



# 34 Reasons Why Students Perpetrate and are Victims of Bullying: Implications for Intervention

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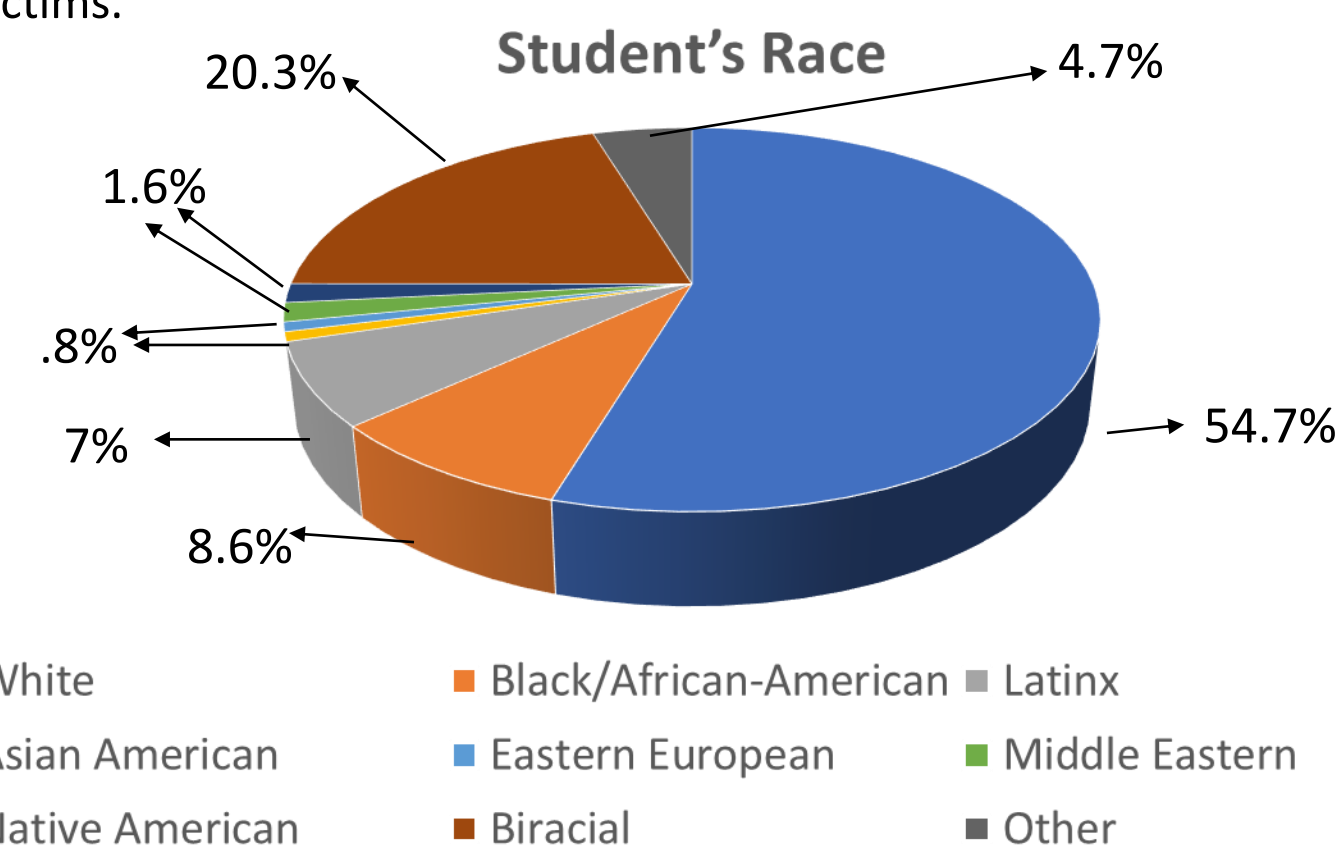
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## Introduction

