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Evidence-Based Bullying Prevention Programs in Elementary Schools

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EVIDENCE-BASED BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAMS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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EVIDENCE-BASED BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAMS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Dean, The Graduate School Date

I dedicate this thesis to my grandmother, Constance Updike, who has always motivated and encouraged me throughout my education. No matter the distance away from home, she continues to be my biggest supporter in life.

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Youth bullying has gained national attention in recent years and is continuing throughout our educational systems. With technology advancing, students are now faced with an increased chance of being bullied inside and/or outside of school. As members of the school system, children need preventive supports to address this growing issue. Although a large amount of research has focused on bullying prevention programs in middle and high school, this review specifically looks at the prevention of school bullying during a child's elementary years (e.g., Kindergarten through fifth grade). Failure to address school bullying as young as elementary school-age can have harmful effects on a student's education and mental health.

This project is a systematic review of evidence-based bullying prevention programs and their effectiveness among elementary school-aged children. From selected databases, the following search terms were used: "Evidence-based," "Bullying prevention programs," and "Elementary Schools" or "Kindergarten," "first grade," "second grade," "third grade," "fourth grade," "fifth grade." All empirical articles that meet inclusionary criteria were presented one-by-one followed by a synthesis of the literature found. This synthesis will guide recommendations for practice and future research.

Introduction

Children are faced with many obstacles throughout their educational life. For some students, an obstacle may be school bullying. The term bullying is usually related to a negative connotation that a student is being tormented at school but for some this term can be related to "playful teasing." Depending upon the situation and types of resources (e.g., family, peer, and school support), a student could face years of bullying victimization before the behavior is discovered by others. On the other hand, some students could experience short-term bullying that is immediately detected by peers, parents, teachers, or school administrators. The type of bullying can look differently depending upon on individual, family, social, and cultural contexts. Many researchers agree that bullying in childhood has negative and devastating effects that may have long-lasting consequences into adulthood (Allison, Roeger, & Reinfeld-Kirkman, 2009; Copeland, Wolke, Angold, & Costello, 2013; Wolke & Lereya, 2015).

Defining Bullying

Bullying is defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (US DHHS, 2019) as "unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time" (para. 1). Although bullying can be defined broadly, researchers tend to include three key components: (a) aggressive behavior that is unwanted, (b) an imbalance of power, and (c) a pattern of behavior being repeated over time (American Psychological Association, 2019; Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2019; PACER, 2019; US DHHS, 2019).

Types of bullying. School bullying has been identified as a problematic behavior among children and adolescents, with two primary modes of attack: direct and indirect bullying behaviors. Direct bullying behavior includes physical and verbal bullying, while indirect bullying includes relational/social bullying. Within these two broad modes of attack, there are four distinct types of bullying most often examined: physical, verbal, relational/social, and electronic (National Centre Against Bullying [NCAB], 2019; U.S. DHHS, 2019).

Visible bullying that can be easily observed by others is called overt while bullying behaviors that are often hidden from peers or adults is called covert. Common overt, direct types of bullying include physical and verbal behaviors. Physical bullying is the most common depiction of bullying and often referred to as "traditional bullying." Physical bullying typically includes kicking, pushing, hitting, and other forms of aggressive behavior towards another student. Verbal bullying may include chants, name-calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, and verbal abuse that can start off harmless but easily escalate (NCAB, 2019). On the other hand, some bullying may be covert, subtle behaviors that are still designed to inflict harm on one's reputation, cause humiliation, and damage self-esteem (NCAB, 2019). Overt bullying is more likely to include social/relational or electronic bullying. Social bullying may include verbal bullying as described above but is done with the intention of causing humiliation or isolation from a social group without physical contact or interaction with another peer. This type of behavior is often overlooked at school and can include lying, spreading rumors, mimicking or mocking, rude jokes, negative facial expressions or gestures, and encouraging the exclusion of someone from a social group. Electronic

bullying, commonly known as cyberbullying, may include both covert (e.g., direct messaging) and overt (e.g., posting hurtful or aggressive comments on one's social media page) aspects (NCAB, 2019).

Twenty years ago, children who were bullied at school went home and were usually able to escape or take a break from bullying for a temporary period of time. Children are now within constant access to social media and technology that allows them to experience bullying at all hours of the day. Popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter can be used to publicly or privately humiliate a targeted individual or group any time of day. Cyberbullying can include abusive or hurtful texts, emails, or posts, exclusion of others online, gossip or rumors, and imitating or impersonating others online (NCAB, 2019). Depending on a student's age, up to 43% of students have reported being digitally harassed (Stomp Out Bullying, 2018).

Defining roles. Bullying is considered one of the most commonly reported discipline problems in public schools as a child is bullied every seven minutes (Stomp Out Bullying, 2018). Students occupy various roles in bullying, including the individual(s) being bullied, those bullying, and bystanders who may assist, reinforce, defend, or observe. Although it is important to understand the multiple roles youth play in order to prevent and respond to bullying, schools should not label children as "bullies" or "victims" (PACER, 2019; U.S. DHHS, 2018). Schools should instead focus on the descriptive roles students are demonstrating and use a solution-focused approach to the given situation. By labeling children, school faculty and staff could be sending unintended messages (e.g., behavior cannot change, a student cannot be involved in multiple roles, and school climate is not a contributing factor) towards students and

adults. When describing a student's role, the terms "student who bullied" or "student who was bullied" are recommended in the school setting (U.S. DHHS, 2017).

Characteristics of students who bully. Farmer et al. (2010) investigated whether bullying-involvement subtypes (i.e., bullies, victims, bully-victims) were perceived by peer nominations as being different on interpersonal factors (e.g., aggression, prosocial skills, social prominence, internalizing behavior). Results indicated that second grade bullies were more likely to be liked and disliked by same-aged peers, while bully-victims were highly disliked by peers. The percentage of boys who bullied (25%) had somewhat the same popular status to non-identified boys (29%), while bully-victims (8%) were not comparable. Furthermore, girl bully-victims (37%) were rejected from same-aged peers more often than girl bullies (7%). Social influence indices resulted in bullies and bully-victims to be slightly different from one another. Boy bullies (5%) were nominated as winning a lot of games/sports more than bully-victims (4.4%), while girl bullies (5.5%) were nominated as being good at sports more than bully-victims (4%). Bullies appear to be disliked by some but liked by others, and they are integrated into a broader social system that includes students who are not involved in bullying. Overall, bullies were more likely to viewed by peers as displaying interpersonal characteristics that are socially desirable (Farmer et al., 2010). This helps solidify one's position in the classroom social structure and to establish dominance (Olweus, 2003).

Most of the time these students are well-connected to their peers, hold social power and are popular. However, some students who are perpetrators of bullying may be isolated from their peers, depressed, easily peer-pressured, and have a difficult time identifying feelings and emotions within others (U.S. DHHS, 2018).

