“Mean Mugging”:
Exploring Young Aboriginal Women’s Experiences of Bullying in Team Sport

by

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Abstract

Youth bullying is a global epidemic that has garnered recent interest among researchers (Dukes, Stein, & Zane, 2009; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Murray-Harvey, Slee & Taki, 2010). Research (e.g., Carlyle & Steinman, 2007; Lemstra, Rogers, Redgate, Garner, & Moraros, 2011) suggests that Aboriginal youth are more likely to be bullied, and at a rate higher than that of the Canadian national average. Sport has been identified as a possible mechanism for decreasing the probability of bullying victimization (Collot D'Escury & Dudink, 2010), but few researchers have explored the experiences of bullying in sports, and therefore there is limited in-depth data to support such claims. Research suggests that Aboriginal youth stop participating in youth sport between junior high and high school (Schinke et al., 2010). Given the well-documented benefits of sport, it is critical to engage in sport research that has the potential to contribute to a body of literature that can enhance sport opportunities for Aboriginal youth. The purpose of this qualitative description study was to explore young Aboriginal women's experiences of bullying in team sport. Eight young Aboriginal women, between fourteen and eighteen years old, were purposefully selected to participate. At the time of the study, they all had played a team sport within the last two years within a major urban centre in Alberta. Each participant engaged in an individual semi-structured interview, which was subsequently transcribed and analyzed by a content analysis. Participants then engaged in one-on-one interviews to confirm the research findings. The participants' experiences of bullying are represented by five main themes: (1)"Mean Mugging," (2) "No Passing", (3) "Happens All the Time", (4) "Stronger Together", and (5) "Active Coaches".

The experiences shared by participants suggest that bullying occurs frequently within team sports, and their detailed descriptions shed light on a broad range of bullying experiences. Participants also described how team bonding and active coaches can serve as potential solutions to team bullying. Findings from this research highlight the voices of young Aboriginal women and subsequently contribute to the emerging bullying literature.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Jennifer Lee Kentel. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, "An Exploration of Young Aboriginal Women's Experiences of Bullying in Team Sport", No. Pro00039944, June 5, 2013.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to both my parents. Their constant support and love helped to make this thesis possible. I will be forever grateful that they taught me to love the world and to love the gift of knowledge.

Acknowledgments

I first would like to thank ENBA Sports (Edmonton Native Basketball Association) without whom this thesis would not have been possible. Thank-you to Coach Barrie Curtis who made sure I had participants and supported me in every way he could. Mom and Dad, thank-you for pushing me forward in my education and never letting me give up. A thank-you to Dr. Pierre Chue who came in my time of need to give me another set of eyes. Thank-you to the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation for all of the support it offers its graduate students. I would like to thank my thesis committee for taking a chance on me and helping me to learn so much from this experience: Janice Causgrove Dunn, Christina Rinaldi, and Nancy Spencer-Cavaliere. Thank you also to all of the teachers who made a difference in my life and pushed me to succeed. Thank-you to all of the young women who participated in this study. You inspire me.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Tara-Leigh McHugh, for every minute she spent mentoring me, teaching me and pushing me to write the best thesis I could. It is my firm belief that she was the best supervisor a student could have and I do not know what I would have done without her. She opened up a whole new world to me in research and helped me make my dream, this thesis, come true.

Lastly, I would like to thank God for giving me the strength and the mind to do this thesis. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." (Proverbs 3:5-6)

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Introduction

My passions have long been basketball and youth mentorship. I played school and club basketball throughout high school and I have coached women's youth basketball for six years. I also take part in youth mentorship, currently mentoring three young women. It has been through this prolonged exposure that I came up with this research question.

As a coach I have seen an increase in bullying, particularly covert aggression in the forms of name-calling, starting rumours, exclusion, and even isolation while playing on the court. At the same time, I have to acknowledge that I am not a player on the team, and what I see may not be interpreted as bullying by the players themselves. I regret that I did not start paying more attention to player relationships until a situation occurred, which almost caused the team to be disbanded. Even then, it was the players who brought it to the coaches' attention when the bullying had become obvious enough to parents watching the games.

What I found fascinating is that none of the youth referred to the behaviour as bullying or aggression or even being mean. They described all of the behaviours as drama. It was in that moment that I realized we as researchers may be looking at bullying in a completely different way than the youth. I also became aware that we coaches may not know what signs to look for that indicate bullying among young women in team sports.

In addition to youth mentorship and sports, I have a passion in working with Aboriginal communities in Canada. I have worked with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police on a violence intervention project in Hobbema, AB as well as

worked with their Aboriginal Policing Unit. One of the most prevalent problems that I saw in the majority of the communities in Alberta was (youth) bullying. Because I see sport as such a positive avenue for youth, I was curious to explore the experiences of bullying among young Aboriginal women in team sports.

Chapter One: Literature Review

This literature review seeks to provide the contextual research upon which the bullying experiences of young Aboriginal[1] women in team sports will be explored. It demonstrates that this topic is timely and relevant, and that experiences of and access to sports may be impeded for young Aboriginal women. It also shows that these bullying experiences in sport address a large gap in bullying research. This review of the literature will begin by defining bullying and the theories that have typically been used in bullying research. An overview of the prevalence and consequences of bullying, which includes gender and ethnic considerations, will then be described. The review of the literature will end with an overview of the literature that has examined bullying in sport.

Defining Bullying

Defining and assessing bullying and peer victimization are complex tasks (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). Espelage and Swearer (2003) stipulate that the common theme among the many definitions of bullying is that bullying is a subset of aggression. Furthermore, Olweus provides the definition of bullying in the literature as a repeated negative behavior, which could include both verbal and physical behaviors, that occurs in a relationship with an imbalance of strength and/or power (Olweus, 1993, 1994, 2010). This definition, however, is controversial for a number of reasons. In her qualitative study of 97 students in the United States, deLara (2012) found that adolescents failed to report bullying because of: (a) the ubiquitous nature of bullying, (b) a sense of helplessness, (c) concerns over adult response, (d) sense of

[1] Aboriginal refers to people of Indian, Métis, or Inuit descent (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2010).

autonomy and self-reliance, (e) shame, (f) adult or parental omniscience, and (g) a different definition of bullying than adults utilize (p.293). deLara (2012) argues that Olweus' definition neglects the perceptions of youth. She argues that not all criteria are met in typical peer-to-peer bullying, and that youth may be working from a different definition of bullying than adults (2012). This problem can result in youth not realizing that they are being bullied because there may not be a perceived power imbalance as it is their friend bullying them. In addition, it may not be a repeated act. Thus, seeking the perspectives of young people in regards to bullying is important (2012).

The fundamental terms of the definition (i.e. power imbalance and repetition) have prompted controversy in the bullying literature. It is argued by Olweus (2010) and Cornell and Bandyopadhyay (2010) that a perceived *power imbalance* and *repetition* are paramount to bullying and distinguish bullying from peer conflict or normal acts of aggression. But, as deLara (2012) points out, one person may commit multiple acts of bullying against various different people. There is not necessarily repetition in the act against one person, but the acts themselves are of a bullying nature, and may mark a power imbalance. Another point of contention is the challenge of distinguishing bullying from peer conflict. It can be argued that friends are not always equals, and in moments of conflict, one person may momentarily have more power than the other. If one friend is aggressive towards another, why is it not considered bullying? As the classification of bully-victims attests, victims can be bullies in other contexts. Should it then not be considered that friends can bully each other, even if they are considered equals most of the time?

With the lack of consensus over the definition of bullying, but a commonality in looking at it as a subset of aggression, it is key that researchers use or borrow from aggression research when defining and assessing bullying behaviours (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). Espelage and Swearer (2003) point out that there are a number of typologies for aggression that are considered in regards to bullying: (a) Pro-active/Instrumental Aggression vs. Reactive Aggression; (b) Direct/Overt vs. Indirect/Covert Aggression; (c) Relational Aggression; (d) Horizontal Violence. It should be noted at this time that bullying and aggression are different. Although bullying is aggression, it also includes repeated acts and a power imbalance (Hawley, Stump & Ratliff, 2011). Pro-active/Instrumental Aggression is overt and involves motivation to achieve a desired outcome, such as social status, control and power (Mayberry & Espelage, 2007). Reactive aggression involves an intense, spontaneous and hostile act in response to a real or perceived frustration (2007). Direct/overt aggression is noticeably physical or verbal, while indirect/covert aggression is subtler and involves social manipulation as well as relational aggression (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). The aim of relational aggression is to significantly damage the relationships or feelings of inclusion of another person (2003). It can include the spreading of rumours, excluding others from one's social group, or even withdrawing friendship or acceptance (2003). Bullying can take these various forms of aggression.

Given that there are somewhat differing definitions of bullying in the academic literature, it is important to identify the working definition of bullying in this study. For the purposes of this study, the working definition of bullying to be used is consistent with that of Faris (2006): "a situation, however brief, where a

perpetrator harms a victim who is a peer, using physical (hitting, tripping, etc.), direct verbal (name-calling, threats of violence), or indirect (rumor-mongering, ostracism, etc.) aggression, and in a context of a continued relationship" (p.4-5). This definition will be used because it places less emphasis on the power imbalance and repetition. I believe that more important than repetition is a continued relationship between the victim and the bully (e.g., a school peer, a team-mate, a friend) because it is that continued relationship that may be what allows the pain to increase. An isolated incident may be walked away from with the knowledge that you may never see that person again. In bullying, the power comes from the victim and the bully knowing each other. In that way, a single incident can be called bullying. I also believe that the power imbalance in the moment of bullying is implicit and this definition acknowledges that the victim-perpetrator relationship is contextual.

