Canadian school psychologists' understanding of bullying intervention based on their experiences in Alberta, Canada

by

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Abstract

School bullying (referred to in this thesis as bullying) was a phenomenon with serious implications regarding short-term and long-term effects on the individuals involved (Craig & Pepler, 1999). While interventions of bullying early in an individual's life might help alleviate the effects of bullying (Carter & Stewin, 1999), there were concerns that current intervention efforts were not optimal (Furlong et al., 2002; Pepler & Craig, 2011; PrevNet, 2007). Addressing the issue of bullying required a broader effort beyond any school in silo can accomplish (Fagan et al., 2009; Kania et al. 2011). A broader coordinated strategy was needed from schools, communities, and other stakeholders (Fagan et al. 2009; Kania et al. 2011). The present study aimed to explore school psychologists' understanding of bullying intervention based on their experiences in Alberta, a province that has legislation and public concern over bullying (Alberta Education, 2014; Reid, 2010). To explore the school psychologists' experience of bullying interventions a cross-case analysis approach was utilized. Eight school psychologists were interviewed. who are ideal persons for bullying intervention due to their training, and broad school wide perspective and target caseload in their school positions (Espelage et al., 2013; GSA Network, 2011; Morrison & Furlong, 1994; Murphy, 2012; National Association of School Psychologists, 2014). Interview data were coded using the constant comparative method (Hurworth & Mathison, 2011). The study showed bullying intervention was a complex experience with no simple pathway to remedying the phenomenon. Criteria to consider with bullying intervention included how bullying manifests in terms of the victim, the bully and the bullying behavior, the personnel and characteristics of the personnel involved, the focus of the

bullying intervention, resources used, the role of the school psychologist, the referral route of the incident, the needs and priorities of the school, and the culture of bullying. Implications of this complexity included an emphasis on the importance of working cohesively between the multiple factors involved in bullying, and consideration of the multiple factors involved in bullying. Furthermore, the research emphasized the complexity of bullying going beyond a simple relationship between a bully and a victim.

Keywords: school bullying, school psychologist, cross case analysis, qualitative, intervention

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Chapter 1: Bullying in Schools: Review of the Related Literature

Introduction

Bullying in schools (referred to as bullying throughout) was a complex phenomenon that involved multiple stakeholders beyond the bully and bully victim (Espelage & Holt, 2001; Salmivalli, 2010). Bullying has serious short- and long-term effects that were detrimental and debilitating, and reached across academic performance, relationships and peer to peer interactions including aggression and violence (Craig & Pepler, 1999; Foody et al., 2015; Olweus, 1993; Osofsky & Osofsky, 2001; Oyewusi & Orolade, 2014; U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001; Whitted & Dupper, 2005). Despite substantial research on bullying, the phenomenon continued to be a challenge both internationally and within Canada (UNICEF Office of Research, 2013; Beran, 2006; Beran & Tutty, 2002; Bowman, 2001; Canadian Institute of Health Research, 2012; Lumsden, 2002; UNICEF, 2007; Whitted & Dupper, 2005). The ongoing challenge of addressing the issue of bullying will require more effort than any isolated school can achieve (Fagan et al., 2009; Kania et al. 2011). Instead, a coordinated strategic effort was required from schools, communities, and other stakeholders (Fagan et al. 2009; Kania et al. 2011). Among this strategic effort, school psychologists were well equipped to be part of the bully intervention team, but there was uncertainty regarding what barriers school psychologists may face with bullying intervention (Espelage et al., 2013; Morrison & Furlong, 1994). The following chapter explored current literature on the definition of bullying, effects of bullying, concerns over bullying, problems with current bullying interventions, and why bullying was an important concern for school psychologists.

The Nature of Bullying

School violence encompassed any action that negatively affected the school climate by inducing fear in students (Dorsey, 2000; Hernandez & Seem, 2004). School violence took many forms including bullying, intimidation, gang activity, locker theft, weapon use, assault and other activities that result in someone becoming a victim (Espelage & Horne, 2008). Bullying was one of the primary forms of school violence (Beran, 2006; Furlong et al., 2005). Although working definitions vary amongst researchers and clinicians, bullying was generally defined as the unprovoked physical or psychological abuse of a person by another person or group of persons over time which resulted in a continuing repetition of harassment and abuse (Olweus, 1991). There was intention to hurt the victims and the aggression was used repeatedly (Olweus, 1978). Critically, bullying differed from repeated aggression because a power difference existed between the bully and the victim (Espelage & Swearer, 2011).

Bullying was made up of three primary participants: bullies, victims, and bully-victims (Espelage & Holt, 2001). Individuals who only commit acts of bullying behavior were known as bullies. Individuals who were the direct target of these bullying behaviors were known as victims. Finally, individuals who were both victims and bullies were known as bully-victims. Studies varied in the prevalence of victims, bullies, and bully-victims. One study showed a ratio of 5.2 victims to 3 bullies to 1 bully victim in children aged 11 to 15 (Solberg & Olweus, 2003). Recent research showed another set of individuals who were involved in school bullying (Salmivalli, 2010). This included bystanders, defenders, and uninvolved students. Bystanders were individuals who were not part of the bullying directly but reported seeing the bullying. Defenders were individuals who tried to stop or prevent the bullying behaviors. Uninvolved

persons were individuals who did not regard the behavior as bullying or were simply not involved in the bullying. Importantly, all these roles were not fixed traits. Current terms used for these roles illustrated that all individuals possibly could enact these behaviors (Swearer et al., 2012). These terms include "students who bully" and "students who are victimized" (Swearer et al., 2012). For simplicity, these terms were reduced to bullies and victims in this thesis. Although there were the three primary roles of bully, victim and bully-victim, bullying did not exist in isolation from the environment. Bullying was affected by important influences from peers, families, schools, and communities and was a social-ecological phenomenon (Espelage & Swearer, 2004; Swearer et al., 2012).