On the opposite end, some students who bully will express more external symptomology including impulsivity, aggression, and being easily angered. These individuals may express a strong interest or have a positive attitude toward violence including defiance and aggression towards their teachers or parents. They may feel a strong need to dominate and subdue other students which can relate to the perceived power imbalance they may have over their targeted peer. Boys, in particular, will display more aggressive and physical bullying towards targeted students. Educators, parents, and other peers may see an increase in anti-social behaviors and other rule-breaking activities such as vandalism, delinquency, and substance abuse in students who bully (Hazelden Foundation, 2016).

School educators should be aware that while many students may identify as being "popular," they could behave and interact with peers in aggressive ways due to their home or family situations. These students may also feel socially isolated from others and use bullying behaviors as a means to gain peer attention and friends. It is very important for educators to understand the underlying cause of a student's behavior before making assumptions that could ultimately impact a student's education (Steele, 2019).

Characteristics of students who are bullied. Almost one in five high school students, in grades 9 to 12, reported being bullied on school property last year (CDC, 2017), while 90% of students in grades 4 to 6 reported being bullied or harassed (Loveless, 2019). Although bullying and harassment can sometimes overlap, these two definitions can be very different (U.S. DHHS, 2018). Under the Federal Civil Rights Law, harassment is defined as unwelcomed conduct towards protected classes (race, national origin, color, sex, age, disability, religion) that is severe and creates a hostile

environment (U.S. DHHS, 2018). No federal law directly addresses bullying, but in some cases, bullying can overlap with discriminatory harassment (e.g., race, national origin, color, sex, age, disability, or religion) (U.S. DHHS, 2017). Among those alarming rates, 9 out of 10 LGBTQ students have reported being harassed or bullied at school (Stomp Out Bullying, 2020).

There is no single factor that puts students at risk of being bullied. According to the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, 2012), "bullying behaviors can be persistently directed at a student's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, physical appearance, sex or other distinguishing characteristics" (p.1). Students who are at risk for being bullied, depending upon the environment, are groups such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning (LGBTQ) students, youth with disabilities, and socially isolated youth (U.S. DHHS, 2018). In addition to that, students that are from specific racial or ethnic minority groups and who have religious differences may be at an increased risk for being bullied. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, National Crime Victimization Survey (2015), a higher percentage of African American students (25%) and Caucasian students (22%) report being bullied at school compared to Hispanic students (17%).

Characteristics of students who are bystanders. Even if a child is not involved in bullying, he or she may be contributing to the bullying behavior displayed towards another student. Students who witness the act of bullying take into account numerous factors as to why they should or should not intervene. Factors that are associated with willingness to defend and actual defense of victims of bullying, include the role of

empathy (Barchia & Bussey, 2011; Nickerson, Aloe, & Werth, 2015; Nickerson, Mele, & Princiotta, 2008), social and moral development, social self-efficacy, cooperation, assertion, and popularity (Gini, Albiero, Benelli, & Altoè, 2008; Gini, Hauser, & Pozzoli, 2011; Jenkins, Demaray, Fredrick, & Summers, 2014; Tani, Greenman, Schneider, & Fregoso, 2003). The decision to act relies on the relationship to those involved, the social hierarchy, the perception of each individual's role, and the roles and responses of everyone else around (Koski, Xie, & Olson, 2015).

Effects of School Bullying

The growing rate of bullying throughout educational systems is contributing to increases in internalizing problems such as depression and anxiety (Espelage & Holt, 2013; Goldblum, Espelage, Chu, & Bongar, 2015; Wang, Nansel, & Iannotti, 2010), and increased risk of suicide among children and adolescents (CDC, 2014). The effects of bullying are widespread and damaging in many ways. Roughly 5.4 million students stay home on any given day due to being afraid they will be bullied at school (Stomp Out Bullying, 2018). Bullying can have short or long-term effects. Some of these detrimental effects have been linked to depression, low self-esteem, health problems, poor grades, and suicidal thoughts (Hazelden Foundation, 2016). On the other hand, students who bully others are more likely to have social and behavioral problems that include getting into fights, vandalizing property, drinking alcohol and smoking, having poor grades, and perceiving school negatively (Hazelden Foundation, 2016). Youth that have reported involvement with bullying behavior are at higher risk for suicidal thoughts and ideation than youth who have not reported being bullied at all (CDC, 2014). This strong association is often mediated by other factors, including depression, violent behavior, and

substance abuse (Reed, Nugent, & Cooper, 2015). Additionally, LGBTQ youth were three times more likely to have missed school in the past month, have lower grade point averages, twice as likely not to pursue post-secondary education, have lower levels of self-esteem and school belonging, and higher levels of depression because of being bullied (Kosciw, Greytak, Zongrone, Clark, & Truong, 2018).

Bullying can affect a wide range of students including those who observe bullying (both bystanders who observe and do not intervene, as well as those who intervene). Students who often see bullying behaviors happen will perceive their school environment as unsafe. Others may also feel fearful of coming to school, powerless to act, guilty for not acting, or tempted to participate (Hazelden Foundation, 2016). Research has found that bystanders report higher levels of suicidal ideation than students who bully and believe helplessness is the strongest predictor of suicidal ideation (Rivers & Noret, 2010, 2013). Results from Midgett and Doumas (2019) conclude that witnessing bullying had a significant association with anxiety and depressive symptoms among middle school students in the U.S. These findings were also consistent with prior research that reported anxiety and depression were strongly associated with students who witness bullying (Lambe, Hudson, Craig, & Pepler, 2017; Wu, Luu, & Luh, 2016).

Researchers have also found that individuals who bully or are bullied through the use of electronics (e.g., social media, text messages) score higher on depression and anxiety scales and lower on self-esteem measures (Kowalski & Limber, 2013; Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012). Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) found that students who engaged in online cyberbullying reported significantly more frequent alcohol and tobacco use and more frequent problem behaviors such as damaging property, police contact, physically

assaulting a non-family member, and stealing. Hunduja and Patchin (2008) found that truancy, poor grades, and fighting were linked to individuals who were victims of cyberbullying. Schneider, O'Donnell, Stueve, and Coulter (2012) concluded that the risk of psychological distress was found to be the highest among students who were cyber and school bullied. They reported that these students were four times more likely to experience depressive and anxiety symptoms and more than five times as likely to attempt suicide.

