CHAPTER 3

Teachers' Perspectives on Bullying

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As noted in previous chapters, bullying is a significant problem in schools around the world. The purpose of this chapter is to explore bullying as it pertains to the role of the teacher. We will discuss bullying from the perspective of teachers, the training teachers typically receive regarding bullying, and the role of teachers in identifying and contributing to bullying. Finally, we will discuss teachers' roles in intervening in and preventing bullying.

Teachers' Perceptions of Bullying

Teachers vary significantly in how they perceive bullying, and their perceptions influence how they respond to bullying (Smith et al., 2010). Their attitudes can range from complacent and unconcerned to proactive awareness targeted at bullying prevention (Craig, Bell, & Leschied, 2011). Nonchalant attitudes regarding bullying behavior occur for a variety of reasons and frequently are based on preconceived beliefs. For example, teachers may believe bullying behaviors are typical in child development and the bully will mature, eventually developing more prosocial behaviors. Some teachers may also presume that bullying is a rite of passage for youth

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and intervention is unnecessary, and as such, being bullied provides an opportunity to "learn how to overcome common obstacles" (Migliaccio, 2015, p. 92). Also, teachers may believe that not intervening in bullying situations forces victims to stand up for themselves, thereby forcing them to develop a stronger and more independent character (Duy, 2013).

Furthermore, teachers often are uncertain about the nature of bullying behaviors. Some teachers find it difficult to determine if students are engaging in good-natured teasing or bullying (Harwood & Copfer, 2011). Some teachers free themselves from the need to intervene by blaming victims for getting themselves into a bullying situation and for letting it continue (Hazel, 2010). Studies have also shown that teachers of young children are hesitant to label preschoolers as bullies or victims, choosing instead to describe negative interactions between peers as inappropriate behavior (Goryl, Neilsen-Hewett, & Sweller, 2013).

Although teachers often focus on the individual student, they are also aware of the social context in which students live. They point to the family, including parenting style and quality of relationship with parents, as a cause for students becoming bullies (Rosen, Scott, & DeOrnellas, 2017). Other factors, such as socioeconomic status and exposure to violence through television, movies, and the Internet, were noted by a group of high school teachers in Turkey, who described bullying as an opportunity for students to demand "rights through violence" (Sahin, 2010, p. 127). Similar beliefs were expressed by a fifth-grade teacher in the USA who stated, "Children are made that way by whatever they are exposed to in the home" (Migliaccio, 2015, p. 95). This perspective not only limits teachers' responses to bullying but also puts the responsibility for students who bully outside the school (Migliaccio). This can be problematic as when teachers attribute bullying to these external factors, more students in the class are victimized (Oldenburg et al., 2015). Given such perceptions, teacher training related to bullying is critical.

Teachers' Training Related to Bullying

Dealing with student misbehavior is one of the most stressful aspects of teaching. Teachers need more training in classroom management in general and in recognizing and intervening in bullying specifically (Maunder & Tattersall, 2010). Student misbehavior is a primary cause of burnout for teachers and a common reason for novice teachers to leave teaching (Allen, 2010). Previous research has shown that teachers and preservice

teachers have incomplete and sometimes inaccurate knowledge of bullying (Ahtola, Haataja, Karna, Poskiparta, & Salmivalli, 2012). Teachers in the field often acknowledge their need for more training on bullying, while preservice teachers may be overly confident in their ability to handle bullying and not see the need for additional training (Ahtola et al.).