Theories in Bullying Research

The research community is urged by Espelage and Swearer (2003) to view bullying from a social-ecological perspective and ecological systems theory. Bullying can be viewed as an ecological phenomenon established and perpetrated over time because of the complex interplay between inter- and intra-individual variables (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Swearer & Espelage 2011). Individual behavior is influenced by the interplay between environmental settings, biological factors and psychological factors and, as such, individual characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, age and gender are important to understanding bullying (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Faris, 2006; Swearer & Espelage, 2011). In other words a social-ecological perspective considers the importance of context, environment and the

individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1999).

There are other theories in the literature that are also gaining attention in regards to bullying. Homophily hypothesis, dominance theory, and attraction theory focus on peer-level characteristics in bullying (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). The homophily hypothesis suggests that in late childhood and early adolescence youth form peer groups based on similarities amongst each other, including behaviors such as smoking and academics (i.e. homophily; Espelage & Swearer, 2003). The homophily hypothesis suggests that, for both young men and women, youth tend to hang out with others who bully at similar frequencies (2003). Also, students who hung out with bullies reported an increase in bullying rates throughout the school year (2003). For this particular study, the homophily hypothesis, although promising, was insufficient to use because these youth did not seek out each other, they just happen to be on the same team as other people. In addition, a full team was not examined and it failed to take into account context.

Dominance theory has been used to explain why bullying increases in early adolescence (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). It posits that when youth enter middle school, hierarchies have to change and redevelop (2003). As a result, dominance is used to find those new positions (2003). However, this theory is more specific of school bullying and we do not know the hierarchies of individual teams because that was not the focus of this study. Attraction theory suggests that youth, in their vie for independence, look to peers who display characteristics of independence (such as aggression, delinquency, disobedience) versus youth who display characteristics of childhood (such as obedience and compliance; Espelage & Swearer, 2003). Again,

attraction theory is promising, but on a team, external supervision and direction reinforce obedience and compliance, so it is possible that it does not apply to sport specifically; again context is not addressed.

Sandelowski (1993) posits that researchers use theory in a number of ways. More specifically, researchers may use theory to establish the context of a study, to justify the research focus and/or techniques to be used as well as to organize, analyze and interpret data (1993). Sandelowski further proposes that different approaches to qualitative research relate to different roles for theory (1993). She also makes it clear that researchers do not have to adhere to a naive or atheoretical stance to avoid bias (1993). For the purposes of this study, social-ecological theory was used to provide context and to justify its focus on peer level interactions. It also influenced the choice of using semi-structured interviews in order to give participants the freedom to explore factors within the microsystems and macrosystem of their lives. Data was analyzed and interpreted through a social-ecological perspective.

Prevalence and Consequences of Bullying

Most developed countries (e.g., Canada, the United States, England, Italy, Japan and Australia) have recognized bullying among youth as a serious concern, making it an international phenomenon (Dukes, Stein, & Zane, 2009; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Murray-Harvey, Slee & Taki, 2010). Indeed, Norway and Japan led the charge in youth bullying research, as a result of youth in those countries committing suicide directly due to bullying (Murray-Harvey et al., 2010; Olweus, 2010). A recent study estimates that bullying can increase suicidal ideation and suicide attempts by up to two times (van Geel, Vedder, & Tanilon, 2014).

Prevalence is high with as many as 50% of students saying that they have bullied someone or have been bullied at school (deLara, 2012). As a result of high prevalence rates and the various consequences of bullying, bullying research with youth is important.

Besides being pervasive (Hawley et al., 2011), bullying is a serious concern because of the negative effects for those involved. Being bullied is correlated with the incidence of increased rates of school refusal, school absenteeism, somatic symptoms, physical complaints, as well as depression, suicide attempts, anxiety (Hawley et al., 2011; Holt & Espelage, 2007; Swearer & Espelage, 2003; Vaillancourt, Hymel, & Mcdougall, 2011), lower self worth, self-esteem, increased loneliness, social withdrawal, and a feeling of not belonging (Vaillancourt et al., 2011). The importance of having a sense of belonging has been established by a variety of researchers (e.g., Hale, Hannum, & Espelage, 2005; Remillard & Lamb, 2005; Vaillancourt et al., 2011) and as such remains a serious health concern related to bullying. Furthermore, a sense of belonging actually predicts better health outcomes (Hale et al., 2005). It is also proposed that early sexual pairing, sexual debut and adolescent pregnancy are linked to bullying as well as adult mental health problems (deLara, 2012). In short, bullying is dangerous to a youth's health, both in the short-term and the long-term.

Over the past decade there has been a marked increase in the number of studies that have explored bullying among youth and young men (Carbone-Lopez, Esbensen, & Brick, 2010; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Hadley, 2004), and there is recent literature to suggest that bullying is just as prevalent among young women

(e.g., Duncan & Smith, 2006; Letendre, 2007; Remillard & Lamb, 2005). However, Olweus (2010) disagrees with this proposition and believes that young men are far more likely to bully and to be bullied. Whatever the case may be, bullying among young women has attracted significant attention from researchers in recent years (e.g., Carbone-Lopez et al., 2010; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Hadley, 2004; Remillard & Lamb, 2005). It has been proposed that young women suffer a wider range and more negative effects of bullying, including negative psychological problems and more severe health problems (Carbone-Lopez et al., 2010). Thus, it is important to specifically study young women's experiences of bullying.

Young women may also be especially susceptible to bullying for contextual and cultural reasons. Horizontal violence, as described by Remillard and Lamb (2005), suggests that bullying occurs among girls because of cultural pressures that induce, suggest, and permit certain forms of conflict between them, as well as promoting jealousy, competition for male attention, and mistrust of other young women. Currie, Kelly, and Pomerantz (2007) further hypothesize that "within peer culture, power comes from the ability to invoke the unspoken 'rules' that police the boundaries of acceptable femininity" (p.23); thus, young women may be encouraged to use aggression to keep others in line through a bullying manner.

For young women, a great importance is placed on close relationships and high social status within the same gender group (Remillard & Lamb, 2005). Crothers, Field and Kolbert (2005) postulate that young women's relationships are instrumental for the formation and maintenance of a positive self-concept. Consequently, young women are more likely to choose to preserve their relationship

with the bully/bullies over other alternatives, even protecting oneself (Remillard & Lamb, 2005). They are also more likely to use relational aggression because it is the most effective (i.e. affecting those close relationships; Remillard & Lamb, 2005).

Like young women, Aboriginal youth may be especially vulnerable. Recent studies have indicated that bullying is prevalent among Native American youth[2] (Carlyle & Steinman, 2007), and bullying rates among Aboriginal youth may exceed the Canadian national average (Lemstra, Rogers, Redgate, Garner, & Moraros, 2011). Carlyle and Steinman (2007) found in their study of 79,492 students in the United States that Native American students' rates of being bullied were much higher than those of other ethnic groups. It should be noted that the ethnic differences between the other ethnic groups were modest at best (Carlyle & Steinman, 2007). Their study was unique in that it included more than one ethnic group, and it provided detail on some demographic characteristics of bullying (2007). They administered school surveys to students from grades six to twelve in sixteen school districts, and suggested that since bullying differs among ethnic groups then prevention programs may need to be tailored to that group specifically (2007).

Carlyle and Steinman's (2007) findings are supported by Lemstra et al. (2011) who found that Aboriginal youth are more likely to be bullied, and at a rate higher than the Canadian national average. This point is concerning since Aboriginal youth in Canada already face many challenges that are likely a result of colonization. They are six times more likely to commit suicide than non-Aboriginal youth (Totten, 2009), and Aboriginal youth face racism, marginalization, as well as loss of land,

[2]Native American is used to be consistent with the terminology used in the study.

culture, spirituality, and values (Canadian Heritage, 2005; Totten, 2009). There are high rates of criminalization whereby Aboriginal peoples are significantly over-represented in the justice system as well as high rates of school-drop out (Canadian Heritage, 2005; Lemstra et al, 2011; Totten, 2009). Possibly most concerning are the high rates of violence that Aboriginal youth face in the forms of family violence and sexual assault (Totten, 2009). Sport is often promoted as a way to address these various health and social challenges (Hanna, 2009). However, if bullying is present in sport then the youth may be missing out on these opportunities and in fact further expose them to hardship rather than protect them.

Bullying and Sport

When describing bullying in sport, the topic of hazing is likely to arise. Unfortunately, hazing is as difficult to define as bullying, making it hard to compare hazing and bullying (Crow & Macintosh, 2009). A major problem is that most student athletes do not consider the same activities as lawmakers and adults to be hazing (Crow, 2008). Hazing and initiation are often used interchangeably (Crow & Macintosh, 2009). For the purposes of this study, hazing is understood as:

> Any activity expected of someone joining a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers, regardless of the person's willingness to participate. This does not include activities such as rookies carrying the balls, team parties with community games, or going out with your teammates, unless an atmosphere of humiliation, degradation, abuse or danger arises (Hoover & Pollard, 1999, p.4).

The key component of hazing is that a group must be involved (Crow & Macintosh,

2009). In addition, there is usually a willingness of the individual(s) to participate (Crow, 2008). Another key component is that the aim of hazing is ultimately to strengthen group cohesion (Crow & Macintosh, 2009), whether or not that is the actual result. So the question remains: how is hazing different from bullying?

Some may argue that hazing is a form of bullying. On the contrary, I agree with Martens (2012) that the two are different, especially in intent. The intent of bullying is fragmentation and isolation whereas the intent of hazing is a ritual imposed on an individual looking to join a particular group or team in order to create cohesion and inclusion (2012). In addition, bullies will often act alone or in small groups whereas hazing takes place with entire groups and teams (2012). As such, for the purposes of this study, hazing is not considered bullying.

