post hoc follow-up test was conducted in order to determine the significance between groups.

## CHAPTER 4

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The American public has become increasingly concerned with school safety and the methods of schools in dealing with perceived bullying incidents. In order to answer questions adequately from school stakeholders (i.e. parents, students, teachers, community members, and others), many schools implemented various types of bullying prevention programs within their schools. In order for these programs to be successful, an adequate understanding of the bullying problem within each school had to be maintained.

This study established a baseline of data that may be used at E. B. Stanley Middle School in Abingdon, Virginia as the stakeholders work to implement an effective bullying prevention program. It showed trends in bullying activities by grade, student gender, frequency, and location of incidents as the students progressed from sixth to eighth grade from the years 2002 until 2005.

In this chapter, the research questions presented in Chapter 1 and the hypotheses presented in Chapter 3 are addressed. The purpose of this study was to investigate reported bullying behaviors of a single class of students as they progressed through E. B. Stanley Middle School in Abingdon, Virginia. The study involved the analysis of data collected from August 2002 until May 2005. Four research questions formed the basis of this study with null hypotheses being developed for each question. All calculations were performed using SPSS.

### Major Findings of the Study

Table 1 presents the percentage of reported bullying incidents subdivided by type, gender, and grade level of students who bullied others at the time of each incident. Each bullying incident reported was evaluated based upon the perpetrator of the activity.

Table 1

#### *Percentage of Bullying Incidents*

Grade Level	Type of Incident	Male	Female	Total
6 <sup>th</sup>	Verbal	77%	23%	129
	Physical	87%	13%	65
	Emotional	52%	48%	48
7 <sup>th</sup>	Verbal	69%	31%	121
	Physical	83%	17%	93
	Emotional	52%	48%	58
8 <sup>th</sup>	Verbal	70%	30%	155
	Physical	64%	36%	79
	Emotional	30%	70%	107

6<sup>th</sup> = 2002 – 2003

7<sup>th</sup> = 2003 – 2004

8<sup>th</sup> = 2004 - 2005

Table 2 presents the participants divided by gender and by the type of bullying incident reported to show the difference of incidents as students progressed through middle school.

These data were analyzed by using SPSS with either a chi-square test analysis or a one-way ANOVA.

Table 2

*Reported Bullying Incidents.*

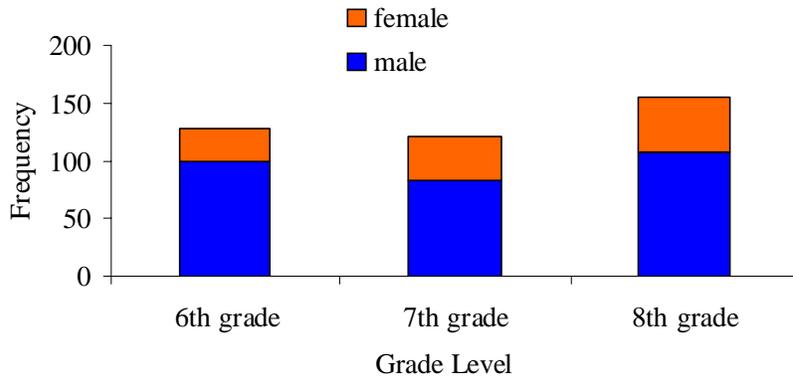
Grade Level	Type of Incident	Male	Female	Total
6 <sup>th</sup>	Verbal	99	30	129
	Physical	56	9	65
	Emotional	25	23	48
	Total	180	62	242
7 <sup>th</sup>	Verbal	83	38	121
	Physical	77	16	93
	Emotional	30	28	58
	Total	190	82	272
8 <sup>th</sup>	Verbal	108	47	155
	Physical	50	29	79
	Emotional	32	75	107
	Total	190	151	341

6<sup>th</sup> = 2002 -2003

7<sup>th</sup> = 2003-2004

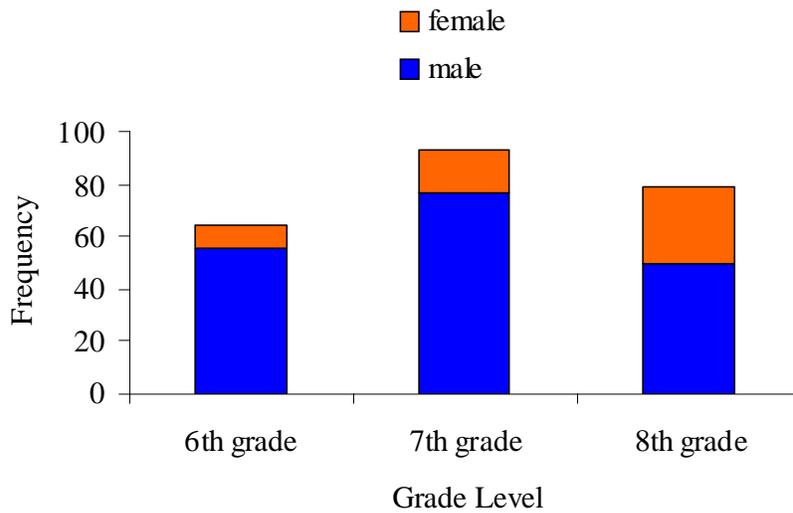
8<sup>th</sup> = 2004-2005

Figure 1 depicts verbal bullying incidents committed at E. B. Stanley Middle School that occurred from August 2002 until May 2005, subdivided by both gender and grade level.



*Figure 1: Verbal Bullying Incidents by Gender and Grade Level*

Figure 2 depicts physical bullying incidents committed at E. B. Stanley Middle School that occurred from August 2002 until May 2005, subdivided by both gender and grade level.



*Figure 2: Physical Bullying Incidents by Gender and Grade Level*

Figure 3 depicts emotional bullying incidents committed at E. B. Stanley Middle School that occurred from August 2002 until May 2005, subdivided by both gender and grade level.

