



Dear BRNET Members:

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>.

Researcher Spotlight – Dr. Phil Rodkin

Phil Rodkin is an associate professor of child development in the Departments of Educational Psychology and Psychology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He holds a B.A. in behavioral science from the University of Chicago, an M.A. and Ph.D. in social psychology from Harvard University, and he was a National Institute of Mental Health-funded postdoctoral fellow at the Center for Developmental Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke University. He has over fifty publications and has been funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), the William T. Grant Foundation, and the Spencer Foundation.

Rodkin's scholarship is concerned with the social dynamics of children's environments, with particular focus on aggression and bullying, ethnicity, gender, and educational context. About 15 years ago, Rodkin and his colleagues identified elementary school boys who were very aggressive yet also very popular with their peers. This phenomenon of the popular-aggressive child has broad implications for the study of aggression and bullying. School and community anti-violence interventions have often been directed towards alleviating the deficits of aggressive children, and improving their friendship skills. Rodkin's work suggests that these interventions may not be as successful when dealing with popular, aggressive children with savior-faire and peer social support. Popular-aggressive children tend to be group ringleaders, widely viewed by students as among the "coolest" kids. Interventions may be best served by targeting both the aggressive child and the peer ecology that provides social reinforcement for aggressive and antisocial behavior.

The study of popular-aggressive children can be useful to educators working towards eliminating the scourge of bullying, since bullies are often presumed to have higher social status than the children they harass. Rodkin has been concerned with developing measures of bullying that are relationally oriented, so that bully-victim *dyads* (and not simply youth characterized as "bully-victims") can be identified. For example, Rodkin and his colleagues have suggested that a focus on bully-victim dyads reveals the presence of many mixed-sex bully-victim dyads, involving boys harassing girls, well before the transition to adolescence. This research has informed federal and state efforts at bullying prevention, including participation (with fellow Illinois colleague Prof. Dorothy Espelage) at the White House Conference on Bullying Prevention in March 2011.

The larger perspective to Rodkin's scholarship is that children and youth make contexts such as daycares, Head Starts, elementary classrooms, and middle and high schools complex social environments, with a peer ecology where children organize themselves in status hierarchies and along social networks. These hierarchies and networks, along of course with the youth themselves, develop rapidly across a school year.

Effective educators work with their evolving peer ecology, providing an invisible hand that helps scaffold positive social relationships for children and a solid base for learning and community. Prof. Scott Gest at The Pennsylvania State University and Rodkin have been funded by IES and the William T. Grant and Spencer Foundations to examine ties between teaching practices, classroom peer ecologies, and youth outcomes. The aims of this project are to assess how social status and networks relate to aggression, school relatedness, and achievement, and to identify teacher practices that promote cohesive, positively directed peer social ecologies. The design includes intensive teacher observations, student surveys, qualitative teacher interviews, direct testing of academic skills, and school record information gathered from 144 K-5 classrooms over four years, including 2500 child participants. This study will provide a platform for developing interventions that assist teachers in using information about the social relationships of their students to prevent problem behavior such as bullying, and to promote healthy school environments.

** Please see the Appendix of this newsletter for a list of references provided by Dr. Rodkin*

BRNET Welcomes Four New Members!

BRNET is happy to welcome several new members this month, including Drs. James Bush, Faye Mishna, Michael Sulkowski, and Muhammad Waseem. These additions put BRNET at 108 members! Please see below for their brief biographies.

James Bush, Ph.D.- Texas Tech University

Dr. Bush is an assistant professor at Texas Tech University. He has a Masters in Theatre and Experimental Psychology. His thesis is titled, Creative and Artistic Personality Development: Positive Disintegration. His Doctorate is in Interdisciplinary Fine Arts and Psychology. Dissertation: An Actor's Makeup: A Psychological Profile of Acting Students. Dr. Bush has worked over the years with Family Promise, The Lubbock Rape Crisis Center, and Women's Protective Services.

Faye Mishna, Ph.D.- University of Toronto

Faye Mishna is Dean and Professor at the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto and is cross-appointed to the Department of Psychiatry. Faye holds the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Chair in Child and Family. Faye worked in children's mental health for over 20 years and prior to joining the Faculty, she was Clinical Director of a children's mental health centre serving children and youth with learning disabilities. Faye is a graduate and faculty at the Toronto Child Psychoanalytic Program and maintains a small private practice in psychotherapy and consultation.

Michael Sulkowski, Ph.D.- University of Arizona

Dr. Michael Sulkowski is an Assistant Professor in the School Psychology Program at the University of Arizona. His research interests include preventing violent/aggressive behavior in youth and ways to protect students from the deleterious effects of peer victimization. Additionally, Dr. Sulkowski is interested in increasing the availability of mental health services in schools and in increasing the delivery of interventions to improve students' emotional wellbeing. Dr. Sulkowski has received awards from the Melissa Institute for Violence Prevention, the National Association of School Psychologists, the American Academy of School Psychology, the Florida Association of School Psychologists, the College of Education at the University of Florida, the American Society for the Advancement of Pharmacotherapy (APA

Division 55), and the Society for General Psychology (APA Division 1) for his research and scholarship. Dr. Sulkowski currently is researching ways in which students respond to being victimized by various forms of peer aggression (e.g., relational, overt).