Hazing aside, the benefits of sport participation (e.g., increased self-esteem, emotional regulation, problem-solving, goal attainment, social skills; Holt, Kingsley, Tink & Scherer, 2011) are continuing to surface in the sport literature, and sport has been identified as a possible mechanism for decreasing the probability of bullying victimization (Collot D'Escury & Dudink, 2010). Although sport undoubtedly has many benefits for youth development (e.g., self-esteem, team work; Collot D'Escury & Dudink, 2010; Holt et al., 2011), there is a significant gap in the research literature in that bullying and relational aggression have not been thoroughly explored as possibilities within the team sport context (Collot D'Escury & Dudink, 2010; Peguero, 2008; Shannon, 2013; Tilindienė, Rastauskienė, Žalys, & Valantinienė, 2008). Of what little research has been conducted, Nixon (1997) found that team sports with lots of contact (e.g., basketball) may be related to violence committed

outside the sports setting and that aggression outside sport is positively correlated to participation in team sports, for both men and women. In his study, he surveyed approximately 200 athletes about aggression. He found that for women, participating in a contact sport was related to physical aggression displayed outside of the sports context (1997). In addition, beliefs in toughness were related to aggressive behaviour in everyday situations. In turn, aggression in everyday life is considered a precursor to bullying (Volk & Lagzdins, 2009).

In their study of soccer players and judo participants, Collot D'Escury and Dudink (2010) used surveys to study the bullying behavior of youth. In total, they surveyed over 800 youth (2010). They found that not only was bullying prevalent in sport, but a number of youth who were bullied in sport were also likely to be bullied in other facets of their life, including school (2010). As a whole, they found that the same percentages of bullies and victims existed in both school and sport. Collot D'Escury and Dudink (2010) argue that if coaches are not taught how to identify and respond to bullying, then recommending a bullied child take part in sports may actually be detrimental. They propose that it may even be more difficult to recognize bullying in sports than in schools because youth talk to their coaches less than their teachers, and coaches may not be trained to spot and intervene in bullying. As well, the competitive atmosphere of sports may make it difficult to recognize bullying. However, more research is needed to examine such ideas (2010).

In her study of bullying in sport and recreation, Shannon (2013) interviewed 71 administrators, leaders, coaches and supervisors to determine the factors that are perceived to encourage bullying, and to examine how they identify and respond to

bullying. She concluded that there is a lack of awareness of bullying in sport and recreation (2013). In addition, using a social-ecological perspective, she found that factors such as competition, unsupervised activity, and unstructured time enhanced the probability of bullying (2013). She also found that bullying sometimes started in other environments such as school or neighbourhoods and spilled over into the sport and recreation context (2013). She argued that it is important to train people, who interact with youth, to identify bullying and intervene when bullying occurs (2013). This emphasis on training to identify bullying and intervening when bullying occurs echoes that of Collot D'Escury and Dudink (2010). It is challenging to intervene in bullying if we do not know what is bullying and *when* to intervene. It then makes sense that we need more research on bullying in the sport context to prevent and intervene in bullying.

Sport research by Volk and Lagzdins (2009) provides further justification for this current study. Their study explored the prevalence of bullying and victimization for young female athletes. For their group of 69 young female athletes, they found the rates of bullying and victimization were two to three times higher than the Canadian average (2009). They attributed these higher rates of bullying to girl culture, whereby masculine traits are deemed unreasonable. The higher rates of bullying were also attributed to sport aggression (2009). This study was exploratory in nature and serves as a stepping-stone for further research into bullying. Specifically, it provides justification for more research that explores bullying within female sport environments (2009).

Sport has the potential to positively impact the physical, mental, and

emotional health of Aboriginal youth (Hanna, 2009). According to the 2006 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS), 69% of Aboriginal youth aged six to fourteen take part in sports at least once a week (Smith, Findlay, & Crompton, 2010). However, research from an Aboriginal reserve in Northern Ontario suggests that youth participation in sport begins to decrease after Grade 9 (Schinke et al., 2010). Carlyle and Steinman's (2007) research suggests that bullying rates peak in junior high and, for Aboriginal students in particular, stay at that peak throughout high school. It is possible that bullying could be associated with the decrease in participation after Grade 9. It is also possible that youth are turned off from sports because of the bullying, but I am unaware of any academic literature that focuses on bullying in sport among Aboriginal youth to explore this possibility. Therefore, this research will address a clear gap in the sport literature. The purpose of the present study was to explore young Aboriginal women's experiences of bullying in team sports.

Chapter Two: Method

Consistent with many critical theorists, I believe that there are multiple realities and that they are all mediated by power relations (Mayan, 2009). Language, I believe, is necessary to develop subjectivity (2009), and the voices of Aboriginal young women is central to the present study. In addition, I believe that facts are found within dominant values and ideology and that certain groups are privileged over others (2009). It is also my belief that oppression, in all of its forms, cannot be considered separately and that dominant research practices unintentionally reproduce this oppression (2009). My hope is that the present study will serve to raise awareness and encourage social change.

Qualitative Description

This study used qualitative description as described by Sandelowski (2000) as its method. Qualitative description is used when a comprehensive summary and a description of a phenomenon or event in everyday terms is desired (Sandelowski, 2000). There are a number of reasons that this method supported the exploration of young Aboriginal women's experiences of bullying in team sports. The first was that the complexity and lack of standardization of measuring and assessing bullying (Bovaird, 2010; Cornell & Bandyopadhyay, 2010; Furlong et al., 2010; Olweus, 2010; Swearer & Espelage, 2003; Swearer, Siebecker, Johnsen-Frerichs, & Cixin Wang, 2010), has emphasized the need for a comprehensive summary of these bullying experiences. The second was that there is very little research that has been done involving bullying within a team sports context (Collot D'Escury & Dudink, 2010, Peguero, 2008; Tilindienė et al., 2008), which also supported the need for a

detailed description of bullying experiences. Finally, although qualitative description is the least theoretical of methods, it is based on naturalistic inquiry, which makes a commitment to study something in its natural state (Sandelowski, 2000). Despite the plain speak of the data, the thematic analyses produced are "detailed and nuanced interpretive products" (Sandelowski, 2010, p.78). This aspect made it ideal for the present study, which aimed to explore the bullying experiences of young Aboriginal women in team sports.

Ethical Considerations

Qualitative research often tackles sensitive issues including interpersonal relationships and, as such, the research should be guided by ethics, with an emphasis on the researcher's duty to the well-being of their participants (Clark & Sharf, 2007). Ethical approval was granted by the University of Alberta's Research Ethics Board prior to initiating the research. As well, all participants provided informed assent, and guardians provided informed consent, prior to engaging in the research. This process of consent described efforts to ensure confidentiality, and delineated the responsibilities of the primary researcher and research participants.

Additional ethical considerations were also made given that I was working with minors and Aboriginal peoples, both of whom are considered vulnerable populations according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2 (TCPS 2) created by the Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics (2010). When working with minors, the roles of gatekeepers, confidentiality and consent are all important considerations. Swauger (2009) argues that Research Ethic Boards (REB) prioritize the consent of adult gatekeepers while they limit the consent of youth. Some researchers debate

whether or not consent and/or assent can be obtained when intellectual capacity and maturity come into question (King & Kramer, 2008). Researchers need to focus on whether or not the person consenting or assenting is able to make a balanced decision that accounts for risks and benefits (2008). At the same time, it is important to acknowledge the youth's emerging ability for assent (2008). As a result, in this study, parents and/or guardians were given the initial consent form and the youth were asked to sign an assent section on the consent form after the consent form was signed by a parent or guardian. This process provided youth with the opportunity to have the final say in their involvement in the research study. Confidentiality with youth is also another important consideration. Researchers are bound to certain legal obligations, including the reporting of instances of abuse, neglect and harm to the authorities (Swauger 2009). As a result, I shared with the youth participants that I was bound by these regulations so that they could make a truly informed decision on their assent (King & Kramer, 2008).

It is also important to outline additional ethical considerations when working with Aboriginal peoples since, as stated by Schnarch (2004), First Nations people have not historically been treated fairly in research. Governments have gathered data on First Nations peoples without knowledge or consent and researchers have convinced First Nations individuals to be participants in research without having the risks to their health and safety fully explained (2004). Research has a history of disrespecting the human dignity of First Nations people or, likewise, their cultural, spiritual or religious beliefs (2004). First Nations people have not been respected or treated ethically in academic research and, as a result, ethical considerations for

research involving Aboriginal peoples are particularly important. For research to be appropriate with First Nations people, the power differential between researchers and Aboriginal people, which was built through colonialism, must be shifted (Schnarch, 2004).

In accordance with Chapter 9 of the TCPS 2, there are a number of ethical considerations that remained central to this study with Aboriginal peoples. Because Aboriginal identity was a recruitment criterion, *community engagement* was critical. Community engagement took place in the form of consulting with the Edmonton Native Basketball Association (ENBA) and with a young Aboriginal woman who is part of my social network, and who was involved in supporting the development of the interview guide. In addition, I used a known sponsor approach in which I conducted the research with someone I had a relationship with who was respected within the community I was working. This person also acted as a representative of the ENBA. The known sponsor helped me find participants through practices, events and contacts. There were countless phone calls between me and the known sponsor from the ENBA, and I also spent time at practices and travelled out of town for practices to support the development of relationships through community engagement.