From a biological standpoint, bullying can impact an individual's body by creating maladaptive responses to stress. Children who have been bullied tend to produce less cortisol than their non-bullied peers (Knack, Jensen-Campbell, & Baum, 2011; Ouellet-Morin et al., 2011). The release of cortisol can steadily decline any physiological triggers to the body and allow adaptive responses to stress take over. Continuous and ongoing stress can be harmful to a student's social and academic life. Studies have also found evidence that being a victim of bullying can alter biological underpinnings. Shalev et al. (2012) tested children at the age of 5 and 10 to examine their exposure to violence, including peer victimization and its association with significant telomere erosion. In this longitudinal study, it was concluded that children exposed to more violence showed a greater reduction of telomere length at the age of 10. The normal process of telomere erosion is typically due to aging, smoking, obesity, or chronic illnesses but with individuals who have shorter telomere lengths, this can also be linked to psychological stress and mortality (Epel et al., 2004; Willeit et al., 2010).

Furthermore, these negative effects may impact a student well into their adulthood. In a 50-year longitudinal study, children that were bullied between the ages of

seven and 11 experienced a variety of diminished quality-of-life outcomes over time. These outcomes included suicidality, depression, anxiety disorders, alcohol dependence, psychological distress, poorer general health, decreased cognitive functioning, lower socioeconomic circumstances, fewer social relationships, and diminished well-being (Takizawa, Maughan, & Arseneault, 2014).

School-Wide Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Given the negative effects of bullying beginning in childhood, schools have an ethical and legal responsibility to prevent bullying, discrimination, harassment, violence, aggression, and abuse of any kind. According to NASP (2012), "creating a safe and supportive school environment is critical to preventing and deterring bullying, mitigating the effects of aggression and intimidation, and supporting learning and academic achievement" (p. 2). At the school level, research related to school climate and school demographics is important in promoting student engagement and reducing bullying behaviors (Cornell, Shukla, & Konold, 2016; Konold, 2016). Students who attend a school that is perceived as having a positive environment are less likely to be involved in teasing and bullying behaviors (Konold & Cornell, 2015; Konold, Cornell, Shukla, & Huang, 2017). Yang, Sharkey, Reed, Chen, and Dowdy (2018) concluded that students' emotional and cognitive-behavioral engagement across all grade levels is strongly associated with school climate and the frequency of bullying victimization experience.

Nevertheless, when schools implement an anti-bullying program it should be part of a multi-faceted, systematic, whole-of-school approach, owned by the entire school community (NASP, 2012; NCAB, 2019). This type of effort requires schools to be persistent while continually revisiting and renewing parts of the anti-bullying prevention

program to fit the needs of the school. Other key components that a school should consider focusing on as part of their prevention efforts include improving school climate, strengthening supervision among students, and focusing on program fidelity among school staff (NASP, 2019).

Multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) or Response to Intervention (RtI) should include universal programs or activities that all youth can participate in and involve interventions tailored towards mitigating or preventing bullying behaviors. At the Primary/Universal level, all students and staff should be taught their school's anti-bullying policy as well as direct and formal behavioral management techniques and prosocial skills. At the Secondary level, students whose behaviors do not respond to Tier I support will be provided with additional strategies such as social skills instruction, increased adult monitoring and positive attention, and specific daily behavioral progress and feedback (Crone, Hawken, & Horner, 2010; Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, & Lathrop, 2007). At the Tertiary level, students who are in need of intensive preventative strategies are provided more individualized academic and/or behavioral intervention plans, more person-centered processes, and school-family-community mental health services (Crone & Horner, 2003; Eber, Sugai, Smith, & Scott, 2002; Walker, Ramsey, & Gresham, 2004).

Statement of Problem

Bullying is a prevalent issue and has negative effects which can damage a student's educational success. Many researchers have focused their attention on bullying behaviors and the impact it has on middle and high school (i.e., 6th grade to 12th grade) students. Although this time of development is typically viewed as difficult, many fail to prioritize the challenges children face in elementary schools. DeHaan and Brotherson (2009) found that aggressive behaviors and bullying were actually more common in elementary schools than in junior and senior high. For educators working closely with children, implementing preventative programs in schools may greatly reduce bullying behaviors. This allows students to develop strong social and emotional foundational skills that they can use beyond their elementary school years.

School psychologists have a broad-based role in direct (student-level) and indirect (system-level) service delivery (NASP, 2010). Among these various roles, school psychologists should continually focus on a student's academic and psychosocial potential (Kub & Feldman, 2015). School psychologists are trained to provide services for complex mental health and social needs, as well as assessing school-wide needs and evaluating programs implemented in a school (NASP, 2019). Bullying is a threat to a student's physical, social, and emotional well-being and can undermine academic performance. Bullying can also impact the way students perceive their school's environment and the overall feeling of acceptance in their school. As a collaborator between school staff and families, it is the responsibility of school psychologists to provide knowledge and expertise in bullying prevention (NASP, 2010, 2012). The extensive training in data-based decision making can provide opportunities for school

psychologists to conduct school-wide needs assessments, complete program evaluations, and implement comprhenesive programs to foster a more positive school climate that directly focuses on academic progress and social development (NASP, 2010). The purpose of this specialist project was to complete a comprehensive, systematic review of the literature on evidence-based bullying prevention programs in elementary schools.

Method

Procedures

After my successful oral proposal, I commenced a systematic review of the literature. A narrow, computerized search of the literature on bullying prevention programs in elementary schools was conducted using psycARTICLES, psycINFO, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, Education Full Text (H.W. Wilson), and ERIC through EBSCOhost and ProQuest search engines. In addition, the references of any meta-analyses located through this search were screened to identify additional articles meeting the inclusionary criteria. Search term combinations used were: "Evidence-based," "Bullying prevention programs," and "Elementary Schools" or "Kindergarten," "first grade," "second grade," "third grade," "fourth grade," "fifth grade." Only peer-reviewed, academic articles from 2000 to 2019 were included in this literature review to reflect current research and recent bullying practices. I used the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA; Moher et al., 2009) flow diagram as a systematic way to track and illustrate the inclusion or exclusion of identified articles. A preliminary search yielded 169 articles.

Studies that were eligible had to (a) examine a bullying prevention program, and (b) evaluate the impact this program had on reducing and preventing overall bullying behaviors in elementary schools (i.e., not just described a program, but empirically evaluated it). These empirical studies had to clearly measure bullying behavior as an outcome rather than general peer violence or aggression and suicidal ideation that may or may not include bullying instances. Articles were excluded from this literature review for any of the following reasons: written in a language other than English; conducted outside

of the United States; failure to be empirical studies; failure to include Kindergarten through fifth grade students in their sample; and dissertations. The PRISMA flow chart is illustrated in Figure 1 and demonstrates the process of identifying, screening, and selecting peer-reviewed articles that are included in this systematic review.

Abstracts from the articles were transferred and organized into an Excel document. From there, all 169 articles were screened by title and origin of where the study took place. Articles were then narrowed down by reading abstracts to determine if they examined a K-5th sample, used a bullying program, and clearly measured bullying behaviors. Articles that met exclusionary criteria were deleted from the Excel document. Articles that did not explicitly state in their abstract their outcome measure were then further examined by reviewing the methods section. Articles that met inclusionary criteria were organized by specific bullying prevention programs or curricula.