- Many students are involved in the bullying dynamic in some capacity, with approximately 10-20% of students reporting victimization and 8-18% of students reporting bullying others (Swearer, Collins, Fluke, & Strawhun, 2012).
- The consequences of involvement in bullying can be serious for all involved but are typically most severe for those involved as perpetrators and victims (bully-victims) and can include short- and long-term negative behavioral, mental health, and social outcomes (Swearer et al., 2001; Ttofi et al., 2001).
- Research finds that bully-victims tend to have lower levels of parental support than perpetrators and non-involved students (Demantet & Van Houtte, 2012), which may contribute to the negative social, health, and mental health outcomes.
- With such serious consequences linked with bullying involvement, understanding the reasons students report bullying others and getting bullied is important for both prevention and intervention.
- Rigby (2005) assessed a sample of Australian school children and found an association between self-reports of perpetrating bullying and negative attitudes towards victims. The present study builds upon these findings and further analyzes responses from students who reported being bully-victims, parents' responses on why they thought their child was involved in bullying, and the impact on their social and emotional adjustment.

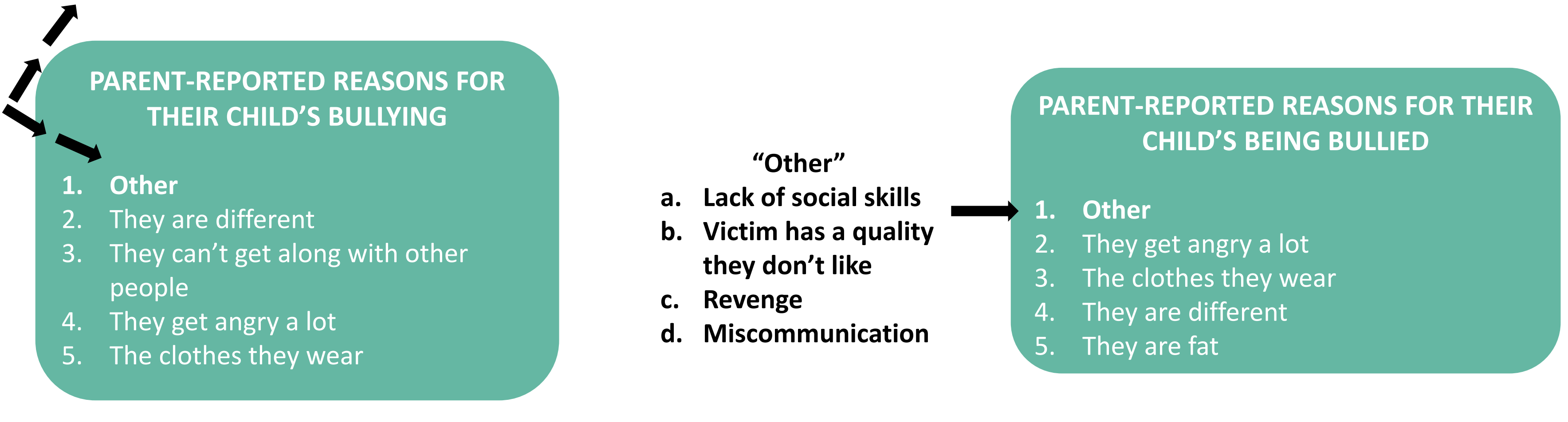
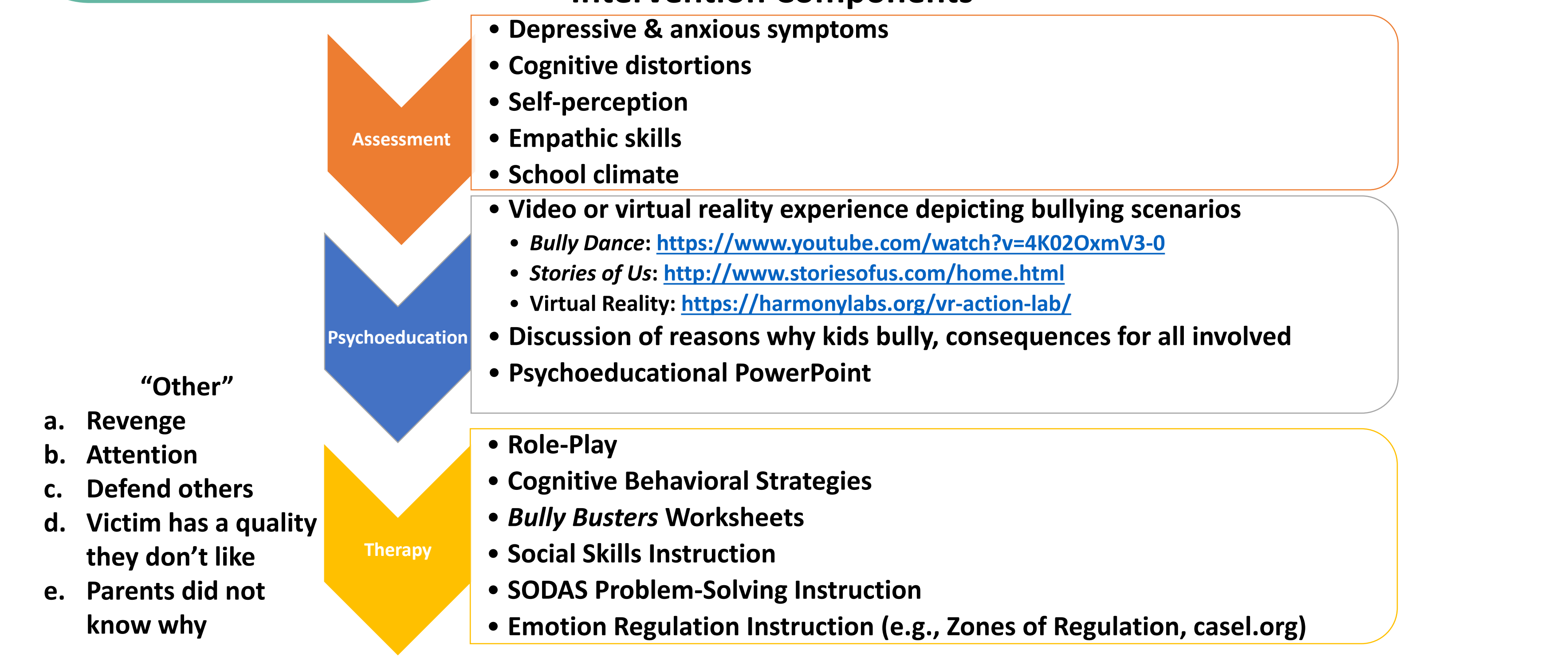
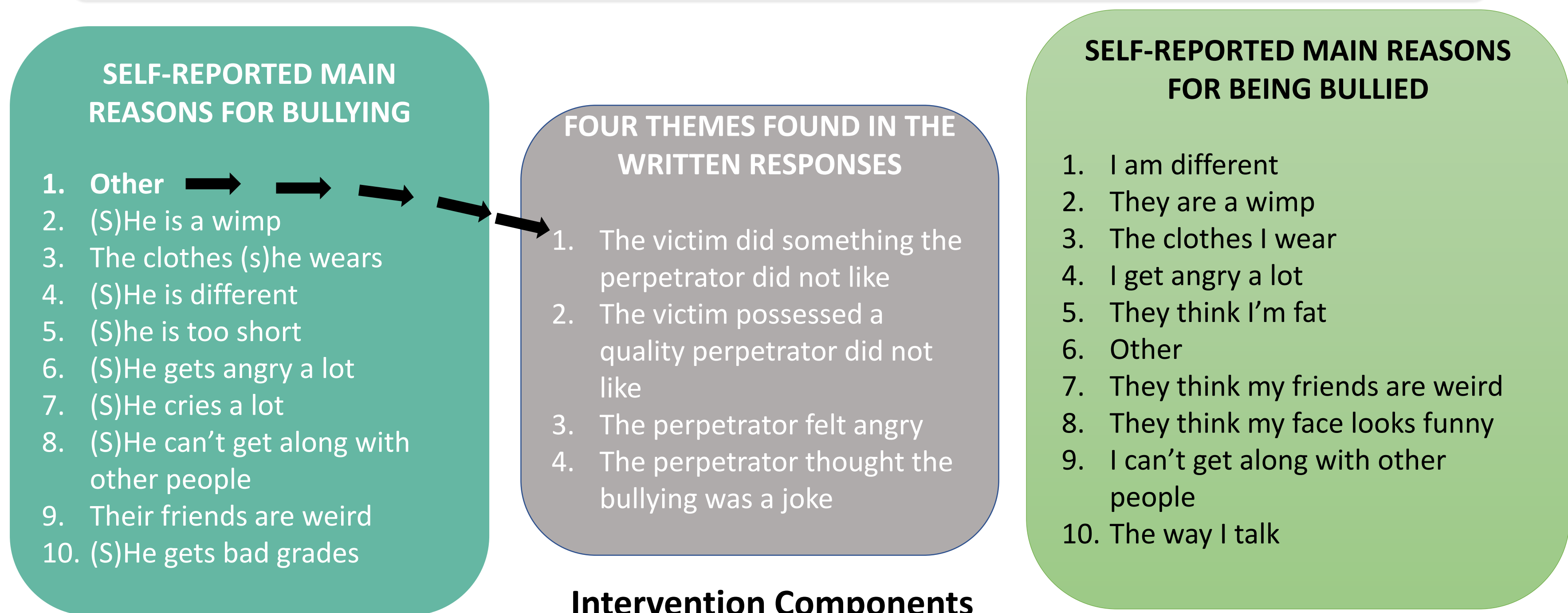
## Method