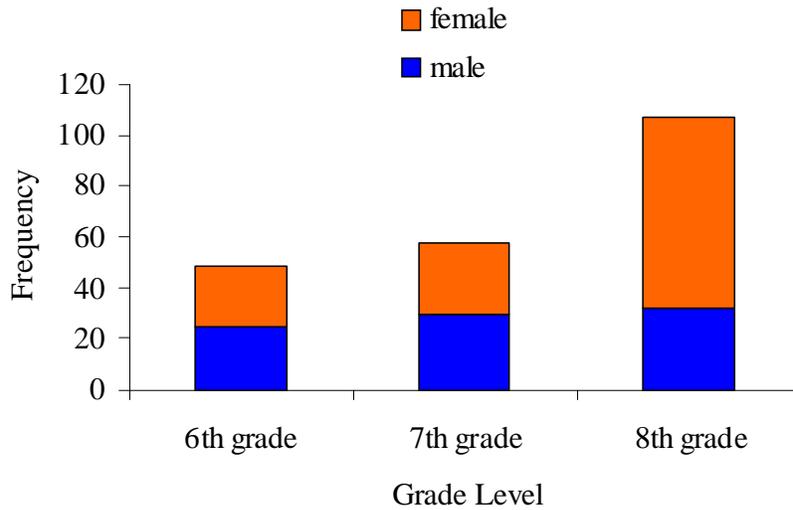
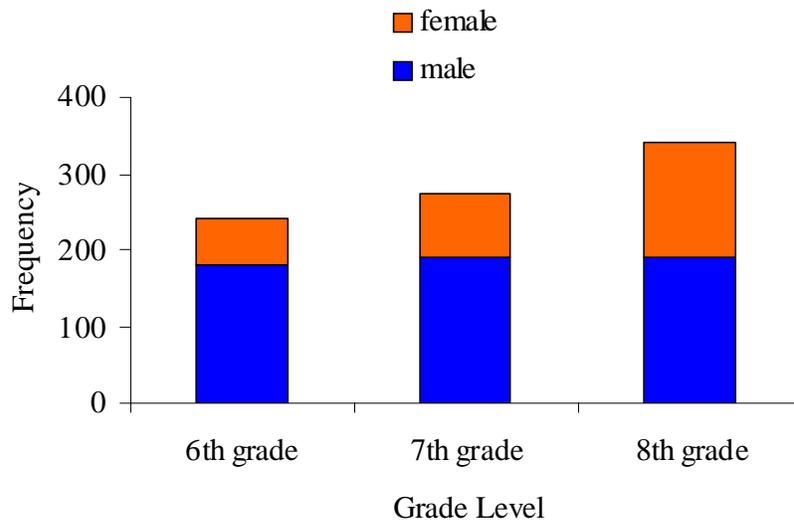


Figure 3: Emotional Bullying Incidents by Gender and Grade Level

Figure 4 depicts the total bullying incidents committed at E.B. Stanley Middle School that occurred from August 2002 until May 2005, subdivided by both gender and grade level.



*Figure 4: Total Bullying Incidents by Gender and Grade Level*

Table 3 presents the participants divided among the locations where the reported bullying incidents actually occurred, subdivided by grade level. Other locations include outside recess, cafeteria, bus duty, and class changes.

Table 3

*Locations of Reported Bullying Incidents*

Grade Level	Type of Incident	Bus	Class	Hall	Other	Total
6 <sup>th</sup>	Verbal	15	56	22	36	129
	Physical	1	26	18	20	65
	Emotional	4	23	5	16	48
	Total	20	105	45	72	242
7 <sup>th</sup>	Verbal	19	40	24	38	121
	Physical	2	29	26	36	93
	Emotional	0	26	5	27	58
	Total	21	95	127	101	272
8 <sup>th</sup>	Verbal	29	31	34	61	155
	Physical	6	20	18	35	79
	Emotional	2	39	10	56	107
	Total	37	185	62	214	341
TOTAL		78	290	162	325	855

6<sup>th</sup> = 2002 -2003

7<sup>th</sup> = 2003-2004

8<sup>th</sup> = 2004-2005

Figure 5 depicts the verbal bullying incidents committed at E. B. Stanley Middle School that occurred from August 2002 until May 2005, subdivided by location and grade level.

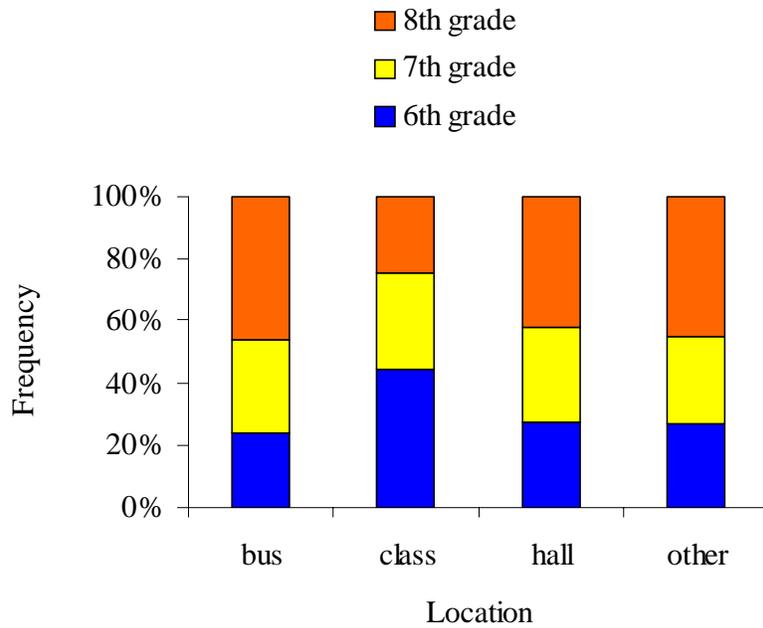


Figure 5: Verbal Bullying Incidents by Location and Grade Level

Figure 6 depicts the physical bullying incidents committed at E. B. Stanley Middle School that occurred from August 2002 until May 2005, subdivided by location and grade level.

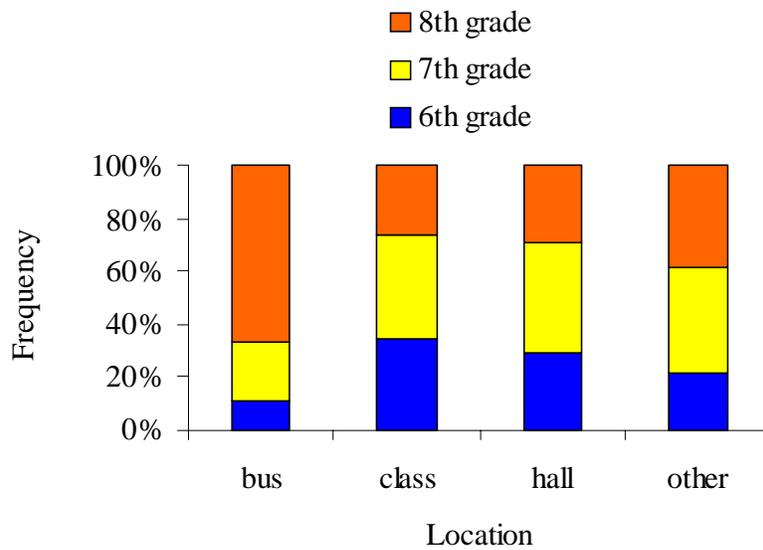


Figure 6: Physical Bullying Incidents by Location and Grade Level

Figure 7 depicts emotional bullying incidents committed at E. B. Stanley Middle School that occurred from August 2002 until May 2005, subdivided by both location and grade level.

