Understanding and Preventing Bullying: A School-wide Perspective

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• Defining bullying
• What do we know about bullying prevention?
• Overview of research on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
• Recommendations
Defining Bullying

- Aggressive behavior that \textit{Intends} to cause harm or distress
- Usually is \textit{Repeated} over time
- Occurs in a relationship where there is an imbalance of \textit{Power} or strength

(HRSA, 2006; Limber & Alley, 2006; Olweus, 1993; CDC, in press)
“Remember this, my child. The world is always in the biggest mess it’s ever been in.”
Is Bullying on the Increase?

• Some recent national data suggest a stable level or possibly a slight decrease in bullying (e.g., CDC, 2012; Finkelhor et al., 2010; IES, 2012; Spriggs et al., 2007)

• However, cyberbullying may be on the increase
  – May be due to greater access to technology (phones, Internet)
  – Cyber is still least common form
Percent of Students Ages 12-18 Bullied at School

2008-09: 28.0%
2006-07: 31.7%
2004-05: 28.1%

National Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Data from CDC

Bullied at School in Last 12 Months

Year: 2009
- 19

Year: 2011
- 20.1
Prevalence of Bullying

- Frequent involvement in bullying (2+ in last month)
  - Elementary – 31%
  - Middle – 31%
  - High – 26%

- Witnessing bullying during the last month
  - Elementary – 58%
  - Middle – 74%
  - High – 79%

\(N=25,119\) (Students grades 4-12; December 2011). Also see: Bradshaw et al., 2007, 2008; Nansel et al., 2001; O’Brennan, Bradshaw & Sawyer, 2009; Spriggs et al., 2007; Finkelhor et al., 2010.
**Student vs. Staff Perceptions**

**Students** \((N=15,185)\)
- Seen adults at school *watching bullying and doing nothing*
  - Middle – 43%
  - High – 54%
- Believe adults at their school *are NOT doing enough to stop or prevent bullying*
  - Middle – 58%
  - High – 66%
- Believe that teachers who try to stop bullying only *make it worse*
  - Middle – 61%
  - High – 59%

**Staff** \((N=1,547)\)
- Said they would intervene if they saw bullying
  - 97%
- Believe have effective strategies for handling bullying
  - 87%
- Believe they made things worse when they intervened
  - 7%  

\(<\% \text{“agree” to “strongly agree”}\)  
(Bradshaw et al., 2007, SPR)
The Importance of School Climate: Linking Bullying with Other Types of Problem Behaviors

- Disruptive and aggressive behaviors are the most common reasons for office referrals and suspensions (Irvin et al., 2006; Pas, Bradshaw, & Mitchell, 2011; Walker et al., 1996)

- Bullying and other behavior problems negatively impact conditions for learning (Bradshaw et al., 2009; Jimerson et al., 2000)

- Discipline problems contribute to teacher and staff turnover (Pas, Bradshaw, & Hershfeldt, 2011)

- Particular concern in middle and high schools
  - Relatively few evidence-based programs (Greenberg et al., 2001)
What Works in Reducing Bullying?

• There are relatively few effective universal “bullying” prevention programs (Merrell et al., 2008; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011)
  – 23% decrease in perpetration of bullying
  – 20% decrease in victimization

• School-wide efforts that involve all school staff and are implemented across all school settings show the most promise (Espelage & Swearer, 2004; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011)

• Universal school-wide prevention models that prevent violence and disruptive behaviors may also impact bullying
A Multi-tiered System of Support

Universal Prevention
Core Instruction, all students, preventive, proactive

Selective or Targeted Intervention
Supplemental, some students, reduce risk

Indicated or Intensive Intervention
Individualized, functional assessment, highly specific for few

Students within Schools

(IOM, 2009; Walker et al., 1996)
RTI
Continuum of Support for ALL

(Source: Sugai PBIS.org)
Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Model: Whole-school Prevention

- Application of behavioral, social learning, & organizational behavioral principles
  - Clear behavioral expectations (e.g., *ready, responsible, and respectful*)
  - Positive rewards
  - Procedures for managing disruptions