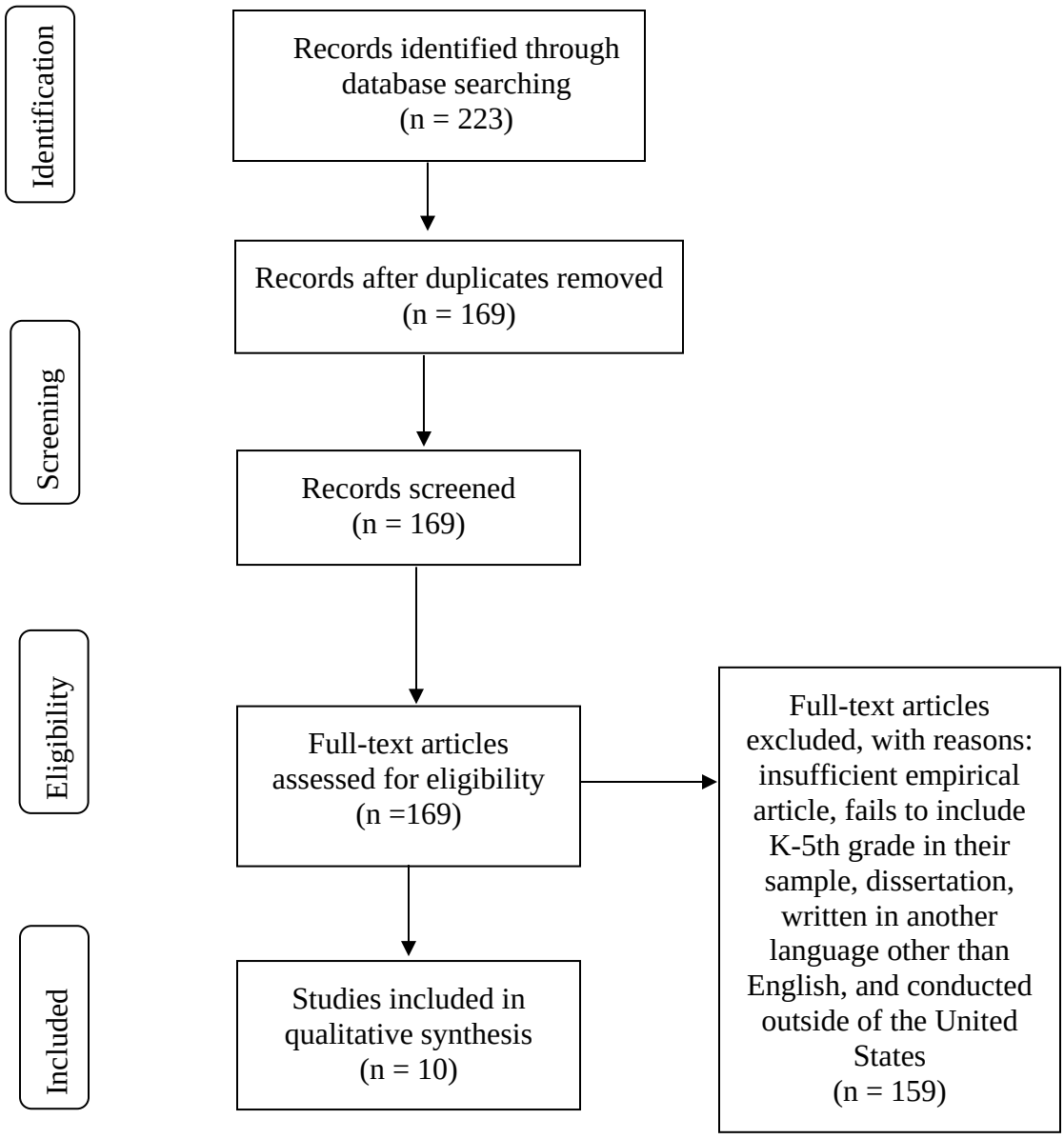

Figure 1. The PRISMA flow diagram (Moher et al., 2009).

Results

There were 169 articles identified and reviewed against the inclusionary and exclusionary criteria. From 169 articles identified, only 10 articles met the inclusionary criteria and were extensively reviewed and summarized. Of the 10 articles, each of the following programs were examined by one article: Bullying Prevention in Positive Behavior Supports, Bullyproof, Bullying-Proofing Your School, Lunch Buddy Program, No Bullying Allowed Here, Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. The programs, Steps to Respect and Youth Matters, were each examined by two articles.

An overall description of each program's goals and objectives is summarized within each article. In addition to this, grade level(s), sample size, measures given, and statistically significant results are identified for each article. An overview of the characteristics of studies is located in Table 1.

Bullying Prevention in Positive Behavior Supports (BP-PBS; Sugai & Horner, 2009)

Ross and Horner (2009) employed a single-subject multiple baseline design across six students in three elementary schools to examine the effects of Bullying Prevention in Positive Behavior Support (BP-PBS). BP-PBS is designed to (a) teach the concept of "being respectful" to all students, (b) teach all students the three-step response (stop, walk, talk) to minimize potential social reinforcement, (c) pre-correct the three-step response prior to engaging in activities, (d) teach an appropriate response when three-step response is used, and (e) train staff on universal strategies to use in their classroom. Ross and Horner (2009) examined whether there was a functional

Table 1

Characteristics of Studies

Sample					
Study	Program	N of Students	Grade	N of Schools	Duration
Ross & Horner (2009)	Bullying Prevention in Positive Behavior Supports	6	3 - 5	3	1 year
Hallford, Borntrager, & Davis (2006)	Bullyproof Program	77	4, 5	1	n/a
Menard & Grotpeter (2014)	Bullying-Proofing Your School	3,497	3 - 5	6	5 years
Elledge, Cavell, Ogle, & Newgent (2010)	Lunch Buddy Program	36	4, 5	2	Spring semester
Rock, Hammond, and Rasmussen (2007)	No Bullying Allowed Here	106	3 - 5	n/a	8 weeks
Limber, Olweus, Wang, Masiello, & Breivik (2018)	Olweus Bullying Prevention Program	31,620	3 - 11	210	3-years
Brown, Low, Smith, & Haggerty (2011)	Steps to Respect	4,415	3 - 5	33	n/a
Low & Ryzin (2014)	Steps to Respect	4,415	3 - 5	33	1-year period
Jenson & Dieterich (2007)	Youth Matters	1,164	4	28	10 sessions
Jenson, Brisson, Bender, & Williford (2013)	Youth Matters	876	4 - 6	28	2 years

relationship between implementation of BP-PBS and reduction of physical and verbal aggression on the playground performed by targeted elementary-grade students.