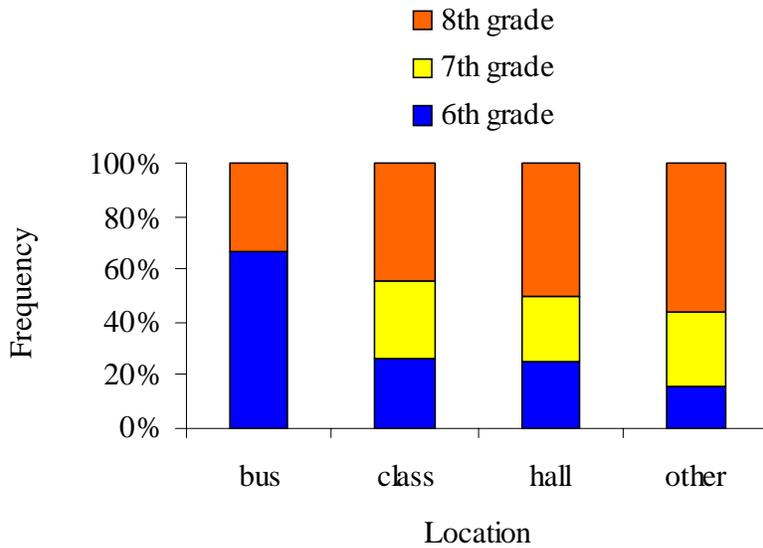


Figure 7: Emotional Bullying Incidents by Location and Grade Level

Figure 8 depicts the total bullying incidents committed at E. B. Stanley Middle School that occurred from August 2002 until May 2005, subdivided by both location and grade level.

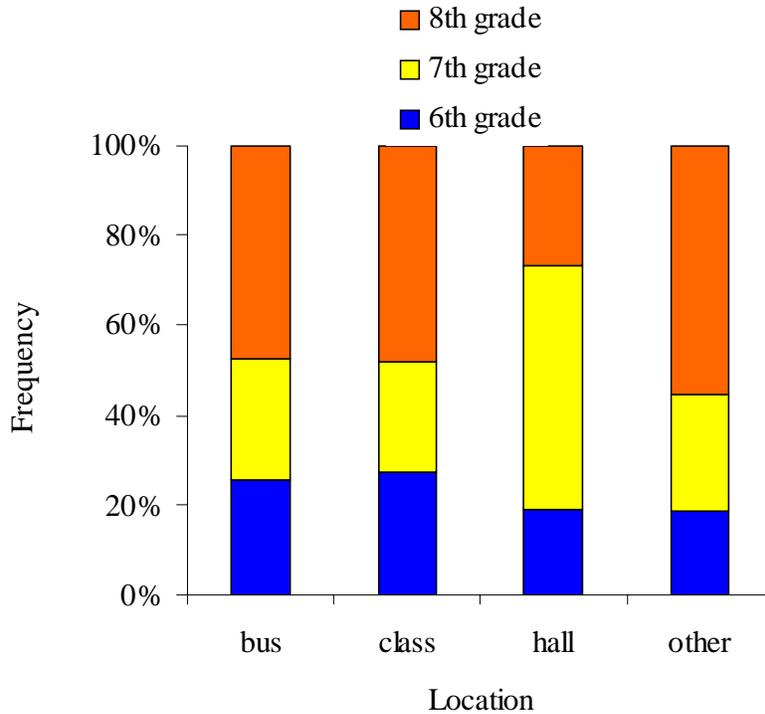


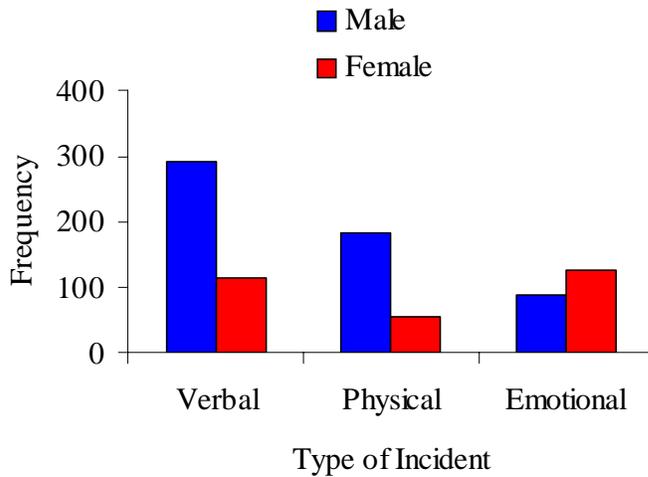
Figure 8: Total Bullying Incidents by Location and Grade Level

Research Question 1

Do males and females differ in the number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying incidents?

HO1: There is no significant difference in the number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors exhibited by males and females.

Research Question 1 addressed the difference between gender of students and the reported bullying behaviors by using the data found in Figure 1. The number of reported behaviors by grade level was attained and analyzed using a chi-square test analysis. Figure 9 indicates the total bullying incidents committed that occurred at E.B. Stanley Middle School from August 2002 until May 2005, separated by type of incident and student gender.



*Figure 9: Total Bullying Incidents by Gender*

In the comparison of students by gender and mean number of verbal, physical, and emotional bullying incidents, a significant difference was determined. Pearson Chi-Square (2,N=855)=78.37,  $p < .001$ , Cramer's  $V = .303$ . Analysis of verbal bullying incidents showed that males committed 71.6% of these incidents and females 28.4%. Analysis of physical bullying incidents showed that males committed 77.2% of these incidents and females 22.8%. Analysis of emotional bullying incidents showed that males committed 40.8% of these and females 59.2%. A significant difference was determined and the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore; there is a significant difference in the total number of bullying behaviors exhibited by males and females.

### Research Question 2

Do males and females differ in the mean number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying incidents at certain grade levels?

HO2A: There is no significant difference in the number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors exhibited by males and females in the sixth grade.

HO2B: There is no significant difference in the number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors exhibited by males and females in the seventh grade.

HO2C: There is no significant difference in the number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors exhibited by males and females in the eighth grade.

Research Question 2 addressed the differences in the numbers of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors by gender and separated by grade level. The number of reported types of behaviors by gender was attained and analyzed using a chi-square test analysis. In the comparison of students by gender and mean number of reported bullying behaviors, a significant difference was determined at all three grade levels.

Figure 10 indicates the type of bullying incidents committed by sixth grade students at E. B. Stanley Middle School from August 2002 until June 2003, separated by student gender.