Effects of Bullying

Bullying had consequential effects on the bully, the victim, the bully-victim, and witnesses to the bullying event. Current research showed two major consequences specifically for the bully and the victim, namely academic success and mental health were compromised (Olweus, 1993). "Being picked on, bullied, and/or persecuted adversely affects academic and social development, and is an important precursor to violent behavior in students" (Osofsky & Osofsky, 2001, p. 288). The following breaked down current research findings regarding these consequences of bullying.

Bullying could have significantly detrimental effects on the learning capabilities of students (Whitted & Dupper, 2005). The capacity to learn for a student was challenged when the student was anxious and apprehensive over insults, threats, harassment and being ostracized in the classroom (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Both bully victims and bullies showed poorer academic achievement compared to their same aged peers (Strom et al., 2013). More

modern forms of bullying, including cyberbullying, were also linked to poorer academic performance (Foody et al., 2015; Oyewusi & Orolade, 2014). In contrast to these findings, however, one study showed that only physical bullying was linked to poorer academic performance, in comparison to verbal and cyberbullying (Bilić et al., 2014). Academic performance was also a risk factor for becoming a bully- many adolescent bullies were males with poor academic performance (Ismail et al., 2014). Therefore, academic performance was critically linked to bullying behavior overall in schools. Deleterious effects were not limited solely to direct bully victims. Witnesses of bullying often developed fearful and anxious symptoms that they may be the next target of the bullies (Chandler et al., 1995). The witnesses of bullying had poorer academic achievement because they were focused on not becoming the next target of bullying, rather than academic work (Chandler et al., 1995). Bullying often occured in multi-person complexes, and the presence of witnesses also encouraged and reinforced the bullying behavior for the bullies, regardless of whether any of the witness took action or remained silent (Chandler et al., 1995). By remaining silent, a bystander effectively condoned the bullying behavior, whether that was or was not the intention of the bystander. Non-intentional condoning of bullying was a critical problem because bullying was a repeated series of incidents and the nature of this constant threat would compound the consequences as the individual continued to have his/her learning impacted (Chandler et al., 1995; Olweus, 1991).

When no intervention was provided, bullying could result in more severe forms of aggression, violence of greater duration, as well as other social and emotional problems (Craig & Pepler, 1999; Olweus, 1993; U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). For example, bullying in elementary grade school children was a risk factor for violent behavior in senior grade school levels (Craig & Pepler, 1999). A history of bullying behaviors was positively

correlated with committing future criminal acts and being associated with the criminal justice system (Olweus, 1991). Sourander et al., (2007) found this correlation strength to be at 33%. Bullying in one form was linked to bullying in other formats. For example, children who committed traditional bullying were also likely to commit modern forms of bullying like cyberbullying (Bilić et al., 2014). A 2012 meta-analysis through 19 electronic databases and 63 journals demonstrated that bullying was a significant predictor of violence on average 6 years later in life, while being a bully victim was also a significant predictor of violence with a smaller effect size (Ttofi, Farrington & Lösel, 2012). A 2014 meta-analysis showed bullies, bully victims, and victims were all associated with a greater risk of carrying weapons compared to individuals not associated with bullying (van Geel et al., 2014).

Bullying was also a major risk factor for many interpersonal forms of violence perpetuated in society (Pepler et al., 2006). Bullying may influence children and youth how to conduct interpersonal relationships, which generalizes to other relationships (Pepler et al., 2006). Research in elementary and secondary schools suggested that bullies were also likely to conduct other interpersonal forms of violence and aggression, including sexual harassment and dating violence (Pepler et al., 2006). The data from elementary and high school analyses showed that youth who reported bullying their peers were also more likely to provide concurrent reports of engaging in developmentally salient forms of aggression through sexual harassment and dating violence (Pepler et al., 2006). Adolescents who bully may also have transferred these interpersonal patterns of maladaptive behavior to workplace harassment, domestic violence, and child abuse as they moved into adulthood. Further research was required to understand how bullying affects adulthood relationships.

Bullying also affected the interpersonal relationships of those who were bullied. Children who were victims of physical bullying and cyberbullying have less satisfaction with their family and friends in comparison to children who were not victims of physical bullying or cyberbullying (Bilić et al., 2014). Children who were victims of verbal bullying showed lower satisfaction with friends than children who were not victims of verbal bullying (Bilić et al., 2014). Victims of bullying in primary school were four times more likely to be rejected in secondary school (Notar & Padgett, 2013). Overall, interpersonal relationships were at-risk when bullying manifested in the school. Interestingly, children's satisfaction with school was the same between children who were victims of physical bullying and children who were not victims of physical bullying (Bilić et al., 2014).

Individuals involved with bullying also struggled with diverse and severe aggressive behaviors, and serious psychosocial symptoms; specifically, the repeated humiliation and oppression by bullies was linked to depression, psychotic symptoms, trauma, suicidal ideation, low self-image and self-esteem, and higher adult dependency in victims (Cerni Obrdalj et al., 2013; Kelly et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2006; Klomek et al., 2013; Lereya et al., 2015; Notar & Padgett, 2013). Gini and Pozzoli's (2013) meta-analysis showed being a bully victim in both children and adolescents were at a significantly higher risk for psychosomatic problems in comparison to non-bully victims. A 2015 meta-analysis summarizing 47 studies showed involvement in bullying through being a bully, bully-victim, or a victim were all linked to suicidal ideation and behavior (Holt et al., 2015). A different 2014 meta-analysis summarizing 20 studies demonstrated that individuals who were bullied were more likely to have headaches (Gini et al., 2014). Another meta-analysis of 19 databases and 63 journals showed that bullies were twice more likely than those who were not bullies to use drugs later in life (Ttofi et al.,