Although they typically have the best intentions, teachers may lack the knowledge or skills to handle different bullying behaviors (Berkowitz, 2014). A misunderstanding of the causes and effects of bullying behaviors can lead teachers to trust that students will work out their differences without adult intervention (Waasdorp, Pas, O'Brennan, & Bradshaw, 2011). Teachers with this mindset fail to consider the long-term consequences of bullying and being bullied (Veenstra, Lindenberg, Huitsing, Sainio, & Salmivalli, 2014). Researchers have demonstrated that lack of awareness and ineffective intervention with bullying can lead to negative long-term outcomes, such as escalated violence, poor academic performance, and truancy for the bully and the victim (Goldweber, Waasdorp, & Bradshaw, 2013). When bullies are successful, they quickly learn that bullying is an easy way to get what they want and may develop other forms of antisocial behavior (Kyriakides & Creemers, 2012). Victims may experience depression and feel useless, which adversely affects their ability to take advantage of the academic environment (Kyriakides & Creemers). While it is important to foster independence and autonomy in developing children, it is equally important to be aware of the long-term effects of bullying behaviors that may present within the classroom and across the campus.

Research indicates that teachers would benefit from additional training in bullying, but some have complained that they do not have time to participate (Charmaraman, Jones, Stein, & Espelage, 2013). They have also expressed little hope of change when intervening stating, "Name-calling is never going to stop. Kids are cruel and gangs are real" (Charmaraman et al., p. 440). Despite resistance from some teachers, most indicated a need for mandatory, long-term training on bullying and increased administrative support for bullying incidents (Charmaraman et al.). Many of the teachers in Charmaraman et al.'s study were unaware of policies aimed at providing positive educational experiences for students. A report released at the White House Conference on Bullying Prevention noted that while 98% of teachers believe intervening in bullying is part of their job, almost half had not been trained on their district's bullying policy (Gulemetova, Drury, & Bradshaw, 2011). To complicate matters, many teachers reported difficulty determining whether students' behaviors are

normative or bullying, making it difficult to follow the mandate of the school's policy (Charmaraman et al.). Therefore, training must not only identify strategies for intervention and prevention but also must increase teachers' ability to identify bullying behaviors.

Lack of training in intervening with bullying makes it especially difficult for teachers to handle bullying related to issues of sexual diversity. Although Kolbert et al. (2015) reported that teacher training on sexual diversity is associated with an improved school climate for sexual minority students, few teachers have had such training. In 2014, *Education Journal* published a survey of approximately 2000 school staff that revealed only 8% of primary teachers and 17% of secondary teachers had been trained to handle homophobic bullying. These numbers are remarkable given that two-thirds of secondary teachers reported that homophobic bullying was affecting students' academic performance at school (*Education Journal*).

If we accept that many teachers in the field need and want additional training in bullying recognition and intervention and that preservice teachers may be overly confident in their belief that they do not need additional training, where is the training to come from? A first step would be to add additional training in child development and specialized training in bullying to the curriculum of teacher training programs (Sahin, 2010). Next, it is important to provide frequent and comprehensive in-service training for current teachers. Teachers must be trained on their district's bullying policy if they are to be expected to enforce it (Charmaraman et al., 2013). Also, teachers will benefit from in-service training on sexual diversity and homophobic bullying (Kolbert et al., 2015). Finally, it is important that teachers understand the best methods for disciplining bullies.

The Role of Teachers in Contributing to Bullying

Children and parents view teachers as the educator, decision maker, and protector of students within the classroom. When children report to their parents about difficulties with other students at school, parents customarily refer their children to the teacher as a source of help and assistance. Society has traditionally viewed teachers as the first line of defense in identifying and intervening with bullying among students; however, teachers may unintentionally play a passive and/or active role in contributing to bullying in the school setting (Veenstra et al., 2014). Currently, teachers have a wide-ranging set of responsibilities that involve more than teaching students. While teachers are focused on these additional duties, they may

inadvertently overlook serious behavioral issues, such as peer bullying, that are not directly affecting the learning environment (Veenstra et al.). This can be especially true when teachers are under pressure for their students to perform well during high-stakes testing. The emphasis on high-stakes test scores has led to "a narrowed curriculum, increased stress on teachers and students, and reduced teachers' attention to other aspects of students' development" (Hazel, 2010, p. 351). The resulting classroom is likely to be less inclusive and to feel less comfortable for students. In this stressful environment, teachers may be unaware that bullying is occurring within the context of their classroom, thus involuntarily contributing to the bullying situation.