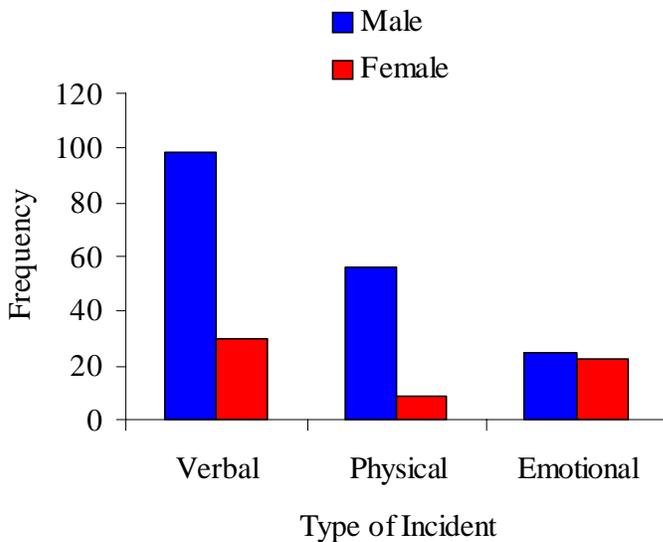


Figure 10: Sixth Grade Bullying Incidents by Gender

Analysis of sixth grade data by using chi-square test analysis yielded a significant difference in the types of bullying behaviors by gender. Pearson Chi-Square (2, N=242)=17.63,  $p < .001$ , Cramer's  $V = .270$ . Analysis of verbal bullying incidents showed that sixth grade males committed 76.7% of these and females 23.3%. Analysis of physical bullying incidents showed that sixth grade males committed 86.2% of these incidents and females 13.8%. Analysis of emotional bullying incidents showed that sixth grade males committed 52.1% of these incidents and females 47.9%. A significant difference was determined and the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors by males and females in the sixth grade.

Figure 11 indicates the type of bullying incidents committed by seventh grade students at E. B. Stanley Middle School from August 2003 until June 2004, separated by student gender.

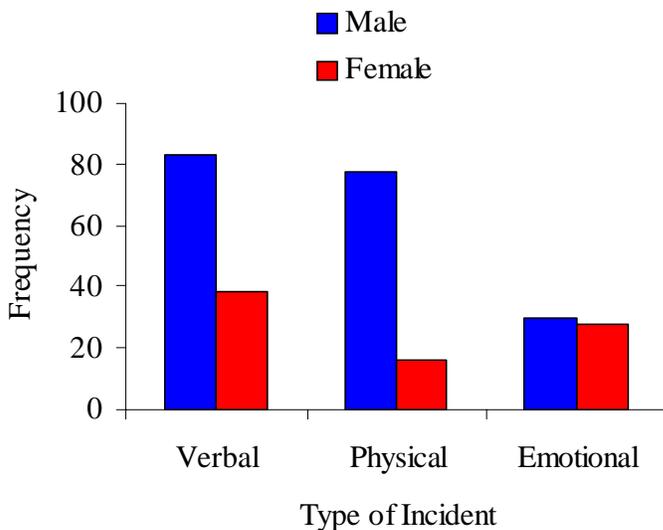


Figure 11: Seventh Grade Bullying Incidents by Gender

Analysis of seventh grade data by using chi-square test analysis yielded a significant difference in the types of bullying behaviors by gender. Pearson Chi-Square (2, N=272)=16.54,

$p < .001$ , Cramer's  $V = .247$ . Analysis of verbal bullying incidents showed that seventh grade males committed 68.6% of these incidents and females 31.4%. Analysis of physical bullying incidents showed that seventh grade males committed 82.8% of these incidents and females 17.2%. Analysis of emotional bullying incidents showed that seventh grade males committed 51.7% of these incidents and females 48.3%. A significant difference was determined and the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore; there is a significant difference in the verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors exhibited by males and females in the seventh grade.

Figure 12 indicates the type of bullying incidents committed by eighth grade students at E. B. Stanley Middle School from August 2004 until May 2005, separated by student gender.

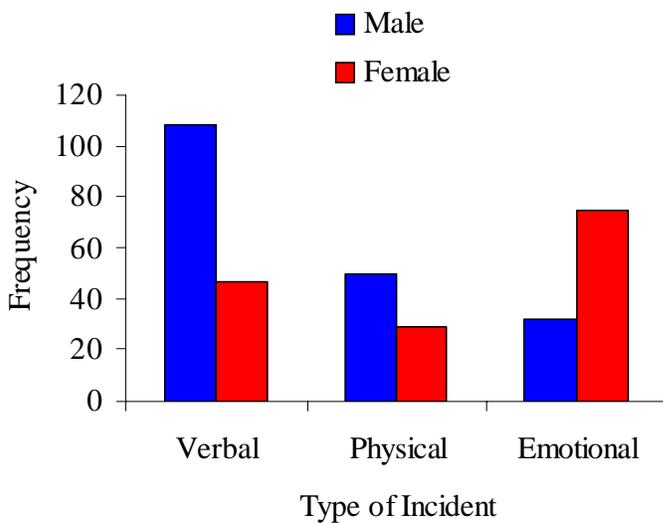


Figure 12: Eighth Grade Bullying Incidents by Gender

Analysis of eighth grade data by using chi-square test analysis yielded a significant difference in the types of bullying behaviors by gender. Pearson Chi-Square (2, N=341)=42.97,  $p < .001$  and Cramer's  $V = .355$ . Analysis of verbal bullying incidents showed that eighth grade males committed 69.7% of these incidents and females 30.3%. Analysis of physical bullying

incidents showed that eighth grade males committed 63.3% of these incidents and females 36.7%. Analysis of emotional bullying incidents showed that eighth grade males committed 29.9% of these incidents and females 70.1%. A significant difference was determined and the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore; there is a significant difference in the verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors exhibited by males and females in the eighth grade.

Research Question 3

Do grade levels differ in their frequency of discipline referrals for bullying?

HO3: There is no difference in the frequency of reported bullying behaviors by grade level.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between grade levels and the frequency of reported bullying incidents. Figure 13 indicates the frequency of the types of bullying incidents committed separated by grade level.