2016). Furthermore, a 2015 meta-analysis of 10 studies show bullying was associated for a higher risk of psychosis (Cunningham et al., 2015). Witnesses of school bullying events have increased suicidal ideation when they perceive the situation as helpless (Rivers & Noret, 2013). Furthermore, bullying victims experienced greater psychological damage when they were both bullied and had suicidality and depression, in comparison to suicidality and depression alone (Bauman et al., 2013). Bullies were at greater risk for externalizing behaviors including alcohol and tobacco usage and ADHD (Ismail et al., 2014; Kelly et al., 2015). Bullies, bully victims, and bully victims were at greater risk for sleep problems (Zhou et al., 2015). More modern forms of bullying, including cyberbullying were also correlated with increased anxiety symptoms, depression, and suicidal ideation (Bauman et al., 2013; Foody et al., 2015). Furthermore, bully victims often shared characteristics with bullies, including a negative view of their overall wellbeing (Lereya et al., 2015; Notar & Padgett, 2013). Children who were victims of bullying may struggle because they were less supported by their teachers and classmates than their non-bullied peers.

Students who were victims of traditional bullying show a higher tendency to become cyberbully assaulters (Jang et al., 2014). Victims of bullying had a higher risk of becoming bullies themselves versus children who were not victims of bullying (Lereya et al., 2015; Notar & Padgett, 2013). Furthermore, children who were cyberbullied were more likely to become cyberbullies themselves (Karabacak et al., 2015). Finally, being a bully also increased the chance of becoming a bully-victim, as well as decreasing feelings of safety (Bejerot et al., 2013; Goldweber et al. 2013). Overall, there was substantive evidence of the deleterious effects of bullying on individuals directly and indirectly involved in the bullying.

In conclusion, the links between bullying and diminished academic success, more violent behaviors, and higher risks of other psychosocial symptoms suggested serious consequences and concern over its impact on the individual and the community at large.

Prevalence of Bullying

To understand bullying incident rates, it was important to understand the barriers associated with researching the rates. Researching bullying rates held challenges as there was limited evidence to show which bullying assessment tool was definitively most robust or if one tool was robust enough to comprehensively capture the phenomena (Green et al., 2013). Currently, no individual tool could comprehensively assess the number of bully victims. One challenge to developing such a tool was that definitional items may not be sensitive enough to capture the power differential between perpetrator and victim, critical in distinguishing repeated victimization from bullying. Furthermore, these tools needed to assess how individuals perceived bullying. This was a critical element that may not currently be captured when assessing bullying incident rates. Another problem was that definitions differ between instruments used in evaluating incident rates. For example, the tools used in the most recent UNICEF survey on child well-being in developed counties, include single incidents as bullying behavior in their bullying definition (UNICEF Office of Research, 2013). This was a clear distinction from other definitions of bullying, where the behavior must be repeated over multiple incidences to be considered bullying (Olweus, 1991). A problem specific to preschool bullying research was identifying bullying roles. Specifically, preschool children could identify the bully most readily in verbal, physical, and relational bullying and rumor spreading, but struggled to identify the victim in any of the aforementioned scenarios (Vlachou et al., 2013). Furthermore, agreement

between children on incidence rates of bullying varied considerably and was typically moderate or insignificant (Vlachou et al., 2013).

Another challenge with statistics measuring the incidence of bullying was differences in how cultures defined/viewed bullying behavior (Ismail et al., 2014). In comparison, a low tolerance culture may have seen the behavior as intrusive, aggressive, and abnormal to development. Specifically, certain Asian cultures were more inhibited in self-expression compared to Western cultures and may have regarded bullying behavior as normal. Using the same bullying definitions in cross cultural research between the two cultures may have resulted in lower bullying incident rates in Asian cultures, despite being the same behavior incident rates (Ismail et al., 2014). Overall, the challenges associated with researching bullying incident rates suggested that caution should be taken when interpreting research results.

The bullying rate data shows that among all the forms of low-level school violence, bullying was the most prevalent type (Beran, 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2005). Statistics varied across studies - one study shows 30 percent of American students between grades 6 to 10 were either bullied, the bully or both (Bowman, 2001). Another study showed that at least one quarter of American children were bullied, and twenty percent described themselves as bullies (Lumsden, 2002). These statistics may even be under-representational of actual bullying demographics - in a survey through the National Association of Resource Officers, at least 89 percent of school police officers believed that school crimes were under-reported (Paul 2003). The research findings were mixed as to which grades had the highest incident rates. In some cases, high schools had higher rates; while other studies have shown elementary grades had higher rates (Nansel et al. 2001; Pepler et al. 2006).

Data from Canadian studies was like American studies. In a study of 4,331 Canadian children aged 11 to 15, 36.3 percent reported to being victims of bullying, while 37 percent reported bullying other children (UNICEF, 2007). Similarly, the Canadian Institute of Health Research (2012) stated that up to one third of Canadian students reported themselves to be victims of bullying. In another large sample sized study with 16,879 Canadian children aged 8 to 18, Vaillancourt and colleagues (2010) reported similar prevalence rates—37.7 percent of students reported being bullied by other students and 31.6 percent of students admitted to bullying other students. Canada's bullying rates, victimization rates, and children's relationships overall were considered poor compared to other countries (Pepler & Craig, 2011). Amongst developed nations, Canada ranked among the lowest in family and peer relationships, health risks and behaviors and subjective well-being (18th, 17th, and 15th out of 21 respectively) (UNICEF, 2007). This stood in contrast with Canada's high educational well-being ranked at 2nd out of 21 (UNICEF, 2007). Canada consistently ranked at the middle or low end of children well-being factors including bullying compared to other nations (Craig & Harel, 2004). Of concern was the discrepancy between Canada's relatively high educational well-being and relatively low psycho-social well-being in children- there was a barrier in translation between Canada's schools and safe and caring schools (Pepler & Craig, 2011; UNICEF, 2007). A look at bullying and victimization rate that changed over time showed a similar trend, although there was some variation; Canada remained average or poorer compared with other nations (Pepler & Craig, 2011). Between the 2001-2002 period and 2009-2010 period, Canada showed slight decreases in the percentage of young people aged 11, 13 and 15 who reported being bullied at least once in the past couple of months (UNICEF Office of Research, 2013). Despite this decrease, Canada ranked 17th place out of 21 developed countries in terms of school bullying