It is likely that many teachers are not intentionally avoiding negative behaviors that are affecting their students; rather, they are simply unaware of what is occurring between their students in the classroom. Bullying behavior also occurs in a variety of settings beyond the four walls of the classroom. For example, the playground, cafeteria, restrooms, and hallways are areas where children may experience negative interactions with peers, and frequently teachers are not present to monitor student behavior (Espelage, Polanin, & Low, 2014). When teachers are not present to observe the bullying behavior, victims are less likely to report the incident to a teacher and bystanders are less likely to intervene (Hektner & Swenson, 2012).

Despite their extensive workloads, teachers play a fundamental role in the overall well-being of their students. While educating students is the primary focus of school, it is important to remember that social and emotional health has a long-lasting impact on a child's future. Teachers play a leading role in facilitating positive and negative atmospheres in their classrooms. Furthermore, a teacher's attitude towards bullies and victims creates the foundation for future attitudes towards bullying for the class as a whole. If the teacher assumes a proactive and anti-bullying position, the class is likely to follow suit (Carrera, DePalma, & Lameiras, 2011).

Unfortunately, there are also incidents in which teachers take on the role of bullies, thus offering poor role models for students on how to interact with others (Charmaraman et al., 2013). Monsvold, Bendixen, Hagen, and Helvik (2011) defined bullying by teachers as "when a teacher uses his or her power to punish, manipulate or disparage a student beyond what would be considered reasonable disciplinary procedures" (p. 323). Bullying by teachers can also be unintentional, taking the form of sarcastic comments, name-calling, refusing to accept late or unidentified work, and

making humiliating comments to students they expect to have trouble from in the future (Sylvester, 2011). In an Israeli study, children who reported experiencing bullying behaviors from teachers, including "ridicule, isolation, verbal discrimination, physical assault, and sexual harassment," were more likely than their peers to develop significant problems in school and to have psychological problems as adults (Monsvold et al., 2011, p. 324).

The Role of Teachers in Bullying Identification

Teachers are educated in aspects of childhood development; however, there is limited focus on the different traits students may present within a classroom setting. Having a thorough understanding of the different roles bullies and victims play during school is vital for accurate identification. A teacher's role in bullying identification should be proactive and direct. As accurate identification of bullies and their victims is fundamental to bullying prevention and intervention (Wong, Cheng, & Chen, 2013), it is concerning that many teachers struggle with recognizing bullying behavior when it occurs and have difficulty determining the purported bully and victim. This difficulty contributes to the lower number of bullying incidents typically reported (Ahn, Rodkin, & Gest, 2013). Accurate identification is complicated by disparities in bullying frequency and severity as related to factors such as the race, gender, age, and culture of the students involved (Chen, 2015). In general, correctly identifying a bully requires a teacher to have a working knowledge of the vast array of bullying behaviors that students may exhibit, as well as an understanding of the personalities of the students in his or her classroom and how bullying behaviors may present within those particular students.

Recognition of bullying behaviors is further complicated by the various types of students that engage in bullying; there is not one specific marker that clearly identifies a bully (Duy, 2013). While many definitions have been given for bullying, there is a general consensus that bullying involves negative, harmful behaviors that are prevalent and persistent over a period of time and that typically target a vulnerable person or group of people (Carrera et al., 2011; Oldenburg et al., 2015). With this broad definition of bullying, it is important to note that specific behaviors are not identified within the context of the definition. In the media, bullying is often sensationalized and portrayed as a situation involving public humiliation and/or physical assault of the victim. Perhaps as a result, teachers are better

able to identify a bullying situation when the behaviors are flagrant rather than secretive; however, this often is not the norm for bullying behaviors. Teachers are less likely to consider indirect behaviors (e.g., excluding students, making up stories about students, etc.) as bullying (Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler, & Weiner, 2005). They also may mistake social forms of bullying as playful behavior between friends and not interpret it as bullying (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006). Having incorporated a schema that bullying behavior is physically aggressive, many teachers overlook covert, but equally painful, behaviors such as relational bullying (Carrera et al.).