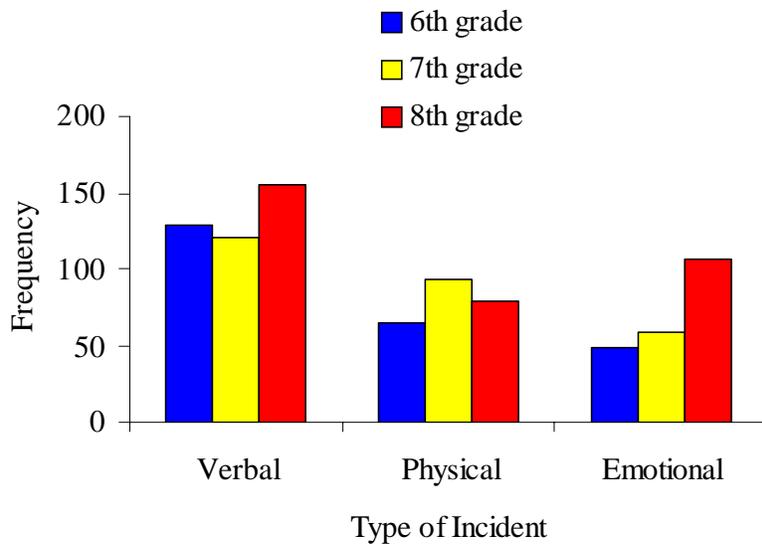


Figure 13: Total Bullying Incidents by Grade Level

The ANOVA was not significant,  $F(2,6) = .28$ ,  $p = .58$ . The strength of the relationship as assessed by using eta-squared was determined to be moderately strong; with the grade level frequencies of bullying incidents reported as .17. Because the overall F value was not significant, no follow-up post hoc tests were conducted.

There were no significant differences between the frequencies of bullying behaviors at different grade levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained: There is no difference in the frequency of reported bullying behaviors by grade level.

#### Research Question 4

Are the frequencies of disciplinary referrals for bullying incidents related to certain locations?

HO4: There is no difference in the number of reported bullying incidents in certain locations.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the location of bullying incidents and the frequency of the reported incidents. Figure 14 indicates the location of reported bullying incidents committed, separated by grade level. Other locations include outside recess, cafeteria, bus duty, and class changes.

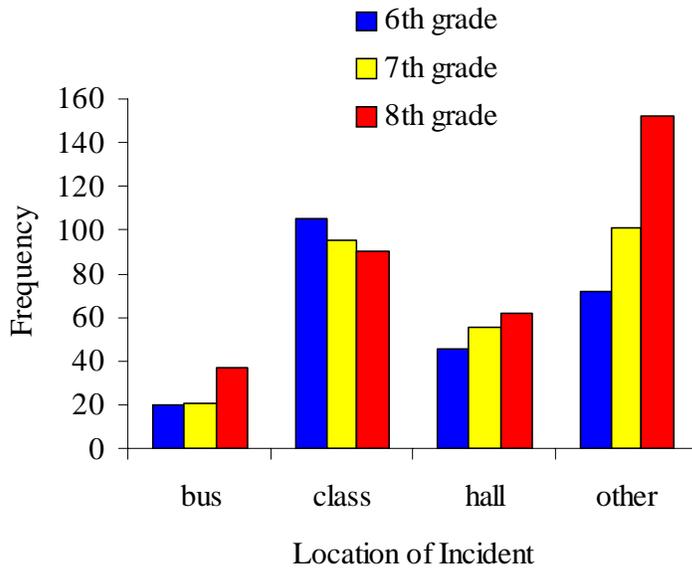


Figure 14: Total Bullying Incidents by Location

The ANOVA was found to be significant,  $F(3,8) = 3.82$ ,  $p = .01$ . Because the p value was less than .05, the null hypothesis was rejected. The strength of the relationship was assessed using partial eta-squared and was found to be strong, with the frequency of incidents at different locations being .78.

The homogeneity of variances test did not show a significant difference among locations so equal variances were assumed. Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the means. Tukey's HSD test was used due to the assumption of equal variances.

As shown in Table 5, there were no pairwise differences between locations of student bullying behaviors except when comparing the bus with class and the bus with other locations. These two comparisons led to a rejection of the null hypothesis, while the remaining comparisons led to the retention of the null hypothesis.

Table 4

*Location of Reported Bullying Incidents*

Location	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>bus</i>	<i>class</i>	<i>hall</i>	<i>other</i>
Bus	77	26.0	9.54	----	.02*	.44	.01*
Class	290	96.7	7.34	.02*	----	.15	.91
Hall	162	54.0	8.54	.44	.15	----	.06
Other	325	108.3	40.50	.01*	.91	.06	----

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

There was a significant difference in the means between the bus and classroom locations ( $p=.02$ ) as well as between the bus and other locations ( $p = .01$ ). Other group pairwise comparisons did not show a significant difference in the frequencies of reported bullying incidents. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected in two situations: There was a difference in the number of reported bullying incidents between the bus and class locations and between the bus and other locations. However, the null hypothesis was retained in all other instances: There was no difference in the number of reported bullying incidents in certain locations.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary of the Study

Chapter 5 presents a summary of the findings of the study, and the literature review and provides conclusions and recommendations for further study and practice.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the bullying behaviors of a single class of students as they progressed through E. B. Stanley Middle School in Abingdon, Virginia. Five research questions form the basis of this study namely: Do males and females differ in their types of reported bullying behaviors? Do students differ in the types of reported bullying activities by grade level? Do grade levels differ in the frequency of discipline referrals for bullying? Are the frequencies of discipline referrals for bullying incidents related to student location?

Data were gathered over the course of three consecutive school years from August 2002 through May 2005. Bullying behaviors that were reported to the school administration as disciplinary referrals were used for analysis. The data were subdivided into groups including student gender, location within the school of each incident, grade of student (sixth, seventh, or eighth) at the time of each incident, and bullying type of each incident (physical, verbal, or emotional). Data were then analyzed using the statistical analysis program of SPSS to determine final results. Reported bullying incidents were analyzed based upon gender of students, grade level of students, frequency of bullying behaviors, types of bullying behaviors (verbal, physical, or emotional), and location of incidents (bus, classroom, hallway, or other).

Significant differences in the types of bullying behaviors exhibited by males and females were determined. Also, significant differences in the types of bullying behaviors by males and females by grade level were determined. There were no significant differences found upon the analysis of the frequency of reported bullying behaviors by grade level. However, significant differences were determined at the 95% level when comparing locations of bullying incidents. Two pairwise differences were found to be significantly different; the bus and class locations ( $p=.02$ ) as well as the bus and other locations ( $p=.01$ ).

### Summary of the Literature Review

The literature review revealed that bullying is an epidemic within American schools and has become both distinctive and destructive (Simmons, 2002). A study of the literature also indicated that nearly 30% of American school children report that they have been involved in some aspect of bullying (AMA, 2005).

The literature review also highlighted a variety of environmental issues related to bullying behaviors and research studies that indicate that classic bullying behavior peaks during the middle school years and then begins to decrease as students become more mature (Banks, 1997). The literature reported that there was a physiological difference between children based upon the family environment in which they lived (Garbarino, 1999). It was found that in the review that a large number of bullies stemmed from families where parents spend little time with children and where discipline was inconsistent and episodic (Davis, 2003). Additionally, the manner in which parents dealt with their own conflicts influenced adolescent behavior (Spurling, 2004).

