

## Incorporating Classroom Behavior Management into Bullying Prevention



Bullying has become a national concern, especially due to the negative outcomes for both bullies and victims<sup>1</sup>. Although a number of bullying prevention programs exist, the majority of these programs have been unsuccessful in reducing student bullying<sup>2</sup>.



Given teachers' daily interaction with students, teachers might be highly effective in intervening and reducing bullying behavior<sup>3,4,5,6</sup>. However, it seems that teachers' willingness to intervene in bullying situations is limited by their level of training on bullying issues and preconceptions that only mental health professionals have the competency to address bullying behaviors<sup>7,8,9</sup>.

It is possible that if teachers were trained to view bullying as a behavior management problem rather than solely a peer relations problem, they may be more likely to intervene.

### Program Goals

The primary goal of the Fostering Healthy Relationships program was to reduce student bullying by supplementing a bullying prevention program with teacher training on bullying and classroom behavior management.

That is the Fostering Healthy Relationship Program assumed that:

- Bullying can be impacted through classroom behavior management.

- Teachers who feel capable of appropriately addressing behavioral concerns within the classroom are more likely to intervene in bullying events.
- Teachers that intervene in bullying events can decrease children's involvement in bullying.
- Although teachers may be effective in reducing bullying, inadequate relationships with peers and problem-solving strategies contribute to bullying behaviors and must also be addressed.

### Program Description

The Fostering Healthy Relationship Program was a school-wide bullying prevention program implemented in a small parochial middle school with 92 sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. The program included three components.

- *Universal Bullying Prevention Components:* All students received instruction in an anti-violence curriculum which taught students to resolve conflicts through problem solving and using non-violent methods
- *Small Group Counseling:* Small group counseling was provided for students who were identified as exhibiting bullying behavior.
- *Teacher Training on Bullying and Classroom Management:* Teachers received training on the prevention curriculum, bullying, and effective behavior management methods for addressing typical classroom behavior as well as bullying behavior.

## Program Outcomes

The Fostering Healthy Relationship program demonstrated moderate success in reducing bullying behavior and increasing bystander intervention. Specifically, the program:

- Increased teacher's willingness to intervene in bullying incidents
- Decreased student bullying based on teacher reports
- Increased bystander intervention in bullying situations

## Conclusion

Bullying in the school setting continues to be a widespread concern. School staff employ a variety of anti-bullying programs<sup>10</sup>. However, bullying behaviors in schools may not be reduced by implementation of anti-bullying programs alone<sup>2</sup>.

Supplementing anti-bullying prevention programs with teacher training on bullying intervention and classroom behavior management strategies shows promise in reducing student bullying.

By viewing bullying in the schools as a behavior management issue and using bullying intervention techniques, teachers have a higher likelihood of facilitating a reduction in some bullying behaviors through intervening and reinforcing school wide anti-bullying efforts.

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### PRA Lab

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## Disclosures

Portions of this research were presented at the National Association of School Psychology annual convention and also are currently under review.

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