Muhammad Waseem , MD, MS.- Weill Medical College of Cornell University

Muhammad Waseem, is an associate professor of Emergency Medicine (in Clinical Pediatrics) at the Weill Medical College of Cornell University and the Research Director for the Department of Emergency Medicine at Lincoln Medical & Mental Health Center Bronx New York. Dr. Waseem is interested in the immediate psychosocial assessment of bullied children. Dr. Waseem evaluates most severe and serious forms of bullying in an urban hospital. This form of behavior often results in either physical injuries or psychological crisis requiring an urgent evaluation in the Emergency Department. Dr. Waseem, along with the support of the Emergency Medicine department, emphasizes on the psychological effects bullying in children. He is also interested in the psychosocial correlates and triggers for bullying. He would like to conduct studies on childhood bullying in settings other than schools. A current project is examining the prevalence of bullying in children who present to the Emergency Department with behavioral symptoms.

Kinder & Braver World Research Series

The Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University is pleased to share a new literature review for the Kinder & Braver World research series, "Bullying in a Networked Area: A Literature Review." This paper was published on September 17, 2012 and can be downloaded at this website:

http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/publications/2012/kbw_bullying_in_a_networked_era

Youth-Nex Annual Fall Conference

It is our pleasure to invite you to the Youth-Nex annual fall conference, "In Between: Middle Schools as Centers for Positive Youth Development," to be held on October 18 & 19, 2012. This second annual, invitation-only event will take place at the University of Virginia.

Youth-Nex (<http://curry.virginia.edu/youth-nex>) is a transdisciplinary, cross-University of Virginia center, focusing on the assets of young people, their health, communities, schools and relationships. The purpose of this conference is to discuss developmental issues of early adolescence and the intersection with educational organization and programming. We hope to identify, share, and plan best methods to promote effective youth development. The meeting will bring together leading scholars, practitioners, and policy professionals to hear the latest and best research, exemplary practices, and key policy considerations.

We will focus on a multidimensional understanding of critical elements promoting positive youth development specifically in middle schools, including physical and mental health, engaged citizenship, and beneficial relationships. We envision a vigorous exchange around this critical topic.

The event will bring together leaders from across the country including scholars, practitioners, and policy professionals to focus on the future of middle schools in the context of Positive Youth Development. Alma J. Powell, Chair of America's Promise Alliance, will offer the keynote, "Keeping America's Promise: The

Role of Our Youth." We will also have a panel of deans of education colleges who will address training. Additionally, Dr. Jacquelynne Eccles, a leading scholar in the conference topic, will provide an overview talk.

We hope you will join us.

**To register, and for details about the conference, please visit http://bit.ly/YN_MiddleSchoolsAsCentersForPYD. Please register early, as capacity is limited.

For all questions, please contact Crystal Haislip at chlaislip@virginia.edu or 434.924.1388

Harvard Graduate School of Education's Moral and Social Development Initiative

BRNET members, Dr. Wendy Craig and Dr. Susan Swearer, were part of an invited group of researchers to consult with the Harvard Graduate School of Education's Moral and Social Development Initiative, led by Dr. Richard Weissbourd and Dr. Stephanie Jones. The all-day meeting took place on Friday, September 28th and a wide range of topics were discussed. We look forward to hearing more about the HGSE's moral and social development initiative!

SRCD Social Policy Report Brief

One mission of BRNET is: "To close the gap between research and practice in bullying prevention and intervention by disseminating research findings through unique outlets." Please check out the SRCD's Social Policy Report Brief, "Using Research in Policy and Practice," which can be downloaded here: <http://cehs15.unl.edu/cms/index.php?s=2&p=146#414>

Upcoming BRNET Think Tanks

Several BRNET members were at the annual conference of the American Psychological Association in Orlando, Florida. Sue met with Dr. Jane Close Conoley, Dean of the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Santa Barbara. We are pleased to announce that UCSB will host the 3rd annual BRNET Think Tank in June 2013 in sunny Santa Barbara! BRNET members, Dr. Mike Furlong and Dr. Shane Jimerson will help coordinate the BRNET Think Tank, which has become a very productive and rewarding meeting. We extend our heart-felt "thank you!" to Jane, Mike, and Shane for hosting our next BRNET Think Tank. Stay tuned for a save-the-date announcement, but plan on joining us in late June 2013 in Santa Barbara, CA.

For the advance planners in the group: We are pleased to announce that the 2014 BRNET Think Tank will held in Canada and jointly hosted by BRNET and PREVNet (<http://www.prevnet.ca>). More information will be provided at the 2013 BRNET Think Tank at USCB in June 2013.

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

Appendix

(Selected References from Dr. Phil Rodkin)

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