I was also committed to ensuring there were *mutual benefits* in this research. Not only was a gap in bullying literature being addressed, but a safer sports environment may be a positive consequence from the knowledge generated from the present study being shared with coaches from the ENBA. In that regard, I gave a presentation summarizing my findings for the head coach and program manager of

the ENBA. To make the information readily available to coaches, parents, and athletes of the ENBA, I created and distributed a newsletter (see Appendix A) that summarized the present study and main findings. I also had the opportunity to give back to the community when I was invited to be a scorekeeper at the 2013 Alberta Indigenous Games (St. Albert), which were hosted by the ENBA.

Given that research with Aboriginal peoples has often been misrepresented, I worked with participants on the *interpretation and dissemination of research results*. I was responsible for the initial analysis. Once themes were developed to represent findings, participants were engaged in member checking. Phone calls and e-mails were sent to gather feedback from participants. Despite being provided with the opportunity to provide feedback, participants did not suggest any additions or changes to the study. One participant, however, was pleased to know that the title of the study, "mean mugging," was created from one of her quotes.

Participant Selection

According to Sandelowski (2000), studies using qualitative description typically use purposeful sampling. This strategy allows the researcher to select participants who will provide rich information about the topic under study (Patton, 2002). In this case, the participants were purposefully selected through my personal networks based on criteria outlined below. Eight young Aboriginal women who have participated in team sports, and who have played sports in a large Canadian city, were purposefully selected to participate. Sandelowski (2000) suggests that qualitative description, although least theoretical, can incorporate other methods, such as phenomenology, grounded theory, and narrative. Because this study

explored experiences (Creswell, 2007) and was closest to a phenomenological study, the sampling size was that of a phenomenology.

Phenomenologies typically include between 3 and 10 participants (Dukes, 1984), and 8 young women participated in this study. The intent of qualitative research is to reach data saturation. It is said that data saturation occurs when there appears to be little new data emerging (Mayan, 2009). Saturation is affected by the quality of the interviews, the scope of the study, the nature of the topic, the amount of useful information, the number of interviews per participant, and the qualitative method and study design used (2009). In the case of this study, the scope of the study was limited and the nature of the topic was one that participants could speak about. As well, each participant took part in a one-on-one interview and then a subsequent phone interview for data verification. To help ensure the quality of the interviews, an interview guide was piloted with two test participants. These various processes supported efforts to reach saturation.

The sampling criteria were young Aboriginal women who have participated in team sports in the last two years. This study was focused on young Aboriginal women because work by Carlyle and Steinman (2007) and Lemstra et al. (2011) indicates that not only is there bullying in Aboriginal communities, but bullying among Aboriginal youth is higher than the Canadian national average. Young women have been included in this study in an effort to address a gap in the current research literature that tends to overlook women. It is critical to include young women as bullying is likely prevalent in this group (Carbone-Lopez et al., 2010; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Hadley, 2004; Remillard & Lamb, 2005). Next,

participants had to have participated on a sports team within the last two years so that they could easily recall their sport experiences. Lastly, participants were in Grades 8 to 12 because, according to Carlyle and Steinman (2007), bullying rates peak in middle school and, for Native American students, persist at that level until the end of high school.

Eight young Aboriginal women participated in this study. Seven of these young women were basketball players and the eighth, Caila, was a volleyball player. As a way of making conversation and ensuring that participants would be described in a meaningful and respectful way, the youth were asked to share self-descriptions at the beginning of the one-on-one interviews. Pseudonyms have replaced participants' names to support anonymity. The following outlines their brief descriptions of themselves. Amy (15 years old), who described herself as Aboriginal, said that she is "happy a lot of times." Britney (16 years old) also identified herself as Aboriginal, and she described herself "as a good kid… I don't do a lot of bad stuff. I don't follow my brothers' and sisters' mistakes." Caila (15 years old) described herself as First Nation, excitedly telling me which treaty she was from. She said that she is "pretty outgoing…stick with my team…be there for them, whatever they need, I'm there and treat 'em like family, treat 'em like one of my own siblings." Desiree (18 years old), described herself as Aboriginal and stated that she is an "outgoing person but I notice when I sometimes I joke around I'm kinda mean. But like it's funny. But I always say sorry." Emily (17 years old) described herself as Aboriginal as well as " shy when you first meet me but then like once I'm comfortable around you it's…yeah…I'm like not shy at all." Felicity (18 years old) described herself as

Aboriginal and said, "I play a lot of sports I guess. A lot of basketball. That's about it. That's all I do." Gigi (16 years old) self-identified as Aboriginal and described herself as "athletic…kind of outgoing once I get to know people I guess. I don't know. Funny." Helene (14 years old) self-identified as Métis and said that she likes sports because of "the feeling of achievement. Yeah I think I finally achieved what I thought that I never would. Or I finally achieved my first medal or my first trophy. Like I finally did it. I got there."

Data Collection

Upon receiving informed consent, participants took part in semi-structured, one-on-one interviews. I individually interviewed each participant and audio recorded each interview with the participant's consent. A follow-up phone interview took place following the analysis of the initial interview to clarify any unclear parts of the data and to verify initial themes. Interviews have been described by Sandelowski (2000) as the main source of data for qualitative description studies. The one-on-one interview allows the interviewer to collect rich information from the participant in the purest form available – the participant's raw thoughts (Mayan, 2009; Patton, 2002). In my opinion, absence of a group may make the participants feel more anonymous, less conspicuous and thus more willing to answer questions. As a result, a flow of information can occur (Patton, 2002), which is important because the goal is to describe the participant's experiences. The average length of the interviews was 45-60 minutes.

The semi-structured interview is used when the researcher has enough knowledge about the phenomenon under study to develop questions but not enough

to predict the answers (Richards & Morse, 2007). In this case, there is plenty of bullying research but not within the context of sport. Semi-structured interviews involve the design of open-ended questions that are put in some type of logical order to frame the conversation (Richards & Morse, 2007). Planned and un-planned probes are used to keep the conversation flowing (2007). The benefit for this study, because I was working with youth, was that the semi-structured interview allowed a conversational feel to be built, which adds to the rapport between interviewer and interviewee. Another benefit of using semi-structured interviews is that they "offer the researcher the organization and comfort of preplanned questions, but also the challenge of presenting them to participants in such a way as to invite detailed, complex answers" (Richards & Morse, 2007, p.114). This organization is a great benefit to more inexperienced interviewers like me.

A set of interview questions was developed in order to guide the first interview (see Appendix B; this guide was piloted with two young women). The interview guide was designed with main questions and probe questions, which allowed the maximum likelihood that the researcher could accurately understand the participant (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The interview guide was split into three sections: (1) Introduction, (2) Formal Segment and (3) Conclusion as suggested by Mayan (2009). The *Introduction* acted as an introduction to the interview and to build rapport with the participants. The *Formal Segment* focused on the purpose of the research and asked the participants to define bullying, to describe their bullying experiences, and to describe their relationships with their team-mates. It also asked them about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed on teams. The

interview ended with the *Conclusion*, which asked them what they feel would help prevent bullying in team sports and provided them the chance to share anything else they feel was important that was not already covered in the interview.

According to Seidman (1998), it is necessary to have more than one interview in order to set the context for the interviewee's words since one interview is simply not enough time nor content to do so (1998). In the follow-up interview, questions were asked about clarification of themes and language used (Patton, 2002). To be put more simply, the main point of the subsequent contact was to member-check initial themes (Creswell, 2013) and to clear up any misunderstandings that may have occurred.

In addition to interviews, field notes were used. These notes served as a record for observational data, such as non-verbal language in the form of body posture, tone, and personal interpretations (Richards & Morse, 2007). As a result they served to describe my reflections, feelings, ideas, moments of confusion, and hunches (Mayan, 2009). They were used for memoing and to act as a supplement to the interview material. These notes were recorded after the interview. They also served to gain insights into my interview techniques and helped me to critique myself in order to improve**.**

Data Analysis

This study used an inductive content analysis, as suggested by Sandelowski (2000) and described by Elo and Kyngäs (2008). It is posited by Elo and Kyngäs (2008) that this type of content analysis is usually used when the knowledge about a phenomenon is limited and text is the primary form of data. In this case, there is little

in the field of bullying and sport as mentioned earlier and interviews are the primary form of data. It is also important to note that the data analysis occurred concurrently with the data collection (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Mayan, 2009; Sandelowski, 2000). As a result, the collection and analysis of the data shaped each other (Sandelowski, 2000). This aspect makes qualitative description reflexive and interactive because researchers will continuously modify their approach to the data in order to accommodate new data and new perceptions about that data (2000). In this case, as I analyzed data and completed more interviews, I learned that I had to use more probe questions because the youth seemed somewhat hesitant to talk about bullying, and I ended up rephrasing my first question about bullying on teams. For example, I started to ask about bullying on teams in general instead of immediately asking about bullying they had seen on *their* teams. Although the young women eventually discussed their own teams, I found that it was necessary to start with a more general discussion of bullying in sports.

There are three main phases to inductive content analysis: preparation, organization and reporting (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008). The main component of inductive content analysis is the grouping of many words of text into smaller content categories (2008); however, no systematic rules for analysis are stated. In the phase of preparation, the unit of analysis must be selected (2008). For this study, that was the words of the participants and, therefore, the interviews were transcribed verbatim. Next they were read and re-read numerous times to establish familiarity. Then the latent and manifest content of the interviews was analyzed using an inductive approach. According to Elo and Kyngäs (2008), after processing the data, I

organized the data by open coding, creating categories, and abstractions. From those I created overall themes and it was time to report and explain what was found in the themes (2008). For verification, it is necessary to have citations from the data to confirm the findings (2008).