This study included three elementary schools from Oregon that currently had PBS implemented in their K-fifth grade and had met the 80% criterion on the School-Wide Evaluation Tool. Once schools were selected, the principal nominated two students from each school that displayed higher levels of physical and verbal aggression than other students. A total of four boys (1-fifth grader, 2-fourth graders, and 1-third grader) and two girls (fifth and fourth grade) were selected from the three schools. The collection of data included the following phases: baseline, acquisition of BP-PBS, and full implementation of BP-PBS.

Ross and Horner (2009) concluded that once schools fully implemented BP-PBS intervention, reductions in problem behaviors decreased on average by 72% from baseline for all six target students. From this study, the use of BP-PBS was functionally related to the reduction in number of incidents, variability, and trend of problem behavior in all six targeted students. Although peer aggression and bullying behaviors decreased, problem behaviors still did not meet levels comparable to typical, same-aged peers.

One limitation is that the selected students needed additional support beyond the Tier 2 BP-PBS intervention. The six selected students need Tier 3 levels of support that incorporates BP-PBS procedures in addition to an individually designed support plan to reduce bullying and aggressive behaviors.

Bullyproof Program (Stein, 1996)

Hallford, Borntrager, and Davis (2006) evaluated the effectiveness of the Bullyproof program among elementary students in Southwestern United States. The goal

of this program was to educate students on the different roles that exist in bullying situations. Bullyproof focuses on preventing bullying behaviors, increasing assertiveness of victims, and including bystanders in the overall prevention of bullying in their school.

This program included 11 sessions that lasted 45 minutes per week. There were 77 fourth and fifth grade students, including 39 girls and 38 boys who completed both pre- and post-program survey required by the school administration. This sample included 86.9% African American, 8.2% Caucasian, 3.3% Hispanic, and 1.6% Native American. Pre- and post-program surveys were conducted using a questionnaire designed by Hallford (2006) and modeled after Salmivalli (2001). This questionnaire measure was split into four sections: self- and peer-nominations of bullying, frequency of bullying, attitudes toward bullying behaviors, and evaluation of the program.

Results from this study concluded that overall frequency of bullying behaviors did not significantly change, $F(1, 60) = 2.49$, from pre- to post-program survey. Significant gender differences were found for pre-intervention anti-bullying attitudes ($t(81) = 2.04$, $p < .05$) and post-intervention anti-bullying attitudes ($t(76) = 3.24$, $p < .01$). Girls reported higher anti-bullying attitudes than boys ($t(38) = -2.83$, $p < .01$). A significant difference between perceived power for fourth and fifth graders was found for the post-intervention power item ($t(39) = 2.41$, $p < .05$). The evaluation of the program ranged from a composite score of 0 to 30 with an overall mean score of 18.99. Fifth graders rated the program less positively ($M = 16.89$; $SD = 1.01$) than fourth graders ($M = 21.95$; $SD = 1.09$). Overall, this study showed that the frequency of observed bullying did not change based on the pre- and post-program survey.

There were many limitations to this study including no control group and limited generalization of sample. Without a control group, this study was unable to compare student attitudes or frequency of bullying behaviors over time to students who did not participate in the intervention. Overall, this study had a smaller sample size with limited generalization of the U.S. population (e.g., 86.9% African Americans).

Bullying-Proofing Your School (Garrity, Baris, & Porter, 2000)

Menard and Grotpeter (2014) examined Bullying-Proofing Your School (BPYS), a school-based intervention program designed to reduce bullying behaviors and school violence. This study evaluates the impact of bullying behaviors in a multiple nonequivalent control group, pretest-posttest design with pre-predicted selection of treatment and control groups. Three major components of BPYS are: (a) heightening awareness of the problem of bullying, involving a questionnaire to assess the extent of bullying, and classroom expectations regarding no tolerance for bullying; (b) teaching protective skills, resistance to victimization, and aiding victims of bullying; and (c) creating positive school climate through the promotion of a "caring majority" in the school. This intervention consists of seven sessions to be implemented into classroom curriculum, as well as an in-service component for parents.

The evaluation of BPYS took place over a 5-year time span with the first year as a baseline year. The second, third, and fourth years were training and implementation of BPYS. The fifth year was post-implementation of BPYS with no technical assistance or feedback provided. Three treatment and three comparison elementary schools were selected in Colorado to participate in this study. Treatment and comparison schools were matched closely in terms of sociodemographic characteristics, percentage of free and

reduced lunch students, and geographic location. A total of 3,497 students participated in surveys from each third through fifth-grade classroom in the six elementary schools. School climate, witnessed aggression, physical aggression and violence perpetration, physical aggression and violence victimization, relational aggression perpetration, relational aggression victimization, and perceived school safety were measured by the Elementary School Scales for BPYS Outcome Measures questionnaire.

Overall, the results indicate that the intervention had statistically significant outcomes related to aggression, victimization, and school safety but was relatively weak in terms of effect sizes. When looking at baseline year through post-intervention year, witnessed aggression (r = -.13), physical aggression victimization (r = -.12) = relational aggression victimization (r = -.08), and perceived school safety (r = .09) were significant at α =.05 post-intervention. Thus, BPYS did lower some rates of victimization, perpetration, and witnessing of physical and nonphysical aggression. A limitation to this study was the limited number of schools. It would be desirable to see more schools included in the study, as well as random assignment of schools in the intervention and control group. BPYS is a promising program that needs further evaluation in terms of a larger sample size and measures the reduction of bullying behaviors per grade level.

Lunch Buddy Program (Cavell & Smith, 2005)

Elledge, Cavell, Ogle, and Newgent (2010) initiated a preliminary study that tested the benefits of a Lunch Buddy (LB) program on elementary aged students who had been identified as bullied. Students who were identified as being bullied were selected through teacher and child reports. This selective prevention program was aimed at reducing peer victimization prior to students entering middle school. Mentors were to

model conversational skills and conflict-resolution strategies that could be adopted by the bullied student and their lunchtime peers. Other mentors could also use praise or reprimands to alter the contingencies that maintain peer bullying (Cavell & Henrie, 2010).

A total of 36 fourth and fifth grade students were selected and paired with a college student mentors from an undergraduate university. Children were identified as being bullied by others using the Child-Teacher Victimization Index (CTVI) [Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004]. This index measure ranges from 0 to 24, with higher scores indicating greater victimization. Once scores from fourth and fifth grade students were calculated, the top 20-30% of students were identified and matched to a group. Same matched controls attended the same school as the mentored children (n = 12) and Different matched controls attended a different school (n = 12). Children were selected to closely match the 12 LB children on the following criteria: CTVI scores, gender, grade, and ethnicity. A total of 12 students were in the LB program, 12 in the Same matched control group, and 12 in the Different matched control group. Data were collected using the Mentor Alliance Scale, LB Harm Scale, and LB Satisfaction Questionnaire (Attkisson & Greenfield, 1994; Cavell & Hughes, 2000). LB mentors visited twice a week during lunch time with their paired student.