prevalence. Bullying prevalence percentages in these two time periods were approximately 35% amongst children surveyed. There were some concerns over this data, as the survey definition of school bullying included single incidences, as well as repeated incidences. One study assessing Canadian chronic bullying versus occasional bullying showed differences in incidence rates over the period of 1994 to 2006 (Molcho et al., 2009). There was a significant drop in chronic bullying rates in both boy and girls (from 17.8% to 12.2% and 8.9% to 6.3% respectively) (Molcho et al., 2009). However, occasional bullying in girls increased from 27.7% to 33.9%, as did occasional victimization in girls, from 26.5% to 34.7% (Molcho et al., 2009). Despite these increases, the incidence rates of boys' occasional bullying, boys' occasional victimization and both boys' and girls' chronic victimization remained stable through the period of 1994 to 2006 (Molcho et al., 2009). The authors did not speculate why these differences existed between occasional and chronic bullying.

Other Canadian statistics included Calgary, Alberta, where several elementary schools reported 52% of their Grades 1 through 6 students were victims of bullying (Beran & Tutty, 2002). Studies also showed Canada decreased relative to other developed nations in rankings- this suggested that other nations were becoming more effective with bullying intervention and bullying still remained a significant problem now in Canada (Craig & Pepler, 2007; UNICEF Office of Research, 2013). These rates suggested that Canadians should push harder for better implementation of research and programming to enable healthy relationships and development in Canadian children (Pepler & Craig, 2011).

In other nations, such as the United States of America, bullying appeared to be in decline since the 1990s (Finkelhor, 2014). Despite this decline, the current rates remained high, and the

problem were not viewed as being adequately managed. It was speculative at best to believe this decline would continue in the long term without a change in intervention. There was a possibility that intervention efforts had been able to affect only readily treatable cases of bullying, and alternative strategies and stronger efforts were still required to reduce the remaining bullying problems (Finkelhor, 2014).

There were several factors that can affect bullying incidence rates. These included differences in the rate of internalizing and externalizing disorders, relationships, supervision style from supervisors such as teachers and parents, and cyberbullying. Firstly, regarding sex differences, boys compared to girls tended to report higher incident rates of being a bully or a bully victim (Cerni Obrdalj et al. 2013). Ismail et al. (2014) found that adolescent boys were more likely to be bullies than adolescent girls. In contrast, gender may have moderated the specific type of bullying incident rate. For example, males were more likely to be physical bullies, while girls were more likely to be emotional bullies (Jeong et al., 2013).

Internalizing and externalizing disorders were also mediating factors in school bullying incident rates (Ismail et al., 2014). ADHD hyperactive and inattentive symptoms were significant risk factors for becoming a school bully. In contrast, having an internalizing disorder was a protective factor from becoming a school bully. It was possible that adolescents who internalized their affective behavior did not have the ability to release their affect through aggressive actions like school bullying. Low self-control was another factor that could increase the risk of becoming a school bully (Moon & Alarid, 2015). Bullies and bully victims differed in how they coped with stressful situations; for example, when presented with fearful and anger focused

stimuli, bullies responded with low levels of fear and higher positive affect, while victims responded with higher fear, anger and sadness (Panayiotou et al., 2015; Völlink et al., 2013).

Relationships were an important mediating factor in bullying incident rates. A child who had a negative relationship with a teacher or parent, or who associated with a school bully had an increased risk of becoming a bully him or herself (Jeong et al., 2013). Students who viewed school rules as fair were less likely to be bullied physically and emotionally. For example, students may have felt comfortable standing up to bullying behaviors because they felt supported by trustworthy school authorities. This result was also seen when teachers responded positively to bullying, because students tended to respond positively to bullying as well (Berkowitz, 2013; Espelage, 2014). Specifically, this meant that students were more likely to intervene as bystanders to bullying events, if they see teachers intervene during bullying events. Critically, this may have provided a compound protective element for bully victims, considering that a lack of intervention from bystanders encouraged bullying behavior in bullies (Chandler et al. 1995). Other factors that increased the likelihood of intervening in a bullying situation included being Caucasian and female (Goldammer et al., 2013). The authors did not speculate why these factors may have increased the likelihood of intervention, and suggested further research was necessary.

Supervision style from supervisors including school personnel and parents was an important moderator; children who were subject to physical discipline or no adult supervision were more likely to bully (Notar & Padgett, 2013). When students believed that they would be sanctioned for their behaviors, they were less likely to engage in cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2013). Students who attended schools with security guards were also less likely to be bullied (Jeong et al., 2013). However, having security protocols like locked doors or security

equipment such as cameras did not have a significant effect in decreasing bullying (Jeong et al., 2013).

As technology changed and became a more integral part of school culture, bullying also changed; cyberbullying was a more recent phenomenon that played a role in school bullying incident rates. In a comparison between Facebook cyberbullying and traditional bullying, Kwan and Skoric (2013) found traditional bullying still appeared to be the more common type of bullying. A large study with 1422 junior high and high school students suggested that there was little overlap between the two types of bullying- most students involved in cyberbullying were not also involved in traditional school bullying (Kubiszewski et al., 2014). Cyberbullying required additional strategic thought in intervention efforts compared to traditional bullying. For instance, cyberbullying offered the ability to keep the perpetrator anonymous and in turn assert his or her dominance in the power differential that was not possible in traditional bullying (Oyewusi & Orolade, 2014). Approximately 73% of male and 71% of female cyberbullies did not disclose their identifications to their victims. Despite this, 63% male and 56% female cyberbully victims could identify their bullies. These factors may have played a role in how to intervene with cyberbullying.