According to the literature, school size, location, or demographics did not seem to be distinguishing factors in predicting the occurrence of bullying behaviors (Jordan, 2000). Olweus

(1993) found that bullying was a component of a more generally anti-social and rule-breaking (conduct-disordered) behavior pattern among adolescents. In order for intervention to be successful, a change in the attitudes of all those involved was necessary to change the current system of bullying behaviors in public schools (Peretti, 2000).

### Summary of Findings

The descriptive data associated with the research questions of this study reflect bullying behaviors of a single class of students as they progressed through E. B. Stanley Middle School in Abingdon, Virginia. Reported bullying incidents were analyzed based upon gender of students, grade level of students, number of bullying behaviors, types of bullying behaviors (verbal, physical, or emotional), and location of incidents (bus, classroom, hallway, or other).

This study's findings were consistent with past research. Numerous bullying incidents were reported to the administration of E. B. Stanley Middle School. When further analysis of these incidents occurred, it was found that many incidents fit within the norm of expected bullying activities based upon past research.

The study found that there was a significant difference in the types of bullying incidents that occur within grade levels at E. B. Stanley Middle School. As younger students enter middle school they are greatly affected by their peer relationships. They tend to report instances of peer emotional bullying with greater frequency at the lower grades. Eighth grade students are more emotionally mature and do not tend to report instances of emotional bullying to adults.

Each research question and its associated findings are summarized below:

#### Research Question 1

Do males and females differ in the number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying incidents?

Research Question 1 addressed the difference between gender of students and the types of reported bullying behaviors by using the data found in Figure 1. A significant difference was determined between the bullying behaviors of males and females by using Pearson's Chi-Square test analysis. Results by using chi-square (2, N=855)=78.37 and Cramer's V=.303 were determined to be significant ( $p<.001$ ). Also, based upon percentage of incidents, males bully more using verbal and physical methods while females bully more using emotional methods. Therefore; the null hypothesis was rejected.

### Research Question 2

Do males and females differ in the number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors at certain grade levels?

Research Question 2 addressed the differences in the number of reported verbal, physical, and emotional bullying behaviors by gender and grade level. The number of reported behaviors by gender was attained and analyzed using a chi-square analysis. A significant difference was determined between the bullying behaviors of males and females at different grade levels.

The use of Pearson's Chi-Square test analysis sixth grade results were chi-square (2, N=242)=17.63 and Cramer's V=.270 were determined to be significant ( $p<.001$ ). Based upon the use of percentage of reported incidents, males bully more than females in all three types of bullying incidents while in the sixth grade. Pearson's Chi-Square test analysis for seventh grade results were chi-square (2, N=272)=16.54 and Cramer's V=.247 were determined to be significant ( $p<.001$ ). Based upon the percentage of reported incidents, males bully more than females in all three types of bullying incidents while in the seventh grade. However, emotional bullying percentages are close (males=51.7% and females=48.3%). Pearson's Chi-Square test

analysis for eighth grade results were chi-square (2, N=341)=42.97 and Cramer's V=.355 were determined to be significant ( $p < .001$ ). Based upon the percentage of reported incidents, males bully more than females by the use of verbal and physical bullying but females use emotional bullying more than males while in the eighth grade. Therefore; all null hypotheses were rejected.

### Research Question 3

Do grade levels differ in their frequency of discipline referrals for bullying?

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the relationship between grade levels and the frequency of reported bullying incidents.

The ANOVA was not significant,  $F(2,6) = .28$ ,  $p = .58$ . The strength of the relationship as assessed by using eta-squared was determined to be moderately strong, with the grade level frequencies of bullying incidents reported being. Because the overall F value was not significant, no follow-up post hoc tests were conducted. The mean, standard deviations, and significance of each grade level are reported in Table 6. The findings indicated that there are no significant differences between the frequencies of bullying behaviors at different grade levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

### Research Question 4

Are the frequencies of disciplinary referrals for bullying incidents related to certain locations?

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the location of bullying incidents and the frequency of the reported incidents. The ANOVA was found to be significant,  $F(3,8)=3.82$ ,  $p=.01$ . Because the p value is less than .05 the null hypothesis is rejected. The

strength of the relationship was assessed using partial eta-squared and was found to be strong, with the frequency of incidents at different locations being .78.

The homogeneity of variances test did not show a significant difference among locations so equal variances were assumed. Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the means. Tukey's HSD test was used due to the assumption of equal variances. The findings indicated that there was a significant difference in the means between the bus and classroom locations ( $p=.02$ ) as well as between the bus and other locations ( $p=.01$ ). Other group pairwise comparisons did not show a significant difference in the frequencies of reported bullying incidents. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected in two situations: There is a difference in the number of reported bullying incidents between the bus and class locations and between the bus and other locations. However, the null hypothesis is retained in all other instances: There is no difference in the number of reported bullying incidents in certain locations.

### Discussion of the Findings

Consistent with the literature review, numerous bullying incidents are reported to the administration of E. B. Stanley Middle School. Further analysis of these incidents indicates that they fit within the norm of expected bullying activities. For example, males tended to use physical bullying more than females in all grade levels. Females in the eighth grade used emotional bullying more frequently than their male counterparts.

In both grades six and seven the emotional bullying incidents were relatively equal for both genders, and males tended to use verbal bullying more often than females at all three grade levels. The literature indicated that emotional bullying was a form of aggression more

prevalent in females. However, upon further research, gender differences disappear when both emotional and overt bullying behaviors are considered (Yoon et al., 2004).

Location also played a significant role in the types of bullying incidents reported. There was a significant pairwise differences found between the locations of bus and class as well as bus and other locations; however, there was no significant difference found within other pairwise analyses. It must be noted that students spend much more time on the school property during a school day than they spend on the bus. This may have had an impact on this result. Students typically do not report incidents to the drivers with as great a frequency as they would report them to a classroom teacher. Bus drivers are concentrating on multiple areas during the day and are not able to witness nor report all incidents of bullying behaviors that occur on the bus.

### Conclusions

As discussed in the literature review, the topic of bullying and its implications for students and administrators has become an important issue. Any form of bullying can negatively affect the learning environment that may in turn also affect the safety of the students. The following conclusions were developed as a result of the findings:

1. Evidence from the findings of the study supports the theory that bullying still exists at Washington County Virginia.
2. Location plays a significant role in the types of bullying incidents reported. There was a significant pairwise differences found between the locations of bus and class as well as between the bus and other locations.
3. Information from literature states that the best approach is to involve all stakeholders in selecting a mixture of violence prevention strategies designed to meet the needs of

- individual schools. Effective implementation of bullying prevention programs will need to involve all school stakeholders in order to be successful.
4. Successful anti-bullying programs have reported that school-wide initiatives should include changes in school policies and procedures as well as in staff development programs.
  5. Effective intervention and anti-bullying programs cited in the literature such as Second Step, Bully B'Ware Program bullying prevention classes (Katz, 2003), Olweus Anti-Bullying Program, and the Bully-Free School Zone character education can be used as school intervention programs.