After organizing everything into categories, those categories were classified as themes. The next step was the follow-up interview with the participants. At this time, verification of the themes occurred as well as the addition of any information that the participants wished to give. Participants were provided with the opportunity to critique the accuracy and credibility of the findings as well as suggest alternative language, observations and interpretations (Creswell, 2007). It was through this consultation process that the title of the study, "Mean Mugging," came about.

Verification

This study used the verification strategies as described by Creswell (2013). Namely, the following were used: prolonged engagement and persistent observation, data triangulation, peer review, clarifying researcher bias, member checking, rich, thick description, and external audits (2013, p. 250-252). As Creswell and Miller (2000) attest, prolonged engagement gives researchers access to sites, aids in finding gatekeepers, establishes rapport with the participants, and allows the researcher to reciprocate in the way of giving back to participants. Prolonged engagement and persistent observation were achieved through the use of one-on-one interviews and follow-up phone interviews. In addition, I achieved prolonged exposure through time spent at multiple practices hosted by the ENBA, as well as time at the 2013 Alberta Indigenous Games. The multiple interviews supported the building of rapport

with participants, and as a result of this rapport I was provided the opportunity to give back to the community at the 2013 Alberta Indigenous Games.

Triangulation was achieved through the use of multiple data sources (Creswell, 2013), including transcripts and fieldnotes. Peer review was provided by Dr. Tara-Leigh McHugh. Clarifying researcher bias and my role as a research tool was achieved through an introductory story, a portion of which was added to the beginning of this paper. Member checking was achieved through the follow-up phone interviews with the participants. A rich, thick description of themes and results was used to enhance the transferability of findings (2013).

While Creswell's strategies are mostly post-hoc strategies, some researchers argue that there needs to be more self-correcting strategies throughout the course of a research study. As suggested by Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers (2002), a number of verification or self-correcting strategies are necessary for rigor or trustworthiness, and these strategies include methodological coherence, appropriate sampling, and collecting and analyzing data concurrently. Methodological coherence refers to the correspondence between the researcher's epistemological and ontological stances, theoretical position, chosen method, and research question (Mayan, 2009). Methodological coherence was achieved through multiple run-throughs of the "armchair walkthrough," which ensures that the methodological trajectory of the research project is logical (2009). The armchair walkthrough is the process of thinking through each aspect of a research project. Purposeful sampling helped in attaining appropriate sampling and saturation (Patton, 2002). Interviews were collected and analyzed concurrently in order to make comparisons and gain as

much information as possible.

Chapter Three: Results

The purpose of this study was to explore young Aboriginal women's experiences of bullying in team sports. The words of the participants suggest that bullying is experienced by young Aboriginal women in team sports. The youth described a range of experiences that included their definitions on bullying and how bullying manifests itself in sports. They also suggested that bullying happens quite often in sport, and they described a number of suggested preventative/intervention strategies. Five main themes emerged: (1)"Mean Mugging", (2) "No Passing", (3) "Happens All the Time", (4) "Stronger Together", and (5) "Active Coaches". Each theme is supported by the words of the participants through direct quotes.

"Mean Mugging"

When asked how they define bullying, the young women shared a variety of answers. Despite the diversity of the experiences shared, the words of the participants suggest that the main goal of bullying is to make others feel bad about themselves. Caila described this process as "mean mugging" when she said, "But we have a thing called mean mugging. Like when you point your eyebrows down and just look at them <makes facial expression>". In sharing her experiences of bullying, Caila intimated that these bullying experiences of "mean mugging" can occur in the faces of opposing team-mates as well as within her own team. The participants provided a number of examples to demonstrate their understanding of bullying. Britney described an experience of bullying that she witnessed on her team,

> I just ignore it…one time they sent a picture…took a picture of her cos of this outfit she wore…they sent it in our group chat. I just I didn't say anything.

> And it was just whatever I don't care. Cos at the end I did think she was annoying but I didn't go in and be, "Oh I don't like her" but now I do hang out with her.

Participants explained how bullying could involve gestures (e.g., pointing eyebrows) and even very overt actions, such as sending pictures of others without permission.

The various examples shared by participants suggest that bullying can come in various forms. Regardless of how the bullying occurs, the participants explained the intent of bullying is to make others feel bad. Amy described bullying as "Treating someone rudely. Not welcoming them if they don't know anyone…and just saying stuff or doing stuff towards them to bring them down and not like make them feel better about themselves. That's it." This view of bringing people down was shared among other participants. For example, Desiree reiterated, "Umm…hmm…any way that like puts like puts someone down and makes them feel uncomfortable in any way. That's what I think bullying is." In addition to making others feel bad, some of the participants also described repetition as an important component of bullying. Emily said, "It's making another person feel bad about themselves and not leaving them alone about it." This young woman described the repetition of bullying.

Bullying was also described as "emotionally hurting" others. Britney said, "Picking on someone, like emotionally hurting them physically verbally." Gigi reiterated the emotional component, "Mmm…I'd say it's…it can be physical but I'd say emotional and like getting into people's heads is worse." The notion that bullying means getting into someone's head echoes Emily's contention that bullying includes "making another person feel bad". Caila described bullying in terms of the

impact it has on a person, "You're the small person if someone bullies you. You feel down. You feel like you're not worth their time worth it. You're just feeling down and sad, alone…" The participants emphasized the emotional impact that bullying can have on young women.

In addition to describing what bullying is as a detailed description, some participants also focused on what bullying behaviour stems from. Helene described bullying in terms of the reasons why bullies may act the way they do. She said,

> I think bullying is either a group or a single person that just is a bitch. <laughter of participant> I don't know how to explain it. But, maybe they're just snobby or they have never learned respect or they haven't grown up in a setting where they need to practice respect. And treat others how you'd want to be treated.

For this participant, the issue of bullying involves respect and treating others with respect.

"No Passing"

Recalling and sharing specific bullying episodes appeared to be harder for the participants than sharing their definitions of bullying. It took them longer to recollect such experiences. Nevertheless, participants described a range of experiences of bullying from not involving someone in game play to getting mad at someone on the court. The participants shared experiences to suggest that bullying in sport is diverse, and they described how bullying can be very sport specific. Caila described bullying as, "In sports, to me like, when they discriminate us that's my bullying." Specifically, Caila explained how in her rural town she thinks that teams

discriminate against Aboriginal young women by only taking one Aboriginal person per team. And Felicity described an incident of a girl getting kicked off the team for making physical threats, "Uh she actually got kicked off the team once the coach found out. Cos she said she was going to kill somebody. So…it was kind of crazy." Amy described an experience where developing players are sometimes excluded from play,

> So…there's this girl. She's getting to be a really good post but that other girl wouldn't pass her the ball whenever she's open even though she's seen that she's open. She'd try to take it herself and she wouldn't get it. (Amy)

She also explained,

> When I'd see the players kind of roll their eyes at each other or just like not talk to each other. They'd cross their arms and not talk to them. And even on the court when I'd see one player open and she's yelling for the ball the girl was dribbling towards her but wouldn't give her the ball and she'd pass it to another player. Yeah… (Amy)

Amy described a situation where a player would be excluded despite the negative effects it could have on the team. This scenario is a clear example of sport specific bullying because it is bullying that seems to only occur in a game situation. In addition, Amy suggested that exclusion occurs to even those who are not beginner players. Furthermore, her descriptive scenario suggests that sport specific bullying is clearly visible to others (e.g., rolling of eyes), suggesting there are signs that others (e.g., players, coaches) can see.

According to the young women, bullying also takes the form of "getting mad"

at players on the court. Felicity said, "Like…like they can get mad over anything really but usually it's when someone screws up or doesn't do what they're supposed to do on the court. That's usually when they get mad." Desiree shared a similar experience saying, "Yeah. I always see people get picked on cos they they mess up or and everyone just really brings them down. Like get mad at them. Like pretty bad." Again the component of bringing someone down seems to be a central component in the participants' definitions of bullying.

Amy reiterated the uncomfortable feelings that can be produced by team-mates yelling at other and bringing each other down. She described incidents that she saw amongst a younger team.

> Umm…but the junior high girls. I don't know what exactly goes on with them but they kinda do that towards each other. Like, we're scrimmaging with the junior high girls and the ones that are sitting on the bench would get mad at the ones on the court, telling them that they're messing up or, "You're not supposed to do that!" They wouldn't cheer them on. They're just all negativity. And that would frustrate the ones on the court and they like just arguments. Yeah… I've seen that when we're scrimmaging.

Amy argued that bullying is not bound by age.

The young women also described, what some may consider, more stereotypical bullying. For example, participants explained how bullying can take the form of gossiping and talking about each other's court performance in negative ways. Britney described,

> Everybody gossips about each other on the court like, "Oh yeah, why'd she

> make that jumpshot when I worked so hard to get that rebound?" Or "why did she dribble with the ball why can't you just pass more?" Or "why didn't she see me open?" And I think it gets overboard when you start talking about each other. Like, "Oh my gosh, look at her like…she's so fat, she's so ugly, so skinny, so tall. Blah blah blah." And oh…I just…any kind of any kind of…yeah I do think that's a form of bullying. And it does hurt people.

And the gossiping does not seem to stay just on the court, but extends to the locker rooms as well, as Helene attests,

> It's like girls like if you did it wrong or something like that. They'd they wouldn't hide it. They would blatantly talk behind your back. It it wasn't…they didn't hide it. They would talk in front of you. Or in the change room… They'd be, "Did you see what she just did? Like how did she even make it on the team?" And just always continuously putting people down.