Overall, there were several factors that can moderate bullying. The next section looked at the concerns about bullying from researcher and public perspectives.

Concerns over Bullying

There were concerns over the significant long- and short-term physical and mental health consequences of bullying from the general public, clinical and research perspectives (Carney & Merrell, 2001; Ttofi & Farrington, 2008, Ttofi & Farrington, 2010). While concern over bullying

has existed from the time data began to be collected, there was particular interest in bullying in recent decades (Carney & Merrell, 2001; Pepler & Craig, 2011). Alberta residents tended to reflect this concern. In 2010, 79% of Albertans surveyed believed the government needed to emphasize efforts on bully intervention, and 87% felt their own communities needed to emphasize efforts on bully intervention (Reid, 2010). On an individual level, 87% of surveyed Albertans believe they had a personal responsibility for bully intervention in their own communities (Reid, 2010). 31% of Albertans felt the community was not in capacity to deal with bullying (Reid, 2010). Overall, there was a concern over bullying.

Problems with Current Bully Interventions

An essential aspect of bullying intervention was the identification and implementation of interventions designed to prevent or reduce bullying in schools (Whitted & Dupper, 2005). The following section reviewed research on the effectiveness of bullying interventions including meta-analyses of bullying intervention overall effectiveness, specific factors that decreased bullying intervention effectiveness, and specific factors that increased bullying intervention effectiveness.

An examination of bully intervention efficacy through several meta-analyses of bully intervention evaluations, revealed mixed results. The study, by Merrell et al. (2008), of both European and North American studies between 1980 and 2004, found just a third of bully interventions met a positive and significant level in bully intervention. Merrell et al. (2008) concluded that for many bully intervention goals, most programs did not cause significant change. Although modest goals may be achieved like altering knowledge, attitudes or pre-conceptions, actual bullying activity remained relatively unchanged (Merrell et al. 2008).

Another meta-analysis conducted by Smith et al., (2004) found that most anti-bullying programs that examined self-reported incident rates of bullying and victimization lead to non-significant results in self-reported incident rates. Importantly, self-reported incidence rates may not be valid and precise in identifying behavioral changes in schools (Swearer et al. 2010). Vreeman and Carroll (2007) found similarly low effectiveness results, where only 3 of the 26 programs reviewed lead to reliable and significant reductions in bullying and victimization incident rates. Critically, the chosen 26 programs for reviewed were the only programs that used a rigorous scientific control method to ensure their results were empirically strong. Therefore, most bully intervention programs were not evaluated in a rigorous scientific manner. Specifically, they did not include treatment and control groups or participant randomization. There were also conflicting results in bullying intervention research. For example, Pepler (1994) found that the number of persons who reported bullying others increased after 18 months of a program's implementation. However, there was a decrease in the number of students who reported to have been bullied. Conflicting evidence in such studies suggested that there was still a need to develop research methods in bullying research.

Despite these results, several meta-analyses showed promise in bullying program efficacy. Ttofi and Farrington (2010) found in their 44-paper evaluation, school-based anti-bullying programs were effective in decreasing bullying by 20% to 30% and victimization by 17% to 20%. In conclusion, general meta-analyses of bully intervention programs revealed mixed efficacy rates. The next step was to look at what factors were limiting bullying intervention efficacy.

The first factor that limited bullying intervention efficacy was the lack of coordinated efforts by communities and embedded schools (Cowie, 2014; Craig & Pepler, 2007; Lereya et al., 2013). By nature, bullying was a complicated phenomenon that had multiple facets to target. This complication meant that coordinating intervention efforts was an important factor for increasing effectiveness. Making schools safe from phenomena like bullying was too complex a problem to be treated by any one school or with a single intervention (Cerni Obrdalj et al., 2013; Espelage 2015; Espelage et al., 2013; Skiba & Fontanini, 2000). For example, every community and school had its own individual needs such as the peers and family involved in the social ecology, or the changing school demographics (Lereya et al., 2013; Swearer et al. 2010). In order to create emotionally safe school climates, intervention had to go beyond basic and obvious physical safety fixes and focus on the holistic community perspective (Astor et al.,2004; Cowie, 2014; Espelage 2015; Lereya et al., 2013; Schroeder, 2005). Specifically, the bullying problem was beyond an individual bully-victim relationship. Bullying was entwined in the culture and climate of the school (Cowie, 2014; Skiba & Fontanini, 2000). While individual bully child relationship strategies could be helpful, in order to be effective on a grander scale, intervention must target several levels that include the community, overall school, classroom and individual relationships between the bullies, victims, bystanders, teachers and other adults and members of the communities (Espelage et al., 2013; Hinduja & Patchin, 2013; Lereya et al., 2013; Skiba & Fontanini, 2000; Tawalbeh et al., 2015; Whitted & Dupper, 2005). The fearful and intimidating environment that bullying created must be the key focus, as it negatively affected the whole school and cannot be fixed by focusing on reactions to individual incidents (Cowie, 2014; Olweus, Limber & Mihalic, 1999). Thus, the overall sense of community and positive relationships that came from a united strategic front was the primary factor that would provide

safety (Cowie, 2014; Mabie 2003). Astor et al., (2004) maintained that the most successful programs to prevent school violence including bullying were those that involved all stakeholders and were tailored to fit the specific needs of an individual school. However, system-wide interventions were difficult to implement. Many school administrators already struggled with bullying within their own jurisdictions and working in collaboration added additional demand (Claussen & Chan, 2015). For example, schools currently struggled with determining when to intervene when a cyberbullying incident occurs, as cyberbullying moved beyond the basic geographical confines of school bullying on school grounds and there were often no clear guidelines concerning the schools' role in cyberbullying intervention (Mezzina & Stedrak, 2015). In conclusion, bullying was too complex a problem to be treated by any one program or a particular school.