### Recommendations for Practice

The following recommendations for practice are based on the findings of this study and from personal experience within this specific middle school:

1. Explanations of what constitutes a bullying behavior must be given to all stakeholders of E. B. Stanley Middle School.
2. Teachers, students, and administration must consistently be aware of bullying behaviors and be willing to address them as they occur.
3. The use of school-wide research-based intervention programs should be implemented as quickly as possible (e.g. Main Street Academix, Olweus Anti-Bullying Program, Second-Step Program, etc.). See Appendix A for further information regarding the Olweus, Bullying Prevention Program; Appendix B for methods to assess the differences between rough play, real fighting, and bullying; and Appendix C for a bullying assessment flow chart.
4. As students grow and mature during the middle school years, specific types of bullying behaviors tend to change; all stakeholders must be made aware of these changes.

5. Teachers within each grade level must promote consistent disciplinary action for bullying behaviors.
6. Adult presence must be established within all locations of the school to discourage bullying behaviors and to encourage student reporting of inappropriate behaviors.
7. An organized bully prevention program may be effective in changing this school's climate and decreasing the incidents of bullying behaviors.
8. All stakeholders must be aware of Beane's (1999) 10 facts about bullying that all schools need to know:
  - a. bullying is more than teasing
  - b. anyone can be a bully
  - c. anyone can be a victim
  - d. bullying is not a modern problem
  - e. bullying affects everyone
  - f. bullying is a serious problem
  - g. stakeholders can work together to find a solution to the problem
  - 8) comprehensive plans will provide the best results
  - 9) children at risk can be helped
  - 10) schools are responsible for protecting students.

#### Recommendations for Policy

Washington County Virginia Public Schools have added an anti-bullying statement to their policy handbook. This policy has been inserted within the area of harassment. The policy includes a definition of bullying and a statement of reaction by the school division of bullying

occurs. The final statement is: *Students who engage in any act of bullying while at school, and any school function, in connection to or with any Washington County Public Schools sponsored activity or event, or while enroute to or from the school are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or expulsion. As may be required by law, law enforcement officials shall be notified of bullying incidents.*

The active policy in Washington County does not include a zero tolerance statement. This type of statement would effectively tie the hands of all school administrators in the cases of bullying incidents. The wording of this policy leaves the disciplinary action to the discretion of the school administration based upon the severity of the bullying incident. It is recommended that the school system and all of its employees become familiar with this specific policy in order to effectively combat the problem of bullying within all schools in the district.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

Although this study was performed within E. B. Stanley Middle School during the course of three school years, it has implications that reach beyond the school doors. Many questions have been developed through this research that warrant further investigation:

1. This study is generalizable to a specific class of students as they progressed through E. B. Stanley Middle School from 2002 until 2005. Further research should examine if these findings are consistent to all classes of students as they travel through this school.
2. This study concentrated on a single middle school in Washington County, Virginia. Further research should examine bullying incidents in all four local middle schools to determine if this is a problem throughout the county school system as well as in other middle schools nationwide.

3. Further research should examine this specific class of students as they travel through Abingdon High School as a peer group to determine whether bullying incidents that occurred in middle school continue through high school.
4. Further research should examine whether students identified as bullies were repeat offenders in the sense that only a small percentage of the students within that class completed the act of bullying while a larger percentage were neither victims nor bystanders.
5. Further research should examine specific teacher referrals for bullying incidents and whether there is a consistent method of reporting these incidents throughout the grade levels and among all teachers.
6. Further research should determine the relationship between the bullying incidents and the disciplinary action taken as a result of each incident. Is the administration of disciplinary actions consistent with the types of bullying incidents throughout the school?

The increase in student learning is the overall goal of this study. If students feel safe at school, if they are not worried about the atmosphere in which they learn, then greater student achievements will likely exist. In order to create and maintain a safe and orderly school environment, all stakeholders must take an active role in combating the bullying problem in America's schools today.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### OLWEUS BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

In the fall of the 2005-2006 school year, E. B. Stanley Middle School began the implementation of a research-based bully-prevention program. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (2004) was implemented within the school and the following information regarding the program is from the authors, primarily Norwegian researcher Dan Olweus and the Olweus Bullying Prevention Group.

The Olweus Program is a school-based bullying prevention and reduction program based on large-scale studies of school bullying conducted by pioneering researcher Dan Olweus. The program focuses on restructuring the existing school environment to reduce opportunities and rewards for bullying behaviors. School staff implement the program with emphasis on improving peer relations and making the school a positive place for students to learn and develop.

There are four major components of the Olweus Program; these include the community, a school-wide component, the classroom and the individual. These four components are placed together as in a jigsaw puzzle to show that the overall program will not be successful if one of the components is missing.

The Olweus Program is a universal, school-wide effort to reduce bullying incidents. It is systems-oriented and individual-oriented. This program is both preventive and problem-solving in nature. It is greatly focused on changing the norms of behaviors in individual schools. It is

research-based and it is not time limited, in order to be successful, the program requires systematic efforts over time.

This anti-bullying program does not include a “canned” curriculum for teachers to present in a rote manner to their classes. It is not a conflict resolution program, nor is it a peer mediation program. This program focuses on changing behaviors over time but it is not an anger management program.

One of the main focus points of this program is on the bully/victim problems. This is due to the short and long-term effects felt by victims of bullies. There is also a concern about student who bully and why this occurs. There is a significant impact on both bystanders at bullying incidents and on the school climate. The Olweus Program works to help educators better understand these components of typical bullying incidents.

The Olweus Program also works with schools to meet the newly founded legal requirements of many states regarding incidents of student bullying. Many state laws now require schools to promote bullying prevention programs. There have been numerous civil suits brought against both schools and school systems due to bullying incidents. There is also a risk management issue relevant to all schools that this program works to combat.

The main goals of the Olweus Program are to reduce existing bully/victim problems among school children. The program also works to prevent the development of new bull/victim problems. The overall success of the program in individual schools will be determined if there is an improvement in peer relations as well as in the school climate.

The Olweus Program is developed around several basic principles. There needs to be warmth and positive interest from all stakeholders. There must be an active involvement from all adults who come into contact with the students. The adults must act as both authorities and

positive role models. Firm limits must be established with both non-hostile and non-physical sanctions imposed.