Participants suggested that language is a part of bullying. The young women provided examples that demonstrate that bullying can be typical but sport specific at the same time.

Some of the participants explained how some athletes may not want to participate, as a result of the bullying that may occur in team sports. Desiree said,

> When we're out on the court you see a lot of yelling at someone or when you see someone yelling like getting yelled at and when they mess up they look real scared and they kinda just look at you. Like…they're scared that you're gonna get mad again at them. Sometimes it just makes them feel

> uncomfortable. Not wanna play when they mess up and someone gets mad at them.

Desiree described how bullying may have an effect on participation in team sports.

"Happens All the Time"

Some of the participants said there was not bullying on their team specifically, but they were adamant that bullying in sports is common. For example, in terms of the frequency of bullying, participants said, "All the time," (Britney), "I think it happens all the time actually. Like it usually does." (Desiree), and "I think it happens a lot…" (Felicity). According to the young women, bullying is common in sport.

Although most participants described bullying as a frequent event, Helene described how bullying may not be noticeable to all people, even when it does occur. Furthermore, Helene acknowledged that some teams do not have bullying, but she still described the high prevalence. The participant described it as follows,

> I think that there's maybe a couple teams that don't have a problem with bullying. And honestly some people might not even notice it. They'd be like it could just spew out or whatever. But I think that it happens more often than not especially at pretty wealthy areas and like preppy kids. So I kinda I think you have to find that happy middle school.

According to the young women, it is possible to not have bullying on a team but it is also possible that it is just not being seen.

The young women suggested that bullying and behaviour on the court affects a person off the court as well. As a result, Amy acknowledged that the problem of

bullying needs to be dealt with,

> Mhmm…No I think it should be dealt with cos what do you take from the court kind of lingers with you off the court and that that brings your attitude and your feelings down and you just think about it constantly and then you have to go back to it and feel that same way again and I think it should be dealt with and not just brushed off.

Helene echoed Amy in describing how bullying in sport impacts other aspects of life as well. More specifically, Helene stated,

> It sucks. Because that means I'd go to school…well I'd wake up, not wanna go to school. Try to skip. Get caught. Go to school. Get made fun of. Go to sports. Get made fun of. Go home and be cranky to absolutely everybody because I had a horrible day. And then eventually…I think I I honestly because of it, I think I took it out on my little sister. And I did what those people were doing to me to my little sister. And that's the last thing I want to do. Like I love her and I'm just taking out all my anger on her, which wasn't nice. But that's because I was bullied all day long. And woke up with negative thoughts, went to bed with negative thoughts. So it's just such a negative person all around. And I…I…I didn't even notice it until after I stopped doing it. I'm like I am so sorry like little sister like I feel so bad. Like this was not your fault at all. And I totally took it out on you. Like I'm so sorry.

The young women described the effect bullying in sport has on everyday life and on one's relationships.

Stronger Together

The young women shared ideas on how bullying on teams can be addressed. Although the participants suggested that bullying in sport does exist and is frequent, they seemed optimistic that it *can be addressed* and *should be addressed*. According to participants, team bonding can lessen bullying or protect the team from the impacts of bullying. Team bonding was described as 'getting to know each other', including getting to know the positive attributes and skills of each player. Participants suggested that if you know someone and can find the positives of that person, then difference should not produce conflict. Participants indicated the need for team bonding through statements such as Emily's, "Umm…like we do team bonding until we get to know each other. And we feel comfortable around each other after a while. And we become good friends." Felicity also described how team bonding could be used to address the problem of bullying in team sports. She said, "I guess if team-mates bond more and get to know each other. I think that's it".

Participants described a range of activities to improve team bonding, including having special practices focused on bonding, writing positive notes for each other, sleepovers, fundraisers, and rallying. Participants argued that such activities could bring athletes closer together. Amy shared her experiences of special practices,

> Getting all the girls together and doing that bonding practice cos our practices are from 4:30 to 6:00 I think. Yeah. And all we did was bond that practice. We didn't practice shooting or dribbling. Well we'd use the balls but umm we just had a bonding practice where we just played all these little games and we

did this…yoga to keep ourselves calm and we listened to music and had a couple of rounds of 21 and stuff like that. That really helps on a team. I like that. And we had a couple of those practices like those kind of practices sorta made us stronger together.

Britney reiterated the need for team bonding and shared a slightly different experience because it was a single activity as opposed to an entire practice. It was time efficient and easy to accomplish. She said,

Do more team bonding. I don't know, one time before a game we all had this piece of paper and we wrote our names on it and we all had to write something nice about each other. And we had a home game like we did that before our home game and I think that really helps. Some of the people that wrote on there that's like when I went out on the court that's like when I had a really good game. Like I didn't care about anything. Yeah, I think that really helps.

The young women suggested that team bonding can have an immediate effect on one's enjoyment of the sport.

In addition to team bonding activities that take place during sport, the young women voiced their general preference for team bonding to take place outside practice time. Britney suggested, "Going to sleepovers with my teams. Getting to know them more better. Like playing games with them. Umm…telling each other secrets. Stuff like that. Going to dinner with your team". Gigi also described out of sport activities as particularly important for team bonding,

Umm…I'd say like more out of the sport activities. Cos like even team

> bonding helps with my team so much. Like you get to know the people on the team and like it's kinda like…people judge a book by the cover or whatever. Kinda like that. But then once you start hanging out when we do team bondings then everyone like talking. I don't know. You get to know everyone. So I think team bonding helps a lot.

Gigi argued that players need to get to know each other, and this can happen outside of practice and games. Another young woman, Caila, from a small town described how their team bonding activities still revolved around the team. She said, "We fundraise together. Once in a while we're like, ""Where are we rallying?" and we'll be like, "Oh my cousin's house okay. We'll all meet there and go rally." Just in a circle. Just out of our own times, like on the weekend, we're just there on the weekend anytime even after practice we still just have fun." Caila considered rallying, a time of team fellowship and encouragement, a valuable bonding activity.

As part of team bonding, participants emphasized the importance of communication. Caila was very clear as to what was needed to foster good team mate relationships, she said, "Communication. Get to know them. Like, be there or if they need someone to rally go with them make new friends. Tell them how goo- say what skills you got and listen to what skills they got and show them." Amy described how a lack of communication can promote a bullying environment, "Ummm… I think it's just how the girls look at each other and judge them based on how they are and what they do and not getting to know them and seeing if they're nice or mean or funny. Umm…yeah." The young women suggest that it is necessary to get to know somebody beyond the first impression.

Active Coaches

The final theme that emerged was active coaching. Participants described how "active coaches" seem to prevent or lessen bullying activity as a result of their familiarity and connection to players. Participants described bullying as a problem that coaches have to address.

Participants described the benefits of having an active coach. Desiree said, "I think if the coach is real active and he's always there for advice and everything it helps a lot with the players getting mad at each other. It makes it easier if they're, if the coach is actually active, like talking to everyone. It just helps a lot better." Similarly, Britney said, "Yeah I think it's really good because then they'll understand what you're going through. And they'll know your background. And I think they'll know how to deal with it more better. Yeah." The young women described how active coaches promote communication and understanding, which may be important components for addressing bullying in team sports.

Communication between the coach and players was described as important to a bullying-free environment. Amy said,

> So you had to like take a lot in. Umm… And like try to get the other girls to talk to each other but like…When a coach does that it's really good for the team…umm…For me it was really good cos in junior high I never really talked to those girls I was on the team with. But once we started playing together and like started well for me when I started helping them…showing them what to do like I'd become friends with them. I liked it. So it helps like a lot.

By increasing communication between coaches and team mates as well as between team mates, an open environment is created where they get to know each other and matter to each other.

Gigi provided a very detailed description of her understanding of an active coach. She described active coaches as those that work with the team and with the players individually. They invite the players to come to them and to communicate. Active coaches are also described as welcoming and as role models. Gigi said,

> Being an active coach…I guess I just…I don't know. I don't really know…they do a lot of stuff within everyone and they help you individually and you see them and they're your coach so you kinda look up to them and what they do… Yeah and even at the beginning of the year and even throughout the year they always tell us like, "If there's anything you need like don't hesitate" or "always come to us." And they're very welcoming.

Participants described how active coaches play an important role in not only preventing bullying by setting acceptable standards of behaviour, but also intervening when bullying occurs. Desiree described a coach who noticed bullying and was active in the situation,

> I've played on a team and like the coach, he noticed it. And he would always tell everyone like you're not supposed to get mad at the other players, you're supposed to encourage 'em. If anyone's going to be getting mad, it's only supposed to be him.

However, it was also acknowledged by participants that although coaches may intervene, it does not always stop all bullying behaviour. At the same time, Felicity

noted that if the coaches do not intervene, there is no change. She said,

> Usually it's the coaches telling them not to do that. But then I don't know so they could still be bullying them ignoring them, other people ignoring them. So mostly just the coaches getting in on telling them not to bully other people.

Chapter Four: Discussion

Bullying among youth is a global epidemic (Dukes et al., 2009; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Murray-Harvey et al., 2010), and this study provides necessary insights into the bullying that occurs in team sports. The experiences shared by young Aboriginal women suggest that bullying in sport is prevalent, which supports the contentions of Collot D'Escury and Dudink (2010), Shannon (2013), and Tilindienė et al. (2008). However, as stated by Shannon (2013), the awareness of bullying in sport is vastly lacking. This study makes a significant contribution to the sport and bullying literature in that it highlights young Aboriginal women's unique experiences of bullying in team sports, and it provides examples of sport-specific bullying. The experiences shared by participants provide concrete examples of bullying that can be identified and addressed by all those involved in sport. This study contributes to the awareness of bullying in sport, and ensures that the voices of young Aboriginal women are at the forefront of this necessary sport research.