The next factor that decreased bullying intervention efficacy was the minimal evidence-based support of most bullying interventions. First, many of the bullying interventions that were implemented in North American schools were quick reactions to major media events (Borum et al. 2010; Mulvey & Cauffman, 2001; Jull, 2000). These interventions tended to have minimal evidence-based support and were criticized for being unsound interventions (Borum et al. 2010). In some cases, these strategies did more harm than good for the students and the school (Mulvey & Cauffman, 2001). There were also concerns that these strategies merely displaced the problem rather than address it (Jull, 2000). Some interventions under criticism included zero tolerance and student profiling policies (Borum et al., 2010). Zero-tolerance, for example, originated from the U.S. Attorney's policy on managing drug smuggling boats off San Diego in 1986 (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). School administrators took the zero-tolerance approach and utilized it heavily into the 1990s (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Currently, there were questions that remained

unanswered regarding zero tolerance. For example, researchers and school officials still struggled with whether the policy was it too harsh and if it targeted minority students disproportionally (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Very few of the bullying interventions developed in the past few decades have had rigorous scientific evaluation (Beran et al., 2004). This use of diverse, unproven strategies occured at local, provincial, and national levels (Craig and Pepler, 2007). In addition to some interventions proving ineffective, some interventions had also proven to increase incidence rates of bullying and victimization (Craig & Pepler, 2007; Eslea & Smith, 1998). In cases where the increased incidence was observed, the authors suggested that students were more aware of what bullying actions were, and thus reported with a greater frequency than before (Craig & Pepler, 2007; Pepler, 1994). Additionally, there was a lack of a guiding theoretical framework that would have informed what needed to be evaluated and how the intervention should be created (Swearer et al., 2010). Interventions needed to be effectively evaluated and screened and required a guiding structure to make relative comparisons with, to have informed decisions.

The next factor to limit bullying intervention efficacy was that bullying required a different set of interventions than other conflict resolution because of its unique characteristics and because it was not a simple phenomenon (Carter & Stephen, 1999; Limber & Nation, 1998). For example, bullying was a product of power differences between individuals and not solely a lack of social skills as was traditionally thought (Sampson, 2009). Despite this bullying characteristic, traditional interventions used to address conflict such as conflict resolution, peer mediation, and group therapy interventions were being utilized for bullying problems. Not surprisingly, they showed poor efficacy in reducing bullying rates (Sampson, 2009). For example, Ttofi and Farrington (2010) found that intervention work with peer correlates with

greater bully victimization rates. This work with peers included such activities as peer mediation, peer mentoring and encouraging bystander intervention (Ttofi & Farrington, 2010). Social emotional learning skill programs that were commonly implemented across American schools were also limited in successfully reducing verbal relational bullying (Espelage et al. 2013). However, these programs substantially reduced physical aggression (Espelage et al. 2013).

Another specific challenge to bullying intervention efficacy came from teachers. Teachers were critical stakeholders in the detection and reduction of school bullying and a protective factor against deleterious effects on academic success from bullying (Mudhovozi, 2015; Strøm et al., 2013). However, teachers intervened in just 4% of bullying incidents in the classroom, possibly because it was difficult for an outside to student culture to perceive the power differentials that exist between students (Beran, 2006; Craig & Pepler, 1997). Additionally, it may be that teachers misinterpreted this aggressive behavior as play activities or they themselves were afraid to step in because they lacked the training to do so (Beran, 2006). The minimal amount of bullying intervention implemented by teachers may be seen by bullies as a passive approval of their aggressive behaviors (Craig & Pepler, 2007). Bully intervention programs could not be effective if the bullying behavior was not recognized or acted upon in the schools.

Another example of the complexity in school bullying strategies was how teachers managed the use of homophobic epithets. Homophobic epithets could be used by students in manners that were not classified as school bullying, and yet their use in homophobic teasing was a key moderator of school bullying in middle school boys and may suggest the student was at risk for increased probabilities of sexual harassment (Espelage et al., 2014). Therefore, schools

must ensure that proper care was taken when incidences of homophobic teasing and the usage of homophobic epithets took place. Finally, teachers were not unanimous in their views on the prevalence of bullying, the forms of bullying and the defining characteristics bullies and victims (Mudhovozi, 2015).

An additional challenge to bullying intervention efficacy was implementation fidelity. Many programs were not completed because of time limitations (Everhart & Wandersman, 2000). In addition to the challenge of incomplete intervention implementation, many school administrators also modified these programs with resource substitutions, which lead to a diluted and ineffective effort (Dupper, 2003). Intervention "buy in" was another challenge (Whitted & Dupper, 2005). School administrators needed to provide appropriate leadership to support the intervention to be accepted throughout the school (Whitted & Dupper 2005). Administrators also needed to ensure appropriate funding was available (Whitted & Dupper, 2005). Schools needed to ensure that interventions were continuous throughout grades, particularly in transition periods (Bucher & Manning, 2005). The most successful safe school interventions had continuous preventative actions (Stevick & Levinson, 2003). The continuous prevention recognized that bullying was heterotypic in nature and transformed into other aggressive behavior that developed from power and aggression in interpersonal relationships (Pepler et al., 2006). Interventions must keep constant focus on targeting bullying as it developed across grade advancement. Constant focus included the vulnerable time period when the child was in transition from elementary to high school, when bullying incidents tended to increase (Pellegrini & Long, 2002).