Since bullying in the school does not always consist of physically aggressive behaviors, it is important that teachers develop an understanding of the different ways that students are able to inflict pain on others. For example, Chen (2015) reported that typical bullying behaviors in a Greek primary school consisted of name-calling with racial and sexual undertones, verbal threats, teasing, and peer rejection, while physical assault and theft were the least common acts of bullying reported. In an elementary school in the northwest portion of the USA, significant bullying behaviors included teasing, name-calling, and instigating rumors among peers; peer exclusion and mild physical aggression were considered less significant (Chen). While this does not discount the physical aggression perpetrated by bullies in schools, it is important to note that bullying identification involves more than what is immediately observable. Sometimes, the worst pain imposed on victims of bullies occurs under the radar of teachers and leaves no physically observable wounds or damage.

This type of bullying, generally referred to as covert bullying, is becoming more of a focus in efforts to identify and prevent bullying in the schools (Byers, Caltabiano, & Caltabiano, 2011). Covert forms of bullying occur in settings and situations that are out of view of the teacher, such as in the halls, on the playground, in the cafeteria, or on the Internet. This method of bullying does not involve physical confrontations or insult; however, it can inflict serious damage to a victim's social and emotional health (Barnes et al., 2012; Demaray, Malecki, Secord, & Lyell, 2013). Bullying that is concealed from others may include verbal abuse, cyber bullying, offensive gestures, blackmailing, name-calling, the spreading of rumors, and exclusion of certain students from a group (Byers et al.). Schools and classrooms have been slow to address this form of bullying, choosing to focus instead on the more easily observed behaviors.

In addition to identifying bullies, it is important for educators to be aware of the victims and the multitude of ways they may present within

the context of the classroom (Yang & Salmivalli, 2013). In general, there are two primary types of victims that emerge from a bullying scenario: the passive or submissive victim and the aggressive victim. The passive victim may become withdrawn within the classroom, exhibit a significant increase in anxiety, and/or avoid coming to school. The aggressive victim may act out in the classroom, display atypical forms of aggression towards peers and staff, and/or become a bully (Carrera et al., 2011). Many children struggle with telling a teacher they are being bullied (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006), and they also struggle with accurately identifying their emotions surrounding the incident. Changes in a child's behavior should be considered a sign that something is amiss in a child's life, and teachers should respond with care and concern.

Complicating teachers' efforts to identify victims of bullying is that children at different developmental stages may exhibit signs of bullying and victimization in different ways. Research has shown that bullying (both aggressive and relational) begins as early as preschool and experiencing bullying during early childhood can impair children's ability to cultivate friendships and lead to students being unhappy at school (Ostrov, Godleski, Kamper-DeMarco, Blakely-McClure, & Celenza, 2015). Older students who are bullied can display a number of other symptoms. These include lack of connectedness to school, poorer grades, lower attendance, withdrawal from peers, rejection by peers, depression, anxiety, and low levels of resilience (Victoria State Government, 2013).

It is also important to note that, just as male and female students have different types of bullying behaviors, male and female victims may respond differently to bullying (Yang & Salmivalli, 2013). In general, males are more likely to suffer physically aggressive forms of bullying, while females tend to suffer more from relational forms of bullying, such as being excluded from peer groups or having rumors spread about them; however, this is not always the case (Dukes, Stein, & Zane, 2010). Therefore, it is important for teachers to be aware of these differences and to respond accordingly.