- Focus on changing adult behavior
  - Emphasizes staff buy-in
  - Team-based & data-based process
  - Consistency in discipline practices

- Can be implemented in any school level, type, or setting
  - Non-curricular model – flexible to fit school culture & context

- Coaching to ensure high fidelity implementation
  - On-going progress monitoring

- Public health approach (universal / selective / indicated)
  - Requires a shift from punitive/reactive to preventive
    (Horner & Sugai, 2001; Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Sugai & Horner, 2006)
Maryland’s PBIS Organizational Model

**School Level**
- 877 PBIS Teams (one per school) ≈ 63%
  - Team leaders (one per school)
  - Behavior Support Coaches (≈ 560)

**District Level (24)**
- District Coordinators

**State Level**
- State Leadership Team
  - Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)
  - Sheppard Pratt Health System
  - Johns Hopkins University
  - 24 Local school districts
  - Department of Juvenile Services, Mental Hygiene Administration
  - University of Maryland
- Management Team
- Advisory Group

**National Level**
- National PBIS Technical Assistance Center
  - University of Oregon, University of Connecticut, & University of Missouri

(Barrett, Bradshaw & Lewis-Palmer, 2008; *JPBI*; Bradshaw & Pas, 2011, *SPR*; Bradshaw et al., in press)
PBIS Maryland Trained Schools by Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Schools</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>805</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>877</td>
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Number of School Implementing SWPBIS by State

August, 2011

12 States ≥ 500 Schools

MD (877)

VA (<400)

(Source: Horner PBIS.org)
Group Randomized Trial of PBIS

**Funding**
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (PI: Leaf)
- National Institute of Mental Health (PIs: Leaf & Bradshaw)
- Institute of Education Sciences (PI: Bradshaw)

**Sample**
- 37 voluntary elementary schools across 5 school districts
  - Enrollment 227-983; 60% Caucasian; 48% suburban; 41% urban fringe; 49% Title I

**Design**
- Group randomized effectiveness trial
  - 21 PBIS & 16 “Focus/Comparison”
- Baseline plus 4 years (spring 2002 - spring 2007)
  - Data from 29,423 students & 3,563 staff

(Bradshaw et al., *Prevention Science*, 2009; *School Psychology Quarterly*, 2008; *JPBI*, 2010)
Effect of PBIS on Overall OHI

Adjusted means from 3-level model. * Intervention effect on slope of overall OHI significant at $p < .05$. 

Study Year

Overall OHI

Comparison

PBIS

Sig. change (.05)
Effect of PBIS on Collegial Leadership

Note. Adjusted means from 3-level model. * Intervention effect on slope of overall OHI significant at p < .05.
SW-PBIS Effects on School Climate

• PBIS associated with significant improvements in staff members’ report of school climate and organizational health

• Significant impacts on:
  • Principal leadership, collegial relationships, academic emphasis, recourse influence, institutional integrity, and overall OHI
    – Effect sizes ranged from .24 (AE) to .35 (RI)
  • Schools starting with lower levels of OHI tended to take longer to reach high fidelity SW-PBIS implementation, but improved the most

(Bradshaw, et al., SPQ, 2008; Bradshaw et al. Prevention Science, 2009)
Brief Summary of Impacts of SW-PBIS on Student Outcomes

• Significant reduction in *school-level suspensions* among the PBIS schools

• Students in PBIS schools were 32% less likely to receive an *office discipline referral*

• A positive effect for school-level *academic performance* was observed (Bradshaw et al., *JPBI*, 2010)
Impact of SW-PBIS on Teacher-Reported Perpetration of Bullying Behaviors

$N = 12,334, \gamma = -0.02, t = -2.60, p < .05$ (Wasdorp, Bradshaw, & Leaf, *APAM*, 2012)
Impact of SW-PBIS on Teacher-Reported Student Rejection

\[ N = 12,334, \gamma = -0.03, t = -2.32, p < 0.05 \] (Wasdorp, Bradshaw, & Leaf, *APAM*, 2012)
Impacts of SW-PBIS on Student Outcomes (cont)