Findings from this research highlight the importance of creating awareness around the bullying that occurs in sport. The young women who participated in this study indicated that bullying can affect them to the point when they do not want to participate in sport, creating a possible inequality in sports participation. For Aboriginal youth, sport has the ability to positively impact physical, mental, and emotional health (Hanna, 2009). If Aboriginal youth are being dissuaded from participating in sport they will not benefit from the developmental opportunities that can be achieved through sport (e.g., increased self-esteem, emotional regulation, problem-solving, goal attainment, social skills; Holt et al., 2011). In addition,

according to Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal Peoples' Participation in Sport, sport is a tool for social development that has "the ability to engage citizens and communities, surmount social barriers and contribute to building a healthier, more cohesive society" (Canadian Heritage, 2005, p.2). To ensure that youth have the opportunity to benefit from sport, Shannon (2013) argued that there is a need for firm anti-bullying policies within sport and recreation environments. Awareness of bullying in sport could support the endorsement of such policies, and findings from this research are a step towards the promotion of awareness of bullying in a sport context.

Findings from this research also contribute to a deeper understanding of the meaning of bullying in team sports specifically for young Aboriginal women. In order to understand participants' experiences of bullying, it had to be established what the young women saw as bullying. In addition to describing bullying as specific to their team-mates and sport specific, the young women articulated that the key parts of bullying were "bringing people down" and "making others feel bad". This viewpoint is far more general than Olweus's definition, the most cited and widely used in the literature. Olweus describes bullying as a repeated negative behavior that could include both verbal and physical behaviors that occurs in a relationship with an imbalance of strength and/or power (1993, 1994, 2010). It could appear that Olweus's definition does not, as deLara (2012) points out, take into consideration youth's perceptions of bullying. An imbalance of strength and/or power as well as repetition were not the key components of the young women's definitions of bullying. That is not to say that those components were not mentioned by participants, but they

did not emerge as key factors. The participants' definitions of bullying were closer to Faris' (2006), which was the main definition used for the present study. Like Faris, the young women of this study described bullying within a continued relationship (i.e. team-mates who they thought of as their peers) and as situational (e.g., specific to the game itself). To ensure that bullying research is relevant to youth, and to address the bullying youth say they experience, it critical to understand their meanings and definitions of bullying. Findings from this research contribute to the bullying literature by providing what deLara (2012) refers to as necessary considerations into the perceptions of bullying among youth.

The young women in this study shared examples of bullying that were very sport specific and such findings emphasize the need to look at bullying within a sport context. For example, participants explained how players were not passed the ball or included in play and name-calling and rumour-mongering often centered around players' skills. These results are consistent with the work of Tilindienė et al. (2008) who found that the *range* of bullying behaviours that occur in same gender youth teams is significantly greater than the range of bullying behaviours that occur among those who do not play sports. However, Tilindienė et al. only referred to the range of bullying and did not provide sport-specific examples. The experiences shared in this study suggests that participants did indeed experience a broad range of bullying, including types of bullying that would not be found in other contexts because they were sport specific. The findings from this in-depth study build upon the work of Tilindienė et al. in that it provides a more detailed understanding of young women's sport specific bullying experiences.

In addition to sharing sport specific examples of bullying, participants explained how bullying in sport may spill over into other aspects of their lives. Shannon (2013) describes this spill over as an additional factor that must be examined with bullying in sports environments. Often, bullying behaviours may have started in other environments (e.g., school or school bus) and are carried over into the sports environment, or vice versa. As Bronfenbrenner (1999) points out, the different contexts of a person's life interact with each other, which can then in turn affect behaviour. This spill over phenomenon was expressed by the young women who described bullying that occurred during and outside of play. Whether it was a compounding effect that led to treating a family member poorly or bullying by taking pictures in locker rooms, bullying spilled over and interacted with both the sport and non-sport world. As the young women discussed in their interviews, bullying does affect one emotionally and their behaviour (i.e. wanting to quit playing), a point supported by the work of Collot D'Escury and Dudink (2010).

The words shared by the participants suggest that their experiences of bullying include various types of aggression. The sport specific bullying behaviours were indicative of reactive aggression (e.g., reacting to losing in a game or mistakes being made) as described by Mayberry and Espelage (2007). In addition, the sport specific bullying could be characterized as direct/overt aggression (e.g., yelling at the team-mates, not passing the ball) as described by Espelage and Swearer (2003). At the same time, there was indirect/covert aggression as well as relational aggression on the teams with rumour mongering and sending pictures of the young women without permission (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). Of relevance to the potential for

change, sport specific bullying behaviour was largely overt, meaning that with proper training it is possible for coaches and athletes to identify and address bullying.

Despite the young women describing the presence of bullying in sports, they were optimistic that there are ways to address that bullying. Their main recommendations were that team sport environments need to promote team bonding and active coaching. The young women described a range of activities that could facilitate team bonding, including self-esteem building activities, sleep overs, non-competitive tasks and more. They described team bonding as something that broke down first impressions and promoted a sense of belonging. The importance of having a sense of belonging has been established by a variety of researchers (e.g., Hale et al., 2005; Remillard & Lamb, 2005; Vaillancourt et al., 2011); furthermore, a sense of belonging actually predicts better health outcomes (Hale et al., 2005). Branscombe and Wann (1991) point out that self identification with a sports team is a buffer against conditions like depression and is good for self-esteem. Branscombe and Wann (1991) go so far as to speculate that team identification can take the place of familial bonds. It would make sense then that team bonding would be a good buffer against bullying on teams.

Active coaching was another strategy that the young women recommended to address bullying in sport. The young women described team dynamics where coaches who took an interest in their players as well as player dynamics had decreased bullying on their teams. Shannon (2013) explained how coaches who communicated a strong intolerance for bullying, and who moved to intervene, kept bullying levels to a minimum. As Conroy and Coatsworth (2006) posit, coaches are

considered experts by the youth and, as such, their behaviour sets the tone for the team. In addition, Jowett and Cockerill (2003) found that developing the interpersonal relationship between coach and athlete is fundamental to players' success as an athlete and as a person. Drawing upon findings from the coaching literature, it is understandable why the young women insist that active coaches are fundamental to creating sports environments that address bullying.

A social-ecological perspective, as described by Bronfenbrenner (1999) and Espelage and Swearer (2010), provided some support for the interpretation of findings. Few participants alluded to individual level factors, such as ethnicity or age, which may influence their experiences of bullying within team sport. However, one participant did indicate that she was discriminated against in her hometown as a result of her Aboriginal identity. The participants did, however, provide various examples as to how interpersonal level factors influence experiences of bullying in team sport. Not only did bulling take place among team mates, but bullying affected the youth to the point where they did not want to play with their team-mates. Participants who were bullied also described instances of "spillover" (as described by Shannon, 2013), whereby they carried over their negativity into other environments and bullied other people (e.g., family) as they had been bullied. In terms of the community, participants explained how team bonding and active coaches could address bullying in team sport. Finally, the participants argued that there is a need for change at a societal level as well. Bullying in sport exists and there is a need to create awareness within sport and communities.

Limitations

The strengths of the present study are outlined in the above Discussion; however, all studies are accompanied by limitations. A social-ecological perspective was useful in framing the research question and interview guide, yet was somewhat limited in terms of the extent to which it supported the interpretation of findings. Bronfenbrenner (1999) described his theory as being one that studies the interaction between a developing human and the changing environments and contexts that he/she is growing up in. He maintains that these interactions affect the intrapersonal traits of a person (Bronfenbrenner, 1999) and that these react with interpersonal factors. Because the present study was exploratory in nature, findings focused more on the realization of bullying in sport and broader contextual factors like sport specific bullying than on inter- and intra-personal variables. However, the theory was helpful in bringing context to the forefront.

This study was completed for a Masters thesis and, as a result, time was somewhat restrictive and did not allow for a more collaborative, and in-depth research approach. In terms of collaboration, the TCPS2 highlights guidelines for research with Aboriginal peoples that suggest the more collaborative the approach the better (the Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics, 2010). Although there was collaboration, if time would have permitted I would have done more relationship building. Recruitment for this study was difficult because of the specificity of the participant criteria and various community events (e.g., funerals, Pow Wows, cultural days) that occurred when recruitment was taking place. The challenges associated with recruitment limited the depth of the study. Nevertheless, I am unaware of other

studies that have interviewed young Aboriginal women in team sports about bullying, and the present study provides unique insights into their experiences.

The sensitive nature of the research topic may also have limited the depth of the study. According to Mayan (2009), saturation is affected by the ease with which someone can talk about a topic. Not only was the study focused on exploring bullying, but it explored bullying within a team environment. As such, the youth may have tried to present a positive impression of their team by not sharing all of their bullying experiences. If an individual highly self-identifies with an in-group, he/she is more likely to protect that group by trying to bolster or maintain the group's reputation as positive (James & Cropanzano, 1994). In addition, this study was guided by the assumption that the youth could put "words" to their experiences and therefore interviews were the primary method of data generation. It is possible that other data generation tools like photovoice may have been more helpful. As Castleden, Garvin and Huu-ay-aht First Nation (2008) suggest, photovoice effectively balances power, creates a sense of ownership, builds trust and capacity and being sensitive to cultural preferences. It creates a catalyst for the participants to ask questions and to share their opinions and views (Shea, Poudrier, Chad, & Atcheynum, 2011).