- The present study's sample consists of 128 school-age students (2<sup>nd</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> grade, 58.6% male, *M* = 11.45 years) referred to a Tier-III bullying intervention program for their involvement in bullying as perpetrators and/or victims.
- A total of 95 parents (85.3% female, 13.7% male) identified their children as bully-victims.



- Measures**
- The Bully Survey – Student Version (BYS-S; Swearer, 2001)**
- The BYS-S is a four part (i.e., A, B, C, D), 46 item, self-reported survey that assess students' experiences and perceptions of bullying as a perpetrator, victim, and bystander.
  - The BYS-S has been validated using office referral data; students who perpetrate bullying have a higher percentage of office referrals followed by bully-victims (Haye, 2005; Swearer & Cary, 2003).
  - Within the survey there is a list of 34 reasons why students perpetrate bullying and are bullied from which they can select.
- The Bully Survey – Parent Version (BYS-P; Swearer, 2003)**
- The BYS-P is a three part (i.e., A, B, C), 33 item, self-reported survey that assess their children experiences with bullying as perpetrators or/and victims, and their own attitudes towards bullying,
  - Within the survey, parents can select multiple options from a list of 34 reasons why their child perpetrates bullying or/and is being bullied.
  - After the intervention, the student, their guardians, teachers, and the interventionist meet to discuss assessment results and further recommendations.

## Results



## Implications

- These results are consistent with Rigby (2005)'s findings in that characteristics of victims are often cited as the main reason for perpetrating bullying behavior or/and being bullied.
- Additionally, the most frequently cited main reason for perpetrating bullying was the victim doing something mean. This is likely associated with the finding that most participants identified as bully-victims.
- This is consistent with parents' self-reported main reason for their child's bullying was revenge. Interestingly, parents reported that the reasons for their child being bullied were lack of social skills, they had a quality that the perpetrator did not like, and revenge.
- These reasons support the idea of individualizing bullying interventions in a school setting. A student who perpetrates bullying because they are seeking revenge may respond better to problem-solving instruction, whereas a student who is perpetrating bullying because the victim has a quality they do not like (e.g., they are annoying or "wimpy") may benefit from interventions that promote empathic skills.
- Understanding parents' perspectives and beliefs on the reasons their children get involved in the bullying dynamic as perpetrators or/and victims is important because it provides some context on how the family cultural context, values, beliefs, and disciplinary actions may influence their children' behavior.