There were challenges to bullying intervention within Alberta. In 25% of respondents to a bullying survey, Albertans indicated they believe that bullying was a normal aspect of growing

up (Reid, 2010). The belief that bullying was normal behavior could be a challenge for interventions if that belief also led to moving away from taking an active stance against bullying. Understanding what bullying constituted also remained a challenge in Alberta, as bullying tended to be recognized as verbal and physical aggression foremost, while social and cyberbullying was less recognized as bullying (Reid, 2010). Further issues included delineating normal aggression such as in sports, from bullying aggression. Awareness of intervention initiatives was also a problem, as only 17% of Albertans were aware of, or were involved with bully intervention community initiatives (Reid, 2010). However, 57% of those surveyed recalled some manner of communication about bully intervention in the past year, and 65% contended that they could handle bully situations more effectively because of those communications (Reid, 2010). Local community initiatives either did not exist or were not reaching out to the community in an effective manner. Broad bully interventions were reaching at least half of Alberta residents surveyed and these efforts had been helpful in some manner. In conclusion, awareness of bully interventions would continue to need better development and support. The next section looked at what factors increased bullying intervention efficacy.

There were several factors that increased bullying intervention effectiveness. One characteristic that was often forgotten was that bullying was the result of obtaining tangible rewards, like money, lunch, or peer approval (Coivin et al. 1998). In other words, the behavior of bullies was often positively reinforced. Another factor was timing of the intervention. Early intervention in the elementary school years was necessary because the behavior patterns in bullying became much more reinforced and more difficult to treat in later grades (Carter & Stewin, 1999). Furthermore, programs needed to be more intensive, including parent meetings, have concrete discipline, foster positive relationships with teachers and cover vulnerable areas of

the school like playgrounds (Johnson, 2009; Ttofi & Farrington, 2010). In addition to the complexity of dealing with traditional school bullying, there was the problem of cyberbullying. There was no current consensus on the effect of traditional school bullying strategies on cyberbullying (Foody et al., 2015). While cyberbullying had cognitive behavioral therapy training studies, there was still more research needed to understand how to intervene with this relatively newer form of bullying.

What was the Role of School Psychology?

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) outlined the role of school psychology in the following manner: school psychologists were clinicians that supported teachers in their teaching and students in their learning ("Who are school psychologists", n.d.). School psychologists specialized in mental health, education, and behavior. This specialization supported students academically, socially, emotionally, and behaviorally ("Who are school psychologists," n.d.). School psychologists worked closely with students, teachers, families, and school administrators to make learning environments that were safe, healthy, and supportive at and on route to and from school ("Who are school psychologists", n.d.). School psychologists supported healthy relationships between the schools, communities, and homes ("Bully prevention", n.d.; "Who are school psychologists", n.d.). Amongst the school psychologists' duty to create safe, positive school climates, they were required to specifically prevent bullying and other forms of violence ("Who are school psychologists", n.d.). NASP's position on bullying stated that bullying was not acceptable behavior, and adults and students have a responsibility to stop this behavior ("Bully prevention", n.d.).

Why was Bullying Significant in the Field of School Psychology?

Bullying was an important topic for school psychologists for the following: the characteristics of school psychologists that made them ideal for bullying intervention, the potential link between bullying and school violence, the link between bullying and more severe types of aggression, and the minimal training requirements that school personnel received to intervene with bullying.

In consideration of the challenges that other school personnel faced with school violence, school psychologists had a unique opportunity to fill this gap in resources. School psychologists had a distinctive specialization in counseling and mental health; this led to their recommendation as a member of the best practice multi-discipline school crisis team (Aronin, 1996). School psychologists in this role could directly assist and service students, staff, and the media (Adamson & Peacock, 2007). Supporting this notion, nearly all participants in a 228 American school psychologist survey indicated they had some type of crisis intervention training (Adamson & Peacock, 2007). School psychologists were almost always identified as members of the school crisis team (Adamson & Peacock, 2007). Most schools provided individual and group psychological services and offered psychological debriefings, an area well suited for school psychologists (Adamson & Peacock, 2007). Furthermore, school personnel themselves did not always have access to psychological services after traumatic events. For example, 3 out of 5 school employee victims of school violence did not voluntarily seek counseling, and 3 out of 4 schools did not require counseling for their employee victims (Daniels et al., 2007; Kondrasuk et al., 2005). In some cases, school administrators implemented policies that did not best meet the needs for school personnel's mental health following a traumatic incident. For example,

Newman et al. (2004) found teachers felt hurt, abandoned, and not validated because they were not given time to process their grief post-traumatic incident. This idea suggested that personnel with psychological training should be involved in such cases. Bullying was an important topic for school psychologists because of the potential link between bullying and school violence. The media and public were interested in the possibility that school violence, particularly prominent events like school shootings, was a result of bullying (Leary et al., 2003). Few studies addressed this possible link, however. From such studies, there was evidence to suggest that targeting bullying in schools may help reduce other forms of school violence. For example, bullying behavior was positively correlated with other specific types of school violence (Nansel et al., 2003). Being a bully or a bully victim was associated with a greater risk in both boys and girls of weapon carrying, weapon carrying within a school, physical fighting, and being injured in a physical fight. Typically, individuals who bully were likely to commit other acts of school violence. Bullying was likely to occur with more serious aggressive behavior and should not be considered a normal development of youth. Although this study did not suggest a causal mechanism, the study suggested that the school violence intervention overall should target bullying behavior because of the correlation between the two sets of behaviors. Importantly, stronger associations tended to occur when bullying occured outside the school. It may be that these bullying episodes were not typically supervised, and so the bullying behavior was greater in severity. The greater severity suggested that increasing the severity of bullying behavior may lead to a greater likelihood of committing other, more serious acts of school violence. A community-wide focus was also needed so that intervention not just targets school ground-based bullying but bullying in the community and home, such as with cyberbullying (Nansel et al., 2003). Finally, the authors estimated that 2.7 million American students carried weapons in the

last 30 days, and 1.8 million carried a weapon to school. A weapon was classified as a gun, knife, or club in this study. This magnitude of potential cases reinforced the necessity to target bullying when intervening, given potential links between bullying and greater severity of aggressive behaviors.