Given that the depth of the study may have been limited, the transferability of the findings could be questioned. However, as Malterud (2001) discusses, the sheer amount of material does not guarantee transferability but the content itself. The rich and candid descriptions of the participants and the resulting themes support transferability (Mayan 2009). The youth shared their experiences of bullying in sport

and provided suggestions of practical solutions to address bullying. I believe that the thick rich descriptions shared will be valuable for future bullying and sport research.

Future Directions

The present study describes bullying among young Aboriginal women, and bullying is currently not extensively studied among Aboriginal youth (Lemstra et al., 2011). Findings from this unique research provide initial insights into young Aboriginal women's experiences of bullying in team sports, and future researchers should consider the use of community based participatory research approaches such as photovoice and other visual methods. Not only would these methods help to decolonize the research process (Castleden et al., 2008), but would provide the participants another means of expressing their feelings and opinions. Bullying is a sensitive topic and every effort should be made to provide a variety of means of exploring this topic.

More in-depth research is needed to provide further insights into the bullying experiences in team sports. As Shannon (2013) and Collot D'Escury and Dudink (2010) argue, there is little to no awareness of bullying within a sports context. There is a need for more research to add to the scant literature about bullying in out-of-school settings (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). We know that bullying in sport does exist, but we know little about its prevalence. Perhaps there is a need for a large-scale prevalence study within sport to examine how much bullying is actually taking place. With that information, it is possible that bullying in sport would get more attention and prevention/intervention efforts could be made.

Future researchers may also want to explore differences in bullying among various ethic groups (e.g., Aboriginal, African-American, Hispanic) because differences may suggest the need for, what Carlyle and Steinman (2007) refer to as, culturally relevant bullying prevention and intervention programs for youth. Peskin, Tortolero, and Markham (2006) indicated that studies need to look beyond the prevalence rates of bullying to the specific ethnic groups; not just between ethnic groups but within ethnic groups. In their 2006 study, they found that African-American students were more likely to bully and be victimized than Hispanic youth. Espelage and Swearer (2003) also suggest that racial/ethnic factors be considered. If these differences exist, it may point to the need for targeted approaches to bullying prevention and intervention programs (Carlyle & Steinman, 2007). What this type of approach looks like remains to be seen because there is so little research done on this topic.

Participants in this study provided initial insights into the spill over phenomenon that was described by Shannon (2013). However, this notion of spill over was not the main focus of this study, and future researchers may want to consider exploring this phenomenon. If different contexts (e.g., sport, school, home) are indeed influencing the bullying and victimized behaviours of youth, then the interactions between contexts need to be examined (Shannon, 2013). These interactions could point to a possible solution to bullying. As Shannon (2013) and Espelage and Swearer (2003) attest, a dialogue must begin between different organizations and schools to create a unified strategy against bullying – a course of action that has shown promise (Shannon, 2013).

Finally, not only is there a need for more research that explores bullying in sport, but there is a need to explore various sport contexts. Seven of the eight participants in this study were basketball players, which can be considered a contact sport. According to Nixon (1997) and Volk and Lagzdins (2009), acceptance of aggression as a norm is a likely precursor to violent behaviour and/or bullying. The contact that naturally occurs within basketball may suggest acceptance of aggression, and subsequently lead to bullying. As Nansel, Overpeck, Haynie, Ruan, and Scheidt (2003) state, "Bullying should not be considered a normative aspect of youth development, but rather a marker for more serious violent behaviors" (p.348). There is a need for more research that explores bullying in sports that have less contact (e.g., volleyball and track and field).

Conclusion

The results of this study suggest that bullying in sport does occur, and it should be addressed. In this unique study, eight young Aboriginal women described their experiences of bullying in team sports in detail. Sport can be a mechanism for positive development of youth, but bullying may undermine that mechanism by creating inequality in sport. Whether it is a youth wanting to quit a sport or one who is afraid to join because he/she knows they will be bullied, access to sport could be affected. At the same time, the participants of the present study have shared possible strategies to start addressing the problem of bullying in sport.

This study suggests that bullying in sport can be very specific to the sport context, and there are overt behaviors that can be recognized. However, to address bullying there must be an awareness of its existence. We know very little about

bullying in sport just as we know very little about bullying among Aboriginal youth. This study is a stepping-stone towards understanding these issues.

Parents, youth, and coaches need to be aware of bullying in sport and strategies that may help control the bullying. The results of the present study suggest that active coaching and team-bonding are important components of creating a positive sport environment for youth. However, we cannot protect our youth from something we do not understand. My hope is that the present study will engender future research, bring bullying in sport to the forefront, and encourage change for the better.

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MEAN MUGGING

Appendix A

Summary

This article summarizes a research project between E.N.B.A. Sports and a Masters student at the University of Alberta, which looked to examine young Aboriginal women's experiences of bullying in team sports. For more information about this study, contact Jennifer Kentel at kentel@ualberta.ca

Key Findings

Some visible bullying behaviours that were mentioned:
- Exclusion on the court
- Yelling at players from the bench
- Dirty looks and the silent treatment

Team Bonding activities were also suggested:
- Fundraisers
- Team sleepovers
- Group activities (e.g. yoga)
- Self-esteem exercises
- Rallying time before games

The components of Active Coaching were also described:
- Communicate your lack of tolerance for bullying
- Intervene if players start bullying
- Work with players individually
- Remind players you are available to talk to if needed
- Be involved with activities such as fundraisers

YOUNG ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF BULLYING IN TEAM SPORTS

Background

Youth bullying is a global epidemic that is being increasingly studied (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). Up to this point, bullying studies typically examined the relationships of young men. Now there is evidence to suggest that bullying is likely just as prevalent in female populations. In addition, it has been suggested that Aboriginal youth are more likely to be bullied, and at a rate higher than the Canadian national average (Lemstra et al, 2011). Sport has long been thought to be a safe haven from bullying in sport but it is possible that bullying may be a reason why some Aboriginal youth stop participating in youth sport between junior high and high school. However there is a large gap in the research to support this claim.

Purpose

This study examined young Aboriginal women's experiences of bullying in team sports.

Data Generation

Eight young Aboriginal women, who were in grades nine to twelve, participated in this study. The goal was to focus on the complexities surrounding participants' unique experiences, and therefore young women took part in individual interviews. The words of the participants are represented by five general themes: (1) Mean Mugging, (2) No Passing, (3) Happens All the Time, (4) Stronger Together, and (5) Active Coaches.

MEAN MUGGING (Continued from front page)

Mean Mugging

Bullying, or "mean mugging" as it was described by one participant, does exist and the young women each had their own definition of the behaviour. The key feature that was common among all definitions was that bullying had to do with people being put down. One young woman's definition seemed to sum up the others,''

"Anyone that puts someone down and makes them feel uncomfortable in any way."

No Passing

Although participants described what might be considered typical bullying behaviours, such as name-calling and distributing pictures of others without permission, many of the behaviours described were very sport specific. They included not passing to one another on the court and getting mad at other team-mates for "messing up". One young woman stated,

"Yeah. I always see people get picked on cos they they mess up or and everyone just really brings them down. Like get mad at them. Like pretty bad."

Happens All the Time

Most participants were adamant that bullying does occur in sports and on teams. Some went so far as to describe the bullying as "al the time." One young woman described her perceptions of sport bullying,

"I think that there's maybe a couple teams that don't have a problem with bullying. And honestly some people might not even notice it. They'd be like it could just spew out or whatever. But I think that it happens more often than not."

Stronger Together

All participants agreed that there are ways to combat bullying on teams. One of the ways that was reported by participants was through team bonding. For example, one young woman said,

"Umm…I'd say like more out of the sport activities. Cos like even team bonding helps with my team so much. Like you get to know the people on the team and like it's kinda like…people judge a book by the cover or whatever. Kinda like that. But then once you start hanging out when we do team bondings then everyone like talking. I don't know. You get to know everyone. So I think team bonding helps a lot."

Active Coaches

Participants also suggested that bullying could be addressed through "active coaches". The young women described how coaches should take an interest in their players' lives and playing styles, and even give individual help. They also suggested that coaches set the tone for bullying on a team,

"Usually it's like the coaches like telling them not to do that. But then I don't know so they could still be bullying them like ignoring them, other people ignoring them. So mostly just the coaches like getting in on telling them not to bully other people."

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Part I. Introduction

1. Tell me how you began participating in organized sports?
2. What do you think are the most important benefits of sport?
3. What are some of your most positive memories of sport?

Part II. Assessing Bullying Experiences

4. Please explain any negative memories of sport?
5. Tell me how you define bullying?
6. What are your experiences of bullying on your teams?
    a. PROBE (If not addressed in explanation)
        i. Describe an incident of bullying that you saw?
        ii. Where were you when this incident occurred?
        iii. What was your involvement in the situation(s)?
        iv. How did you respond to the situation(s)?
        v. Who was involved in the incident (e.g., the star players on the team, the point guard, the defenseman, etc.)?
        vi. For what reasons do you think the situation(s) occurred?
        vii. How did the experience make you feel about (a) yourself and (b) about sports?
        viii. Do you think that the coaches noticed? What could they have done?
        ix. Does the bullying occur off the sports field/court?
        x. Does the bullying continue in other places?
        xi. Where does the bullying occur?
7. How often do you think bullying occurs on teams?
8. How does the bullying affect you outside of the sports environment?
9. How would you describe your relationships with your team-mates?
    a. PROBE (If not addressed in explanation)
        i. Have you ever had a negative experience with a team-mate?

If yes: Explain. If no: What reasons can you give as to why you haven't had a negative experience?

Part III. Conclusion

10. What are some ways that would help build positive team-mate relationships?
11. Is there anything else you would like to tell me that you haven't had a chance to share that might be important to understanding this topic?