Results concluded that there were significant differences on peers' reports of victimization, $t(11) = 3.44$, $p < 0.5$. Children who were mentored were seen by peers as significantly less victimized after the LB program was complete. Mentored children were viewed by peers as significantly less bullied than "Different" controls, $F(1,21) = 10.55$, $p < .05$, $d = 1.09$. In contrast, LB children did not differ significantly from the "Same"

controls, $F(1, 21) = 1.99$, $p = .17$, $d = .41$. This preliminary study found that peers viewed bullied children as less victimized following the mentoring semester, but no differences were found in self and teacher reports of reduced victimization (Elledge et al., 2010).

There were several limitations to this study that interfered with the casual relationship between group membership and child outcomes. One of the most obvious limitations was non-random assignment of treatment condition, as well as limited generalizability of results due to small sample size. Limited research has focused on a mentoring program for students who experience bullying and should be further examined in a school-based setting (Elledge et al., 2010).

No Bullying Allowed Here

Rock, Hammond, and Rasmussen (2007) examined the No Bullying Allowed Here school-wide program for grades three through five. This program is aimed at decreasing the amount of bullying behaviors. No Bullying Allowed Here incorporates students, teachers, and parents in informational lessons. Lessons are given to students through the use of lectures, demonstrations, role-playing, cooperative group games, and discussions. Each lesson is 40-45 minutes long over the course of eight weeks.

Data were collected by administering surveys to 106 students in grades three through five. Surveys were administered before and after the completion of No Bullying Allowed Here program lessons. Results of the survey were evaluated using chi-square. Changes in the frequency of the occurrence of bullying behaviors at all grade levels were significant, 31.27 (3, $N = 106$) = 7.81, $p < .05$ for fifth grade, 10.39 (3, $N = 106$) = 7.81, $p < .05$ for fourth grade, and 27.73 (3, $N = 106$) = 7.81, $p < .05$ for third grade. Students reported far less bullying and fear about being bullied after receiving instruction on

preventative techniques. All settings including the bus, walk to school, cafeteria, and playground were reported as a decreased area at which to be bullied. Physical and verbal aggression declined as well (Rock et al., 2007).

More information regarding student sampling, grade, ethnicity, and generalizability should be addressed. Due to this program being a preliminary study, first through second grade were not included in these preventative lessons. In the future, this program should address students in younger grades to see if this program has long-term effects on students. Also, this study did not elaborate on the sampling process used to gather students for completion of surveys (Rock et al., 2007).

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (Olweus & Limber, 2010b)

Limber, Olweus, Wang, Masiello, and Breivik (2018) evaluated a large-scale implementation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) among children and youth in grades 3-11 in the U.S. Data were collected across 210 schools over two years and 49 of those 210 schools over three years. All schools were located in central and western Pennsylvania. This quasi-experimental study addressed whether systematic changes occurred in students' reports of being bullied and bullying other students after implementation of OBPP in their school.

The OBPP is one of the oldest and most researched bullying prevention programs to date (Olweus, 1991, 1993; Olweus & Limber, 2010). This program focuses on short and long-term changes to create a positive and safe school environment. The goal of this program is to reduce existing bullying behaviors among students, prevent new bullying problems, and create better peer relations. OBPP is built on four basic principles to guide staff and administration at school: (a) show warmth and positive interest towards

students; (b) set firm limits on acceptable behaviors; (c) non-physical or non-hostile consequences when rules are broken; and (d) function as positive role models (Olweus, 1993; Olweus et al., 2007). This program is designed for elementary, middle, and junior high students, which includes school-level and classroom-level components.

In this study, a total of 31,620 students completed a baseline assessment and 29, 814 students in grades 3-11 completed assessments at Time 3. More specifically, in third grade there were 8,636 participants (fourth grade = 8,586 and fifth grade = 9,161) in the two-year study and 4,447 participants (fourth grade = 4,402 and fifth grade = 4,446) in the three-year study. The demographics reported for the two-year study and three-year study were representative of the overall United States population. Participants completed the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ), a 40-item anonymous questionnaire that assesses students' reports of bullying others, being bullied, reactions when they witness bullying, attitudes towards bullying, and their perceptions of their teachers to counteract bullying (Olweus, 2007a,b). Students completed a baseline assessment prior to implementation of the OBPP, and completed assessments at Time 2, two years after their first assessment or Time 3, three years after their first assessment (Limber et al., 2018).

All grade levels, based on baseline to Time 2, showed reductions in 'Being Bullied.' These changes over time were significant among all grades except for 8^{th}, 10^{th} and 11^{th} grades. All school-level effect sizes were large to very large based on Cohen's *d*. More specifically, third grade ($d = 0.81$), fourth grade ($d = 0.86$), and fifth grade ($d = 1.02$) displayed a large effect size. Overall, the Being Bullied scale for grades 3-5 from baseline to Time 2 was significant ($B = -0.111$, $p < 0.001$), as well as Time 3 ($B = -0.120$, $p < 0.001$). Similar to the above, 'Bullying Others' showed significant reductions

across all grades except for third grade. Among student scores of bullying others, school-level effect sizes were large to very large with the exception of third grade (d = 0.31) and fourth grade (d = 0.61). Fifth grade, on the other hand, had a Cohen's d of 1.00. The 'Bullying Others' scale for grades 3-5 was significant from baseline to Time 2 (B = - 0.048, $p < 0.001$) but was not significant for Time 3 (B = - 0.058) (Limber et al., 2018).

Among students in all grades, there were significantly visible lower rates of being bullied and bullying others. This study provides empirical support that a whole-school bullying prevention program like OBPP can have positive systematic effects. A clear strength within this study is the large sample size and representation of most grade levels. Although this study incorporated a wide range of schools, schools were not randomly assigned to an intervention or control group. This may be a threat to internal validity, which could result in systematic bias between groups. In summary, a considerable number of students in the OBPP intervention do not experience bullying and report having an improved positive school climate (Limber et al., 2018).

Steps to Respect (Committee for Children, 2001)

Brown, Low, Smith, and Haggerty (2011) reported the outcomes of a randomized controlled trial of the program, Steps to Respect (STR), in 33 California elementary schools. The purpose of this study is to extend from previous findings of STR program efficacy on reducing school bullying perpetration and victimization, and to assess the efficacy of the program to proximal and distal bullying risk factors, attitudes, social skills, bystander behaviors, and improved school climate. Schools were matched based on school demographics and randomly assigned to the intervention or control condition. Similar to outcome measures by Low and Ryzin (2014), this study obtained measures

from (a) all school staff, (b) a randomly selected subset of third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade teachers in each school, and (c) all students in classrooms of selected teachers. At posttest, 1,296 school staff had completed a survey and 3,119 students completed their student survey. Pre- and posttest data were obtained from staff using the SES. Student classroom behavior, scholastic aptitudes, and student demographics was assessed using the Teacher Assessment of Student Behavior (TASB). Students completed the revised version of the Colorado Trust's Bullying Prevention Initiative Student Survey (Csuti, 2008).

