



Methodological Issues in Bullying

Amy Bellmore

Eve Brank

Dewey Cornell

Laura Hanish

Melissa Holt

Andy Horne

David Smith

Susan Swearer

Tracy

Vaillancourt

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UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

Definitional Challenges

- Consider and use the CDC definition
- Fall 2011: CDC definition
- Does the repeated nature need to be included in the definition?
- Adding perceived harm
- How to assess power imbalance?
- How to distinguish bullying from other forms of peer conflict?
- How to assess the fact that bullying is a relationship issue?
- There might be levels of bullying (i.e., persistent bullies versus low-level bullying)



Definitional Challenges (cont')

- How to include humiliation, embarrassment, etc.?
- Perceived harm (whose perception?)
- Look at the sexual harassment literature as a model
- Apply the reasonable person test
- Given the variability in definitions and measurement, it's almost impossible to compare findings across studies
- We want to make recommendations to further the field
- Looking at the hostile attributional bias component



Definitional Challenges (cont')

- Should the definition be victim-based or bully-based?
 - Susceptible victim or a vulnerable victim?
 - Different forms of victimization



Methodological Challenges

- Importance to have some type of standardized assessment procedures to assess bullying
- Context in which measures are given are just as important as the measures themselves
- “Best Practices” document
 - Recommendations for contextual considerations
 - Developmental stages (i.e., different terms at different ages)
 - Longitudinal nature of assessment
 - Different assessment goals



Methodological Challenges (cont ')

- Minimum standard would include several items that assess a bullying climate
- How to include an assessment of different forms of bullying?
- Practical considerations
- Research considerations
- Preliminary level to a more comprehensive level
- Perhaps model after DSM criteria?
- Decision tree idea?
- Global assessment of functioning idea?



Methodological Challenges (cont')

- How to create an environment where all kids can learn
- What are key elements needed to produce change?
- Effective leadership is key
- Importance of teacher training and administrative training programs at the university level
- On-line bullying learning module
- Connection to classroom management practices
- Assessment: basic research and program evaluation



Methodological Challenges (cont ')

- Criteria for teachers
- Criteria for counselors
- Criteria for school administrators
- Issue of fidelity across identification (this is bullying or not) and intervention (schools practice evidence-based programming)



Moving the field forward...

- Write a methodological challenges paper
- Need to identify standards for both bullies and victims
- Continuum idea: persistent bullies and chronic victims at one end to mild at the other end
- Will the schools resist? Yes, until the Department of Education and the CDC mandate
- Does the bullying impair a child's ability to receive a free, appropriate education
- Link to educational outcomes
- Parallel: providing provisions for



American Psychologist Special Issue

- Introductory Paper
- Psychological Processes in Bullying
 - Bullying through the life span
 - Moral disengagement
 - Bullying as a causal risk factor
- Psychological Processes in Victimization
 - Mental health outcomes
- Social and Policy Issues in Bullying/Victimization
 - Bias-based bullying
 - Legal issues
 - Civil rights: criminality
- Bullying/Victimization and Educational Outcomes
 - Research to practice



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- Conceptual and Methodological Issues in Bullying/Victimization
 - Future directions
 - "Best practices"
 - Minimum standards

