



Dear BRNET Members and Friends of BRNET:

Thank you for being a part of the Bullying Research Network! Below you will find updates from our network. Be sure to check our website at <http://brnet.unl.edu> for additional information and check “BRNET Member Announcements” at the end of this newsletter for several job openings and opportunities.

Tenure-Track Bullying Faculty Positions at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

For the past decade the College of Education and Human Sciences at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln has supported the Bullying Research Network (BRNET), an international network of bullying prevention and intervention researchers. Building upon the success of BRNET, the college has developed the Empowerment Initiative that conducts translational research on bullying prevention and intervention. This position is integrally aligned with the Empowerment Initiative and will be part of a **cluster hire of bullying-related researchers**. We are seeking scholars to contribute to our translational research foci on youth empowerment, youth engagement, and bullying prevention across homes, schools, and communities. Please see the attached job descriptions. For more information, please contact Dr. Susan Swearer at: sswearer@unl.edu or by phone: [402-472-1741](tel:402-472-1741) (office).

Please find attached copies of the two tenure-track bullying faculty position ads at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Researcher Spotlight – Dr. Mara Brendgen

Dr. Mara Brendgen is a Professor of Psychology at the Université du Québec à Montréal and a Senior Research Scientist at the Ste. Justine Hospital Research Centre in Montreal. She obtained her Ph.D. in 1996 at the Free University of Berlin, Germany. Dr. Brendgen conducts research on the interplay between individual, family-related, and peer-related factors in the etiology of aggression and victimization among children and adolescents. To this end, she utilizes a genetically informed longitudinal design based on twins, which allows an estimation of genetic and environmental effects based on a comparison of the similarity of monozygotic and dizygotic twin pairs. Her research program has been supported by two consecutive salary awards from the Fonds de Recherche sur la Santé du Québec (FRSQ) and is being conducted in collaboration with colleagues from Université de Montreal, Université Laval, and Concordia University.

One component of Dr. Brendgen's research program focuses on peer victimization from the aggressors' perspective, in order to better understand--and eventually prevent--children's abusive behavior against their peers. The results from these studies show different etiologies for different types of abusive behavior against peers. Additional findings show that the expression of a genetic disposition to abusive behavior against peers is most likely in an environmental context that fosters this type of behaviour (e.g., affiliation with aggressive friends or classroom norms that favor such behavior). The second component of Dr. Brendgen's research program concentrates on the victims of peer abuse. Findings show that genetic vulnerabilities toward both externalizing and internalizing mental health problems constitute an important risk factor of becoming a target of peer abuse both in younger and older children. Results also provide evidence of a diathesis-stress process whereby peer abuse interacts with genetic liabilities to foster externalizing mental health problems. In contrast, peer-related difficulties seem to foster internalizing problems (anxious or depressive symptoms) or somatic problems even in those children who do not have a genetic liability for such problems. However, a positive social context (e.g., a good teacher-child relationship or the presence of good friends) can help reduce the expression of a genetic risk for externalizing or internalizing problems.

Dr. Brendgen has published over 100 peer-reviewed papers and book chapters and her research has been funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Sciences (CIHR), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and by the Fonds Québécois de Recherche sur la Société et la Culture (FQRSC). Two new research projects, recently funded by SSHRC and CIHR, will examine potential long-term effects of peer victimization on mental and physical health in early emerging adulthood as well as help uncover underlying neurophysiological and epigenetic mechanisms. This newly funded research also aims to identify protective factors that might mitigate such long-term effects and thus inform preventive intervention efforts for victims of peer bullying.

U.S. Political/Policy Updates

BULLYING DEBATE COMES TO CAPITOL HILL: On the heels of the Senate HELP Committee's markup of No Child Left Behind, Sen. Bob Casey (D-Pa.) is looking for ways to get his proposed language on bullying into the education bill. "It's a great opportunity to finally - at long last - put this issue right on the front burner," Casey told Morning Education. "Because it's a pretty difficult issue to ignore if it gets to the Senate floor and you have to cast a vote on it." Both Casey and Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) withdrew proposals aiming to curb bullying in schools during the markup after the amendments garnered little Republican support. Republicans cited concerns about federal overreach. Casey's proposal would require states to have policies that prohibit bullying based on students race and LGBT status, among other things. It is based on a bill that had two Republican cosponsors - Sens. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) and Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) - in 2013. But during last week's markup, Murkowski expressed doubt about the measure. And a national debate over Indiana's religious freedom law makes for a charged climate when it comes to debating federal policies meant to protect gay and lesbian youth.

