Empowering Students to Report Bullying Behavior
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Introduction

• One way to decrease bullying behaviors is by improving school climate as it is malleable and affects student’s outcomes academically, socially, and behaviorally (Wang & Degol, 2017).
• The US Department of Education found that 57% of bullying situations stop when a peer intervenes on behalf of targets (Hawkins, Pepler & Craig, 2001).
• For students who intervene, their motive for defending targets was because they believed the bullying would stop if they intervened (Pyshnien et al., 2012). For students who did not intervene, they did not expect the bullying to improve even if they responded to it (Pyshnien et al., 2012).
• This study examined why students do not report bullying behavior and whether or not a positive school environment may encourage students to report bullying.

Methods

• Participants for this study were collected from an on-going research project (n = 261); a Tier III, one-on-one, three-hour cognitive-behavioral intervention tailored to specific bullying referrals. The sample was comprised of students ages ranging from 7 to 18 years old (M = 11.45, SD = 1.75), residing in a Midwestern city. White= 52.6%, Black/African American = 11.2%, Latino/Hispanic = 10.6%, Asian American and Middle Eastern = 2%, Native American = 5.3%, Biracial = 13.8%, other =4.5%. (Malas 161, Female = 101).

• Thoughts About School (TAS; Song & Swearer, 1999): a 34-item measure of student’s perceptions of school climate related to bullying. (n= 80)

• Bully Survey Student Version (BYS-S): a four-part, 46-question survey that queries students regarding their experiences with bullying, perceptions of bullying, and attitudes toward bullying (Swearer, 2001).

• Descriptive statistics were conducted to determine participants’ views towards their school according to their role in the bullying dynamic (no involvement, bully perpetrator, bystander, or victim).

• Univariate analyses of variance were conducted to test for significant differences between attitudes towards bullying and their bullying roles. Post hoc mean comparisons were conducted to compare individual means.
• A regression analysis was conducted with students who witnessed bullying, their attitude towards school and how they responded.
• Participants responses were thematically analyzed and grouped into the following themes: Telling an adult, not taking action, talking to victim, confronting perpetrator, and reinforcing bully perpetrator.

Results

Table 1: Post hoc analysis were conducted to compare individual mean difference in average attitudes towards school and student involvement. Results indicate there were no significant differences in any comparisons beside victim bystanders. Victim bystanders were significantly different in their average attitude towards school compared to every role.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bullying Status (with bystander info)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victim-Bystander</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pure Bully</td>
<td>-10.68</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>0.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bully-Bystander</td>
<td>-7.46</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pure Victim</td>
<td>-12.90</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>0.009</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bully-Victim</td>
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<td>3.69</td>
<td>0.001</td>
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<td>Bully-Victim-Bystander</td>
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<td>2.92</td>
<td>0.003</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uninvolved</td>
<td>-17.12</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>0.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bystander only</td>
<td>-10.11</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>0.018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pure Bully</td>
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<td>5.16</td>
<td>0.214</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bully-Bystander</td>
<td>9.66</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>0.034</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Demographic breakdown by bullying roles.

Figure 2: Univariate analysis of variance found significant differences between attitudes towards school and bullying roles by bystander information included (F(7, 228) = 2.73, p = .010).

Discussion/Implications

• Results indicated that students who were not involved in bullying held the most positive attitudes towards school (M = 107.44, SD = 9.13).
• Students who reported witnessing bullying and being victimized held the most negative attitudes toward school (M = 90.31, SD = 14.06).
• Univariate analysis of variance found significant differences between attitudes towards school and bullying roles when bystander information was included (F(7, 228) = 2.73, p = .010).
• Post hoc mean comparisons revealed that average attitudes towards school were only significant for victim bystanders.
• There was a significant relationship between student’s attitudes towards school and the action they would take in addressing the bullying they witnessed (F(4, 234) = 42, p = 0.031).

Strategies for Educators:

• Build relationships with students using interventions such as “Check and Connect.”
• Use an anonymous reporting system and screening system.
• Have a clear anti-bullying policy and response system.
• Apply policies and procedures fairly.