Results from Brown et al. (2011) indicated significant intervention effects related to a decrease in student bullying intervention, $t(29) = 3.42$, $p < .01$ and a decrease in school bullying related problems, $t(29) = 2.91$, $p < .01$, for intervention schools compared to control schools. Students from the intervention school reported greater increases in student bullying intervention, teacher/staff intervention, and positive bystander behavior than the students in the control schools, $t(29) = 2.35$, 2.54, and 2.62, p values $< .05$. No significant differences between intervention and control students were reported for Student Support, Student Attitudes against Bullying, Student Attitudes towards Bullying Intervention, School Bullying-Related Problems, Bullying Perpetration and Victimization, School Connectedness, and Staff Climate. The effect sizes associated between the intervention and control schools were considered small based on Cohen's guidelines (i.e., less than 0.3) and ranged from 0.12 for Student Bullying Intervention to 0.19 for Student Climate. This may be a limitation to the practical significance used in educational settings. A long-term follow of students with a full dosage and exposure to the intervention might show larger effect sizes. Overall, the results from this study

showed significant intervention effects for the prevention of school bullying on 50% of all outcomes examined across the three sources of data (Brown et al., 2011).

Low and Ryzin (2014) examined the STR bullying prevention program and the change in school climate to decrease bullying behaviors. STR focuses on positive peer relations, emotion management, and recognizing, refusing, and reporting bullying behaviors. There are 11 semi-scripted sessions that include direct instruction, small or large group discussions, skills practice, and games.

This study draws upon data from 33 elementary schools in north-central California over a 1-year period. The sample size of school staff that completed a survey at posttest was 1,296 individuals and a target sample of 3,119 students. Schools were randomly assigned to an intervention or control condition. Outcome measures from this study (pre- to post) were obtained from (a) all school staff, (2) randomly selected 3rd-fifth grade teachers, and (c) all students in classrooms of selected teachers. Pre- and post-test survey data was collected using a revised version of the Colorado Trust's Bullying Prevention Initiative Student Survey and School Environment Survey (SES) for staff (Csuti, 2008).

Low and Ryzin (2014) reported that staff-report of the psychosocial climate was linked to a variety of improvements, including lower levels of bullying perpetration and higher levels of positive bystander behaviors with a medium effect size (R^2 = .24 - .25). Based on student report of the psychosocial climate there were lower levels of bullying perpetration and victimization, and higher levels of positive bystander behaviors and attitudes against bullying. The effect sizes for psychosocial climate change ranged from small to medium (R^2 = .08 - .21). Based on these findings, STR did strengthen the school

climate, which inadvertently changed bullying attitudes and behaviors. Although STR generated improvements in the psychosocial climate, the data does not adequately evaluate the hypothesis due to only two waves of data (pre- and posttest) being collected. Future research should examine the recursive relationship in bullying and psychosocial climate, in which climates leads to reduction in bullying behavior, which improves the psychosocial climate (Low & Ryzin, 2014).

Youth Matters (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996)

Jenson and Dieterich (2007) examined fourth grade classrooms at 28 Denver Public Elementary Schools that were selected to receive modules from the Youth Matters (YM) prevention curriculum. Data were collected over the course of two years from the same population of students in order to test the effect of the intervention on self-reported bullying and victimization. YM is a universal, skills-based intervention that promotes the healthy development of young people and encourages positive relationships between students and school staff throughout the school community. Lessons in YM clearly identify consequences of bullying behavior and teach students the skills necessary to enhance their social bond, improve prosocial attitudes, and increase self-efficacy. Each module incorporates enhancing the students understanding of what bullying is (perceptions), assists them in adopting anti-bullying norms and beliefs (attitudes), and provides skills training to boost their self-confidence at reducing bullying in their schools (self-efficacy beliefs).

Students received 10 sessions during each of the four semesters with 702 students in the experimental group (YM) and 462 students in the control group. Student data were

collected (e.g., fourth grade into fifth grade) throughout the two years using a classroom survey, the Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (Olweus, 1996).

Results suggested that, by the end of the study, the median bully victim score in the control group was 1.56 compared to 1.42 in the YM group. Based on self-report of bullying victimization, the YM schools decreased at a higher rate compared to the control group students. By the end of the study, bully-victim scales did decline and the rate of decline in victimization in experimental schools relative to control schools was significantly steeper.

One limitation to this study was the increased rate of attrition starting in year two that is most attributable to student mobility between fourth and fifth grade. The mobility rates were observed to be consistent with the Denver Public School district, which indicated that only 50% of students are enrolled in the same elementary school for three consecutive years. Thus, attrition rates may have been adversely impacted due to YM being implemented in schools that reported the highest behavior rates. The findings from this study support the use of skills training in educational settings, especially schools with higher behavior rates. The decline in victimization provides a more positive school climate and alters the norms related to bullying behaviors within these high rate behavior schools (Jenson & Dieterich, 2007).

Jenson, Brisson, Bender, and Williford (2013) also examined the effects of a YM, on patterns of bullying and victimization among public school students in grades four through six. This study examined 876 participants transitioning between states of bullying and victimization during the last two years of elementary (Grades 4 and 5) and first year of middle school (Grade 6). They hypothesized that, when compared to the

control group, more YM participants would transition from bully to victim to uninvolved as a result of the intervention. Four different YM curricula were implemented and tested on Grades 4 and 5. Each curriculum lesson lasted 90 minutes and occurred during the course of a regular school day. The content was standardized across the four modules and interventionists (i.e., educational specialist) were receiving ongoing training to ensure fidelity of the program.

A total of 28 Denver schools participated in this study with 438 students in each the control group and experimental group during baseline in Grade 4. There were no significant differences in demographics. Data were collected at baseline during fall of fourth and fifth grade, and spring of fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. Bullying and peer victimization were measured using the revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire for Students (Olweus, 1996) at the four data time points.

Jenson et al. (2013) concluded that the YM group transitioned from all three classes (i.e., bully, victim, and bully-victim membership) to the uninvolved group at significantly higher rates than the control group. By the end of the first year of middle school, 54% of YM participants compared to 37% of control group students, were classified as bullies and had transitioned to the uninvolved class at time two. This pattern repeated itself during time three and four with 44 % of YM students compared to 34% of control group students, transitioning from bullying to the uninvolved group. Findings from this study show that if the YM prevention program is more effective at reducing aggression and bullying behaviors before middle school when compared to no implementation in schools.