The Role of Teachers in Intervening in the Moment of Bullying Episodes

Teachers' understanding of bullying varies based on level of training, experience, and beliefs regarding bullies and victims. Deficits in their understanding are likely to result in a well-documented tendency

to underestimate rates of bullying, particularly with regard to bullying that occurs on school grounds but outside the classroom (Carrera et al., 2011; Chen, 2015; Duy, 2013; Hazel, 2010). In a large study by Demaray and colleagues, the majority of school staff reported bullying rates of less than 10% while students reported rates between 20% and 30% (2013). A number of factors inhibit teachers' response to bullying, and studies have shown that teachers believe they intervene much more frequently than noted by students (Novick & Isaacs, 2010; Pepler, Craig, Ziegler, & Charach, 1994). Pepler et al. found that 84% of teachers reported intervening often or always in bullying situations while only 35% of their students believed this to be true. This finding is supported by a videotaped observation of teacher and student behavior during bullying incidents by Novick and Isaacs who found that teachers intervened in only 18% of episodes that occurred within their classrooms and, even when the teachers were clearly aware of the bullying, failed to intervene 27% of the time.

Just as teachers' schemas about bullying affect their ability to identify bullying behaviors, these belief systems help to determine whether or not they will intervene. When teachers are debating whether or not to intervene in bullying incidents, they draw upon their beliefs about bullying, their previous experiences, and their beliefs about students. Teachers tend to attribute bullying behavior to factors within the teacher's control (i.e., internal factors) or to factors outside their control (i.e., external factors). They are more likely to intervene when they attribute behaviors to internal factors because they are more likely to believe the behaviors can be remediated and are thus more committed to stopping those (Oldenburg et al., 2015). Teachers are likely to put less energy into intervening with bullying behaviors when they believe they are due to external factors, such as characteristics of the student, the student's family, or the community in which the student lives, because they doubt their intervention will make a difference or because they do not believe intervening is part of their job (Oldenburg et al.).

There are a number of internal factors that influence teacher's propensity for intervening in bullying situations. These include characteristics of the teacher, previous experiences, training, and level of confidence regarding intervening in bullying. Teachers' personal histories of bullying influence their decision to intervene. Oldenburg et al. found that teachers that have bullied others may have more permissive attitudes towards bullying, recognizing it as a way to gain power or popularity;

teachers that have been victimized by bullies are more likely to empathize with victims, recognize bullying as it is occurring, and be more likely to intervene (2015).

Teachers' approaches to bullying intervention are influenced by their levels of experience. New teachers typically spend their first year trying to learn the many facets of their job and have little experience intervening in bullying situations, which has led some to conclude that more bullying may occur in the classrooms of new teachers (Oldenburg et al., 2015). However, it has also been argued that, while experienced teachers have intervened in numerous bullying incidents through the years and have developed ways of managing the events, more bullying may take place in the classrooms of experienced teachers because they have, over time, become comfortable with student misbehavior and are less likely to intervene (Oldenburg et al.). Therefore, the teacher's level of experience should be considered in developing training programs for intervening in bullying.

With experience, teachers typically develop confidence in their ability to maintain behavioral control within the classroom. Teachers that feel confident in their ability to intervene effectively are more likely to do so (Ahtola et al., 2012). However, when teachers lack confidence, they are less likely to intervene and their classroom can become unsafe for students. Their lack of confidence may be due to actual skill deficits stemming from inadequate training. Previous attempts at intervention may have failed, and teachers may refrain from intervening due to a fear of making things worse. In some schools, retaliation by students may be a legitimate concern (Pyhältö, Pietarinen, & Soini, 2015). In other cases, teachers may dismiss a child's claim that he or she is being bullied because the reported bullying does not match the teacher's pre-formed schema (Duy, 2013). As previously noted, bullying is typically assumed to mean overt aggression (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006), and teachers have been observed to intervene more frequently with this type of bullying. However, teachers may appear oblivious to mistreatment involving students when it occurs in females, involves behavior outside the classroom or on the Internet, or when the bullying behavior is covert in nature, such as rumor spreading or purposeful exclusion of peers (Waasdorp et al., 2011).