• Significant reductions in teacher-rated behavior problems
  • Rejection & bullying (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2012)
  • Reductions in concentration problems and aggressive/disruptive behavior, and improvements in prosocial behavior and emotion regulation (Bradshaw, Waasdorp, & Leaf, accepted)
    • Some indication that the intervention effects are strongest the earlier students are exposed to SW-PBIS (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2012)

• Service use (e.g., counseling, special education referral, office referrals) (Bradshaw et al., accepted)
Effects of PBIS on ‘At-Risk’ Students

• Students with a ‘high risk’ and ‘at-risk’ profile at baseline faired better in SW-PBIS schools than Control schools with regard to discipline problems and service utilization
  • Relative to at-risk students in comparison schools, at-risk students in SW-PBIS schools were less likely to
    • be sent to the principals office
    • receive counseling for problem behaviors
    • receive counseling for social skill deficits
    • be referred to special education
  • Shows that main effects models may ‘wash out’ some significant program impacts
Significant Impacts of Tier 2 PBISplus Trial

- **Student-level receipt of *classroom-based behavioral services***
  - Students in the PBISplus schools were 21% less likely to receive these services than those SWPBIS schools.

- **Teacher reports of *special education rates***
  - Fewer students received special education services in the PBISplus schools than in the SWPBIS schools (Coefficient = - .59, \( p = .03 \)).

- **Teacher ratings of *achievement***
  - PBISplus students had significantly higher achievement than students in SWPBIS schools (Coefficient = .02, \( p < .05 \))
    (Bradshaw, Pas, Goldweber, Rosenberg, & Leaf, in press)
PBIS Research in High Schools

• Maryland Safe and Supportive Schools (MDS3)
  – USDOE funded RCT of PBIS in high schools
    • Maryland State Department of Education
    • Sheppard Pratt Health System
    • Johns Hopkins University
  – Test the integration of PBIS with other evidence-based programs (e.g., Olweus Bullying Prevention, Life Skills, Check & Connect)
    • On-site coaching and technical assistance
    • 3 years (post training)
    • Data collection related to school climate (safety, engagement, environment) & fidelity of evidence-based programs
    • 60 high schools across 12 Maryland school districts
What kind of school do you want your school to be?

MDS3 Climate Survey  Date: March 1st-May 15th

Complete the MDS3 Climate Survey.
It only takes a few minutes and is anonymous.

This survey will help us better understand how staff, students, and parents perceive your school and to develop ways to help improve school climate.

The MDS3 Initiative is sponsored by the Maryland State Department of Education to measure and improve school climate in high schools throughout Maryland.
USDOE’s School Climate Model For Establishing the Conditions for Learning

**School Climate**

- **Engagement**
  - Relationships
  - Respect for Diversity
  - School Participation

- **Safety**
  - Emotional Safety
  - Physical Safety
  - Substance Use

- **Environment**
  - Physical Environment
  - Academic Environment
  - Wellness
  - Disciplinary Environment
Annual State-wide School Climate Survey Administration

- Web-based
- High school students (n=24,949)
  - 25 classrooms
    - 7th grade, 6 of grades 10-12
      - Randomly selected classrooms
- Staff survey (n=4,046)
- Parent survey (n=2,345)
- Annually each spring
On-Line Results Reporting System

- 4 Report Options
  - **Quick Report** – all data for all respondents
  - **Advanced Report** – sorting function
  - **Executive Summary** – specific items for selected school
  - **Comparison Report** – compares across years

- Download all data into excel

- Password protected with different levels

- Training provided in data use
  - Schools, districts, coaches
  - Manuals created and distributed
MDS3 Observations