These findings suggest that the YM program is effective at developing students' social and emotional skills, and altering their perceptions, attitudes, and self-efficacy beliefs that prevent and handle bullying occurrences. One limitation of this study is that the YM curriculum modules do not cover the influence of technology on bullying and victimization. The lack of content to address electronic bullying should be examined in future studies (Jenson et al., 2013).

Discussion

From this comprehensive literature review, a total of ten research articles were examined based on the bullying prevention program used, and effects of reducing bullying behaviors. Based on the literature reviewed, most participants were third to fifth grade students in public elementary schools. Most articles included a large (e.g., at least 1000 students) sample size that implemented a manualized or curriculum based bullying prevention program (Brown et al., 2011; Limber et al., 2018; Low & Ryzin, 2014; Menard & Grotpeter, 2014). A few other articles included smaller sample sizes that focused more on individualized bullying prevention methods such as the Lunch Buddy (Elledge et al., 2010) or Bullyproof program (Hallford et al., 2006). Data were typically collected through pre- and post-test surveys or program specific questionnaires.

Important results were found among each article that can guide educators and school administration towards a comprehensive bullying prevention program tailored to the needs of their school. First, the majority of programs identified that training for staff and administration needs to be comprehensive (Brown et al., 2011; Hallford et al., 2006; Jenson et al., 2013; Jenson & Dieterich, 2007; Limber et al., 2018; Low & Ryzin, 2014; Menard & Grotpeter, 2014; Rock et al., 2007; Ross & Horner, 2009). Adequate training for staff needs to address what constitutes bullying behavior, characteristics of bullies and victims, and techniques they can teach their children to use. The program used should support their school-based no-bullying policy or prevention program to help mobilize a large group of students who are neither victims nor bullies. It is important for staff and administration to support and intervene in order to create a safe, positive, and warm environment for students. By creating consistency, students are able to know the

expectations and consequences that can occur when engaging in bullying behaviors. Staff should be trained to handle conflict situations and seek the appropriate action or response based on their policies.

Second, it is critical that collaboration and partnership occurs between school and home. Some programs offer parent informational trainings that focus on understanding, identifying, and informing parents of what to do when their student is bullying or being bullied (Brown et al., 2011; Hallford et al., 2006; Limber et al., 2018; Low & Ryzin, 2014; Menard & Grotpeter, 2014; Rock et al., 2007; Ross & Horner, 2009). These informational sessions provide an overlook of what the program entails, as well as risk factors to be aware of. When parents partner and collaborate with the school, positive outcomes can occur within the school setting and home. This can increase the bullying prevention programs efficacy and overall goal to reduce bullying behaviors.

Third, an effective program needs to have specific instruction in concepts, skills, and rehearsal that supports development of a school belief system that bullying is unacceptable (Brown et al., 2011; Hallford et al., 2006; Jenson et al., 2013; Jenson & Dieterich, 2007; Limber et al., 2018; Low & Ryzin, 2014; Menard & Grotpeter, 2014; Rock et al., 2007; Ross & Horner, 2009). A program should support the school as a whole to target positive school climate. A lack of knowledge and understanding about bullying prevents adults and students from detecting bullying and victimization within their school. Programs such as OBPP (Limber et al., 2018), STR (Brown et al., 2011; Low & Ryzin, 2014), and BP-PBS (Ross & Horner, 2009) focus on reducing bullying behaviors, as well as changing school climate. These programs incorporate concepts that build positive peer relationships, self-regulation and emotion management, and reduce

existing bullying behaviors. Many manualized programs involve weekly lessons to build skills, knowledge, and practice that prepare students for future conflicts (Brown et al., 2011; Hallford et al., 2006; Limber et al., 2018; Low & Ryzin, 2014; Menard & Grotpeter, 2014; Rock et al., 2007; Ross & Horner, 2009). Bullying prevention programs that incorporate classroom, peer, individual, and/or parent components are going to be more effective at reducing long-term bullying behaviors in their school.

Results indicate that programs which were most effective at reducing bullying behaviors in their schools used a structured program/curriculum that was centered around improving awareness of bullying behaviors, practiced preventative and/or confrontation skills, and created a more positive school climate (Brown et al., 2011; Hallford et al., 2006; Jenson et al., 2013; Jenson & Dieterich, 2007; Limber et al., 2018; Low & Ryzin, 2014; Menard & Grotpeter, 2014; Ross & Horner, 2009).

Implications

It is important to understand that bullying can occur at any age or grade-level. It is crucial that schools and parents become aware of the increasing mental health impacts bullying can have. The rise of mental health awareness in schools starts with preventative programs that focus on bullying, social-emotional learning, and suicide awareness. By understanding that bullying can begin at any age or grade and be detrimental to a student(s) social, emotional, and physical well-being is critical towards implementing a bullying prevention program. Not only should school administration and teachers be prepared to handle bullying situations but so should parents and students. By spreading awareness and providing protective factors to decrease bullying behaviors, we are preparing students for healthy coping skills and strategies to use in the future.

From this research, I have found that school psychologists are in a great position for advocating and continuing positive home-school collaboration. Not only are school psychologists skilled professionals in the area of the mental health, but they are also experienced at identifying important information from research to use in their school. As an emerging professional, I have gathered extensive knowledge on bullying prevention programs and will be able to guide my school administration towards a program/curriculum that seems best fit.

Limitations

One limitation to this comprehensive, literature review is that programs were not examined from the earliest stages of research (e.g., OBPP began in 1970's). This leaves out a large amount of information on the program's implementation and evaluation throughout the years. This also makes it difficult to demonstrate how these programs became evidence-based from their initial to current research. In addition to this, the literature only examines programs that were implemented in the United States. Some programs such as OBPP and STR have furthered their research across many geographic regions. This provides additional information about the validity of their program and cultural differences surrounding bullying behaviors.

Future Directions

Future research should address the effects of implementing a bullying prevention program as young as Kindergarten and continue to examine programs across more than one study. Most articles reviewed only implemented a prevention program as early as third grade. By third grade, most students begin to understand cause and effect, they are easily influenced by their peers, and become aware of others' perceptions of them

(Morin, 2019). At this age, students may have already experienced bullying in person or through technology. Students often are not prepared or equipped with the right strategies and tools to protect themselves or seek help when bullying is occurring. This is why research should address students as young as Kindergarten so that they are better prepared for healthy social and emotional coping skills. In the future, bullying prevention programs should be implemented as soon as Kindergarten to increase efficacy and positive long-term effects of reducing bullying behavior. In addition to this, only two programs were empirically tested by more than one study (Brown et al., 2011; Jenson et al., 2013; Jenson & Dieterich, 2007; Low & Ryzin, 2014). To demonstrate reliability and validity of bullying preventing programs in elementary, researchers should examine all programs across more than one study.

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