Finally, it is important to mention that teachers may avoid intervening with bullies because they fear becoming a target. de Wet (2010) reported that over 90% of teachers in a London inner-city school were victimized by students. This victimization took the form of deliberate and repeated acts that were aimed at harming the teachers "physically, emotionally,

socially, and/or professionally" (de Wet, p. 196). The teacher participants reported feeling powerless and embarrassed, had low self-esteem, and were more likely to withdraw from others. They also reported suffering from physical and psychological ailments such as sleep disturbances, headaches, stress, burnout, and difficulty controlling their anger (de Wet). As would be expected, the victimization limited teachers' ability to teach effectively, increased the number of disciplinary problems in their classrooms, and made it difficult for teachers to look forward to going to work (de Wet). Therefore, multiple aspects of the teacher's previous experiences may determine how and if bullying intervention occurs.

External factors play a significant role in bullying intervention as teachers are less likely to intervene in bullying situations when they believe that bullying and victimization are due to characteristics of the students (Ahtola et al., 2012). Some teachers believe that students are victimized because they are not assertive enough in dealing with bullies (Blain-Arcaro, Smith, Cunningham, Vaillancourt, & Rimas, 2012) and that students would not be picked on or bullied if they would stand up for themselves. However, Espelage (2015) found that encouraging victims to be more assertive led to more aggression and victimization across the school year.

Harwood and Copfer (2011) note that teachers often share the belief that all children bully or are bullied as part of the growing up process (i.e., bullying is normative and intervention is not necessary). Teachers who believe bullying is normative are more likely to let the students work it out on their own, especially when bullying involves girls, and are less likely to reprimand the aggressor (Espelage, 2015).

Another belief held by some teachers is that students would not be victimized if they would just avoid bullies (Harwood & Copfer, 2011). Espelage (2015) found that teachers are more likely to contact parents and separate students when boys are involved; however, with younger students, separating bullies and victims was associated with "lower levels of aggression, declines in classroom-level peer victimization, and declines in aggression for highly aggressive girls" (p. 78). When teachers fully ascribe to these beliefs, they are less likely to intervene and are more likely to blame the victim (Rosen et al., 2017).

Other factors at play include whether the teacher believes the victim is to blame for the bullying, if the victim has what the teacher considers attributes of victimization, if the teacher feels empathy towards the victim, and if the teacher feels the situation is serious (Mishna et al., 2005). Some teachers, including preservice teachers in a study by Smith and

colleagues (2010), respond to bullying based on how upset the victim seems to be. Other factors linked to how teachers deal with classroom situations include the gender of the teacher (Harwood & Copfer, 2011), characteristics of the school (e.g., size, climate), and characteristics of the students involved (e.g., age, gender, social status; Holt, Kantor, & Finkelhor, 2009).

Teachers also may be uncomfortable intervening with certain types of students. Bradshaw and colleagues surveyed members of the National Education Association and found that teachers feel more comfortable intervening in bullying involving students with disabilities or weight-based bullying than they do in intervening in bullying regarding sexual orientation (2013). Kolbert et al. (2015) attributed this discomfort to "fear of discrimination, fear of job loss, the possibility of receiving unfavorable reactions from parents, students, and other staff members, their own prejudices, or failure to recognize bullying based on sexual orientation as a serious problem" (p. 249).

In addition to teacher- and student-related factors that influence teacher's intervening in bullying, there are contextual factors, such as school-based anti-bullying policies and adherence to the Student Code of Conduct. Teachers typically consider school policy regarding bullying, particularly when physical aggression is involved (Harwood & Copfer, 2011). All schools have policies that define physical aggression and its consequences. For nonphysical bullying, however, teachers may focus on anti-bullying policies that encourage students to resolve conflicts through prosocial avenues, such as being appropriately assertive and making compromises (Harwood & Copfer).