- Casey plans to keep in talks with Senate HELP Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander and others as NCLB moves ahead, but he said he doesn't think Alexander's proposed language on bullying is strong enough. "It might be we're still at loggerheads" by the time the bill gets to the floor, Casey said.
- Meanwhile on K Street: The Human Rights Campaign hired Epplin Strategic Planning's Robert Epplin, former legislative director for Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine), to lobby issues including bullying of LGBT youth. HRC Government Affairs Director David Stacy said the group is "strongly urging" lawmakers to include both Franken and Casey's anti-bullying language in

NCLB. "We will continue to push for those bills to be included when the bill moves to the Senate floor," Stacy said.

- And in bullying news outside the beltway: Montana is no longer the only state in the country without an anti-bullying law. The law Gov. Steve Bullock signed into law will ban students and teachers from bullying students in all K-12 public schools and give parents and authorities a path to go after bullies and others that break the law. More: <http://gftrib.com/1DAXmRy>.

BRNET New Members!

BRNET has a current total of 161 members!

- Please send recommendations for potential BRNET members (i.e., faculty, researchers, and clinicians who are conducting research on bullying or related topics) to Dr. Shelley Hymel, Dr. Susan Swearer, or to bullyresearchnet@gmail.com.

If you have recently joined BRNET and have not yet provided your information, please send the following to bullyresearchnet@gmail.com.

- 1) contact information that can be posted on the website,
- 2) a brief biography of you and your work,
- 3) a list of current/ongoing projects in this area,
- 4) an annotated bibliography of your work in this area (i.e., full reference plus a few sentences about the work), and,
- 5) relevant web-based links you would like to share.

Friends of BRNET

Friends of BRNET is a group of graduate students, administrators, parents, and individuals who are interested in learning more about the Bullying Research Network. Friends of BRNET receive our monthly e-newsletter. If you are interested in becoming a Friend of BRNET or to refer someone to Friends of BRNET, please click on this link: <http://cehs15.unl.edu/cms/index.php?s=2&p=711>

BRNET Member Grant/Funding Announcements

Receipt of funding facilitates the BRNET mission to conduct interdisciplinary research related to bullying and aggression, with particular attention being paid to the link between basic and applied research. Thus, the BRNET directors are excited to offer members a new opportunity to share grants (and other sources of funding) they have received for their research projects.

Funding varies across countries and is not limited to federal grants. If you are interested in sharing your grants or funding with other BRNET members, please send an abstract of the research funding along with the funding source to bullyresearchnet@gmail.com and we will post the information on our website.

BRNET MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

(1) Bullies, Bullied, and Bystanders Conference



**Bullies, Bullied
and Bystanders:**
Advancing Knowledge,
Understanding and Practice
in Education

9th - 10th June 2016
ABC, National Anti-Bullying Research and Resource Centre
School of Education Studies
Dublin City University

CALL FOR PAPERS

education, comparative studies, business studies, media and communications, law, geography, art, literature, comparative literature, visual studies, psychology, sociology, anthropology, intercultural studies, women studies, gender studies, history, bio-medicine, neuroscience, ICT and the natural sciences.

Deadline for Submission of Abstract proposals: Friday 4th December 2015.

Submission of Abstracts and Registration: www.bully.ie

(2) Member Query

A faculty member in the Department of Teaching, Learning, & Teacher Education at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln is writing a book on stories of migration. Some of the youth in the book identify as Third Culture Kids (TCK) —expatriates who come from privileged homes and spend much of their times living in different countries. In one interview, a TCK was bullied in Japan because she was different. If any BRNET member has done research on bullying and TCK's, please contact:

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Thank you for your involvement in the Bullying Research Network! If you have any news, information, research, suggestions for new members, or other materials that our members would find useful, please do not hesitate to email us at bullyresearchnet@gmail.com.

Most sincerely,

Dr. Shelley Hymel
University of British Columbia
BRNET Co-Director

Dr. Susan Swearer
University of Nebraska - Lincoln
BRNET Co-Director