The staff at E. B. Stanley Middle School has already chosen a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee (BPCC) to implement the Olweus Program. This committee will attend a two-day training session and then provide a plan to implement the program to the remaining staff. The committee will train all stakeholders and then individual teachers will administer the Olweus bully/victim questionnaire to all students.

All teachers will receive “The Bullying Prevention Program: Supplemental Lesson Plans” and the “Olweus’ Core Program Against Bullying and Antisocial Behavior: A Teacher Handbook” for use in their classrooms. School rules against bullying will be established and posted throughout the building and in the school handbook. Staff will work to identify the bullying “hot-spots” around the school, upon completion and calculation of the results from the student questionnaire. Supervision in these areas will then be increased. Both consistent positive and negative consequences will be used when dealing with bullying incidents. Staff discussion groups will meet regularly and parent involvement will be sought. The students will hold a kick-off celebration and then will work to make E. B. Stanley Middle School bully-free.

This intervention program has been used worldwide with successful results. In Norway, the initial study resulted in the prevalence of bullying incidents decreased by 50% or more during the course of the two years immediately after the introduction of the program. There was also a marked reduction in general antisocial behavior such as theft, vandalism, and truancy. There were also marked improvements in classroom order and discipline as well as an increase in overall student satisfaction with school. Similar results have been reported in two other major intervention studies in Norway with a reduction of 40%-60% in bullying incidents. Similar

intervention programs have been used in England, Germany and the United States with somewhat weaker results being shown.

The major findings and conclusions from these studies show that a dramatic reduction in bully/victim problems in school and related problems can be achieved by using the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program.

## APPENDIX B

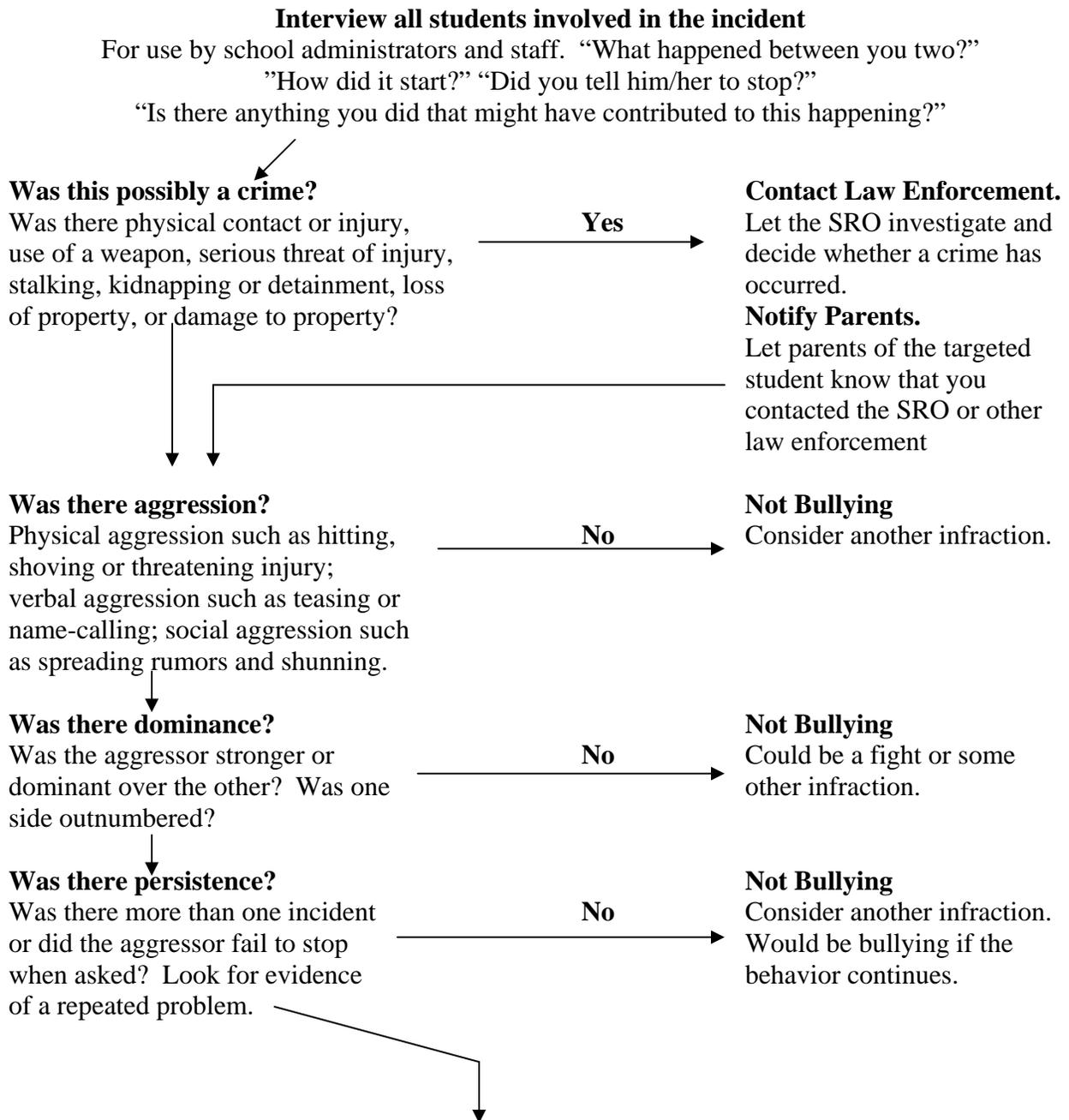
### DETERMINATION OF ROUGH PLAY, REAL FIGHTING, OR BULLYING

During many incidents there may be a question as to whether there is actual bullying taking place or not. In order to assist adults in determining the impact of these incidents on individual students, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (2004) developed the following chart:

ROUGH PLAY	REAL FIGHTING	BULLYING
Usually friends; often repeated (same players)	Usually not friends; typically not repeated	Typically not friends; generally repeated
Balance of power	Power relatively equal	Unequal power
No intent to harm	Intentional harm doing	Intentional harm doing
Affect is friendly; positive, mutual	Affect negative; aggressive, tense, hostile affect	Affect negative; aggressive & differs for victim and aggressor

APPENDIX C  
BULLYING ASSESSMENT FLOW CHART

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (2004) provides a Bullying Assessment Flow Chart to be used by adults in order to better determine the “next step” when solving a bullying incidents at school.



**Respond to bullying.**

1. Discipline aggressor for bullying in accordance with discipline policy.
2. Educate and counsel all students, including bystanders, about bullying.
3. Suggest that the aggressor apologize and promise not to do it again.
4. Ask all students, "What could you do that would keep this from happening again?"
5. Ask all students, "Would you let me know if anything like this occurs again?"
6. Monitor and follow-up to make sure bullying does not recur

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