Whether or not teachers elect to intervene, their behaviors have consequences. If they choose to ignore the incident, bullies are likely to see this as acceptance of the behavior and are more likely to continue while victims come to understand that teachers cannot be trusted to intervene and are less likely to report bullying incidents (Burger, Strohmeier, Sprober, Bauman, & Rigby, 2015). When teachers take an authoritarian (i.e., controlling) stance against bullying by setting firm limits, using verbal reprimands, or incorporating other forms of discipline, bullies tend to curtail their behaviors for a short time. However, this can lead to more covert forms of bullying that are harder to identify (Burger et al.). Some teachers choose a nonpunitive approach in which the bullies' motives are addressed. The goals of this approach are to increase the bullies' understanding of and empathy for the victim and to help bullies develop nonaggressive behavior

strategies (Burger et al.). These results must be considered when developing programs for curtailing bullying.

The Role of Teachers in Prevention and Intervention Programs

Teachers are a key factor in bullying prevention (Kyriakides & Creemers, 2012) and "the factor with the greatest impact on school satisfaction" (Simoes & Gaspar Matos, 2011, p. 38). They do this by creating a learning environment in which all students feel safe. Teachers at all levels strive to maintain a positive atmosphere within their classroom, and the environment of the classroom has profound effects on overall student performance (Goldweber et al., 2013). Students, as a whole, demonstrate greater academic and social gains when teachers provide support and encouragement, thus facilitating an accepting educational environment (Wang et al., 2014). A teacher's attitude lays the foundation for the overall setting in his or her classroom and may have positive or negative implications for the students (Ahn et al., 2013).

As previously noted, many teachers struggle with bullying intervention, and this may be especially true with regard to how to discipline bullies (Kokko & Pörhölä, 2009). Schools that have established harsh criteria for handling bullying situations (i.e., calling the police, suspension, expulsion, corporal punishment) typically do not see a decrease in bullying behaviors because bullies become more secretive and victims are less likely to tell due to fear of retaliation. This approach is ineffective in resolving conflicts and causes further deterioration of the relationship between the bully and victim (Wong et al., 2013). While environments that are strict and overly structured in regard to bullying tend to promote bullying by facilitating negative attitudes and hostility (Harwood & Copfer, 2011), a supportive classroom climate in which the teacher responds to and intervenes effectively with bullying has positive outcomes (Berkowitz, 2014).

Teachers not only create positive environments within their classrooms but can be instrumental in making other parts of the school (e.g., playgrounds, hallways, cafeterias, and restrooms) safe and positive climates (Cortes & Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2014). They also work to promote healthy relationships between students. When students feel comfortable reporting bullying to their teacher, it is a reflection of the positive environment their teacher has created. Students notice how teachers respond to bullying and

use this information to decide how likely teachers are to help them if they are in that situation. Seeking help is fostered by the knowledge that their teacher takes bullying seriously (Cortes & Kochenderfer-Ladd). When teachers clearly take a stand against bullying, students learn that bullying is unacceptable and are empowered to speak out against bullying (Maunder & Tattersall, 2010).

Teachers use a number of strategies in preventing bullying. At the classroom level, they set up learning experiences that discourage bullying; supervise students more closely, especially when they are at play; and intervene quickly when bullying occurs (Goryl et al., 2013). Interventions tend to be either proactive or reactive. Since down times (i.e., when students are between assignments or taking a break) can be problematic, teachers can be proactive in organizing activities (e.g., working in cooperative groups to solve puzzles, listening to music, or playing quiet games) that calm students, give them little opportunity for bullying behaviors, and increase their enjoyment of school (Kyriakides & Creemers, 2012). When bullying occurs, teachers who intervene typically do so by verbally reprimanding students, separating students, talking with students about their behaviors, notifying parents, or diffusing the situation (Harwood & Copfer, 2011).

Collaboration with other teachers or with students who are not involved in the bullying can also be very effective. Teachers should be encouraged to work together to observe students, identify bullying behaviors, and exchange ideas about how to best handle situations (Olweus, 1997). Effective strategies can then be shared with staff and administrators.