- Funded by William T. Grant Foundation
- 4 data points, over 3 years
- 6+ days of observation per school, per time point
  - 2 data collectors
  - 25 classrooms per school (≈1500 per time point)
  - 30+ non-classroom locations
- Using handheld devices to collect data
- Instruments
  - Assessing School Settings: Interactions of Students & Teachers (ASSIST): Rusby et al. (2001); Cash & Debnam
    - Praise, opportunities to respond, punishing statements, transitions, supervision, positive interactions, aggressive behavior etc.
    - Both event based and global ratings
  - School Assessment for Environmental Typology (SAfETy): Bradshaw, Lindstrom Johnson, Milam, & Furr-Holden
    - Features of the school environment that encourage access control, surveillance, territoriality, physical maintenance, and behavioral management (e.g., disorder, substance use, broken windows)
Menu of Evidence-Based Programs

• **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports** (Sugai & Horner, 2006)
  – 3 tiered prevention model, focused on climate and behavior management

• **Olweus Bullying Prevention Program** (Olweus, 2007)
  – Bullying and school climate

• **Botvin’s Life Skills program** (Botvin et al., 2006)
  – Substance abuse prevention

• **Check-in/Check-Out** (Hawken & Horner, 2003)
  – Mentoring and behavior management

• **Check & Connect** (Anderson et al., 2004)
  – Mentoring and truancy prevention

• **Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools** (Kataoka et al., 2003)
  – Focused on mental health issues (e.g., anxiety, depression)
Bullying Prevention Policy: Increased Staff Awareness

- 83.5% → 86.8% reported their schools have a bullying prevention policy
- 69.1% → 74.6% reported receiving training on it in the past year
- 50.3% → 58.8% received training on how to complete A Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation Reporting Form

(MDS3 Spring 2011 & 2012 Sample Staff = 4,046)
School-wide Prevention Activities

• Establish common set of *expectations* for positive behavior across all school contexts

• Implement and provide training on clear *bullying prevention policies*

• Involve *all school staff* in prevention activities

• Train teachers to implement effective *classroom management* strategies and how to consistently respond to bullying

• Consider implementing *social-emotional learning* curricula to foster skill development

(Stopbullying.gov; Olweus, 1993; Olweus et al., 2007; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011)
School-wide Prevention Activities (cont)

• Collect *data* to inform prevention programming and surveillance

• Provide high-levels of *supervision* in bullying “hot spots” (e.g., playgrounds, hallways, cafeteria, bus)

• *Train students* on how to respond to bullying

• *Integrate programming* efforts to promote sustainability

(Stopbullying.gov; Olweus, 1993; Olweus et al., 2007; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011)
Example of Linking Bullying Prevention with PBIS and School Rules

• *Respect* means…
  – We will not bully others.
  – We will try to help students who are bullied.
  – We will include students who are easily left out.
  – When we know somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.
School-wide Prevention Activities (cont)

- Collect *data* to inform prevention programming and surveillance
- Provide high-levels of *supervision* in bullying “hot spots” (e.g., playgrounds, hallways, cafeteria, bus)
- **Train students** on how to respond to bullying
- **Integrate programming** efforts to promote sustainability
- Involve *parents* in prevention programming
- Apply the **3-tiered logic** to support all students

(Stopbullying.gov; Olweus, 1993; Olweus et al., 2007; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011)
Triangle Activity: Applying the Three-Tiered Logic to Your School, District or State

Tier 3

Practices, Initiatives, Programs for a FEW

Tier 2

Practices, Initiatives, Programs for SOME

Tier 1

Practices, Initiatives, Programs for ALL
Integrating Programs & Services: A Multi-Component Whole-School Approach to Prevention

- Social Emotional Learning
- Bullying Prevention
- Special Education Assessment and Referral
- Effective Classroom Management
- Student Services
- School Mental Health
- Suicide Prevention
On-Line Resources

- Stop Bullying
  - http://www.stopbullying.gov

- Blueprints for violence prevention
  - http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/index.html

- Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Admin. (SAMHSA)
  - http://nrepp.samhsa.gov/

- National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)
  - Success in school online resource kit
  - http://www.naspcenter.org/resourcekit/index.html

- Collaborative for Academic, Social, & Emotional Learning (CASEL)
  - http://www.casel.org

- National Center on PBIS
  - http://www.PBIS.org
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