Since bullying frequently occurs outside of the classroom when no adults are present, one way that teachers can expand their prevention role is by motivating bystander peers to intervene and/or to report incidents (Blain-Arcaro et al., 2012). Peers are usually present when bullying occurs, and they reinforce bullying either by helping the bully or by watching the incident without intervening for the victim (Burger et al., 2015). When they understand how groups operate, teachers can have a powerful impact on students in their classes. They are in a position to influence peer relationships by teaching students social rules and by guiding them to develop their own healthy social norms. Teachers also influence students by being a role model and by developing the teacher/student relationship (Hymel, McClure, Miller, Shumka, & Trach, 2015). When working with students to encourage their assistance, teachers should keep in mind that students may misperceive the seriousness of bullying and should listen to their

accounts of the incident carefully. It is important that teachers be very clear in discussing what constitutes bullying and how these behaviors differ from normal relationship difficulties (Maunder, Harrop, & Tattersall, 2010).

In addition to the prevention and intervention measures taken by teachers, both alone and in collaboration with students and other teachers, there are a number of school-wide intervention programs available for adoption (Barnes et al., 2012). Research indicates that long-term programs that involve the entire population of the school are more effective than short-term programs with smaller targeted participants (Sahin, 2010). Teachers have an integral role in the success of these programs.

One of the great advantages of implementing a school-wide program is the knowledge teachers gain (Bowllan, 2011). In a review of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, a school-wide intervention program that has been found to change school climates, teachers who participated in the program were better able to recognize and intervene in bullying. In addition, students reported that teachers talked to them more about bullying, and they observed teachers intervening in bullying situations more frequently. It is likely that changes in teacher behavior are related to the training they received on implementing the program (Bowllan).

Teachers also receive training when implementing the KiVa Antibullying Program, a school-wide anti-bullying program that has been found to be effective in replacing bullying in elementary grades (Ahtola et al., 2012). Although the program begins with two days of face-to-face training, the majority of teachers' learning appears to take place while administering the program using a teachers' manual. Through their implementation of the program, teachers develop more confidence in their ability to intervene effectively, more knowledge about identifying bullying, and self-efficacy (Ahtola et al.). Teachers also develop a better understanding of group process while teaching students about the role of the peer group in bullying (Ahtola et al.). Participating in a school-wide program provides teachers with the opportunity to receive sorely needed training on recognizing bullying, to develop confidence in their ability to intervene, and to become a role model for students in dealing with conflict appropriately.

Although it appears that teachers have much to gain from participating in school-wide bullying programs, adherence to the program can be a significant problem. Blain-Arcaro et al. (2012) reported that teachers tend to make use of the elements of the program that fit with their approach to

teaching while rejecting those parts that they did not feel would be helpful. This inconsistent adherence to the program is likely responsible for the mixed results seen in program reviews. It is important that school-wide programs take into account teachers' understanding of bullying so as to encourage adherence and fidelity to the program.

Conclusion

In addition to providing a supportive learning environment, teachers are charged with protecting the students under their care. This requires recognizing, intervening with, and preventing bullying. Unfortunately, many teachers report a lack of knowledge of bullying and a lack of time and resources for intervening (Oldenburg et al., 2015). Other teachers ignore bullying or blame victims for not being assertive enough to avoid being mistreated (Blain-Arcaro et al., 2012; Harwood & Copfer, 2011).

Teachers' perceptions and preconceived attitudes regarding bullying must constantly be challenged in order for them to successfully intervene during bullying situations (Kokko & Pörhölä, 2009). Teachers need to be more open in voicing their concerns to administrators regarding their lack of knowledge and training (Charmaraman et al., 2013). To help teachers be more effective with bullying situations, Maunder and Tattersall (2010) recommend that teachers' roles and responsibilities regarding bullying be clearly defined by school administration. Teachers play a pivotal role in the facilitation of or prevention of bullying through their relationships with students, communication with parents, and collegial relationships with co-workers.

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