School violence included more prolific incidents like school shootings. A case study of school shootings between 1995 and 2001 found that most shooters were dealing with social rejection, including teasing, bullying, or ostracism (Leary et al., 2003). This study was limited to generalizing these results due to the selection process for the case studies. Next, the authors pointed out that most adolescents that endured bullying did not escalate into school shooters. Finally, they suggested that most shooters were also struggling with psychological problems, interests in guns or explosives, or a fascination with death. They suggested continued work regarding bullying and causal links to school violence, particularly because of the intense media interest in this relationship. Critically, bullying was linked to unhealthy relationships between bully victims and their peers, friends, family, and school overall (Bilić et al., 2014; Notar & Padgett, 2013).

Bullying was an important topic for school psychologists because of the link between bullying and more severe levels of aggressive behavior in adolescence and young adulthood overall (Bender & Losel, 2011). Individuals who bullied at the age of 14 were likely to have violent convictions between the ages of 15 and 20, and self-reported committing violence from ages 15-18 (Farrington & Ttofi, 2011). Individuals who were frequent bullies were also correlated with both occasional and repeated criminal offenses (including violence) (Sourander et al., 2007). In comparison, bully-victims were associated with repeat criminal offenses only

(including violence). Like the Leary et al., (2003) case study, the link between bullying and more severe violent behavior was strongest when there was a concurrent high level of psychiatric symptoms (Sourander et al. 2007). The authors suggested that students who frequently engaged in bullying behavior should be screened for psychiatric problems. In particular, the authors found physical bullying was more predictive of antisocial behavior versus verbal or indirect bullying. This idea indicated that interventions regarding bullying must be specific regarding the types of bullying being committed. Another study found that bullying behavior and homophobic teasing were significant predictors of sexual harassment incidents in middle school children (Espelage et al., 2011). While these studies suggested a strong link between bullying and violence, there have been exceptions. One meta-analysis suggested that bullying predicted more antisocial behavior and not necessarily interpersonal violence and thus there was a caution in generalizing these results (Ttofi et al., 2012). Overall, bullying was associated with several unhealthy behaviors and, therefore, should be of concern for school psychologists.

Another reason bullying was an important topic for school psychologists was because of the limited mental health intervention training that school administrators and teachers received at the pre-service level (Koller & Bertel, 2006). The limited mental health intervention training was problematic, considering that teachers were key professionals in the detection and reduction of school bullying (Berkowitz, 2013; Mudhovozi, 2015; Strom et al., 2013). In most cases, teachers took a general psychology course that provided limited real-world applicability in helping to manage mental health in their classrooms (Koller & Bertel, 2006). Despite the challenge to teachers, some bullying interventions improved both the teachers' knowledge of bullying behaviors and teacher's self-efficacy with intervening on these bullying behaviors (Newman-Carlson, 2004). Regardless, the limited training teachers receive was disproportionate to the

complexity of mental health problems bullying exists within (Cerni Obrdalj et al., 2013; Kelly et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2006; Klomek et al., 2013; Lereya et al., 2015; Notar & Padgett, 2013). As well, there was limited research supporting teacher training programs in mental health, and these programs were not a core section of teacher training programs (Kandakai & King, 2002; Sela-Shayovitz, 2009). Even if there were interventions available, teachers tended not to participate in them (Sela-Shayovitz, 2002). Junior and senior experienced teachers both report feeling inadequate in controlling classroom mental health problems, including school bullying, keeping their classrooms safe, and managing their unsafe school-related stress and burnout (Koller et al., 2004; Kandakai & King, 2002; Mallet & Paty, 1999). When teachers intervened in bullying situations, they reported feeling more competent dealing with the victims and parents, than the aggressor (Nicolaides et al., 2002). While not specific to bullying, teachers reported a lack of trust that their school as an organization would provide coping support after experiencing violent trauma within the school (Daniels et al. 2007; Sela-Shayovitz, 2002). The lack of trust suggested that teachers felt they have limited organizational support for less severe traumatic events like bullying. Importantly, comprehensive school administrative support from school staff was also linked to less bullying from students and a greater likelihood for students to intervene in bullying situations (Espelage, 2014).

Teachers may also simply not have had enough time to focus on the mental health of all of their students (Claussen & Chan, 2015). The priorities for teachers included teaching the curriculum and other schools concerns including bullying, were often trivialized. The trivialization was a challenge for teachers because many teachers recognized that a healthy state of mind was critical for academic success (Claussen & Chan, 2015; Foody et al., 2015; Oyewusi & Orolade, 2014; Strom et al., 2013). Furthermore, students with low academic grades were at a

higher risk for becoming a bully (Ismail et al., 2014). In a survey of teachers' perceptions of a child's perception of a stressful event versus the child's actual perception, first-grade teachers were better able to empathize with first-grade students compared to fifth-grade teachers and fifth-grade students (Anderson & Jimerson, 2007). The difference might be a result of higher-class numbers and a bigger range of developmental diversity in senior grades (Anderson & Jimerson, 2007; Cole et al., 2005). Having either too many students or too wide of diversity could both be barriers for teachers to develop a thorough understanding of their students. In turn, these barriers could have led to school bullying not being recognized in the classroom.

Further problems included training programs for school staff that a) undermined or ignored student mental health; b) favored pathology and illness over preventative measures; and c) used vague definitions that were not up to standards in mental health practice (Koller & Bertel, 2006). The nature of these training programs was likely a barrier that prevented school personnel from feeling confident in bullying. Bullying was a significant problem that could include trauma that affected behavioral and emotional functioning that was difficult to manage through standard coping interventions (Roberts, 2000; Jordan, 2003). For example, bullying could lead to posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, suicidality depression, poor self-esteem, and adult dependency (Cerni Obrdalj et al., 2013; Daniels, 2002; Gill, 2002; Kelly et al., 2015; Kimet al., 2006; Klomek et al., 2013; Lereya et al., 2015; Notar & Padgett, 2013). One study that supported the limited mental health training school personnel receive was through the Center for the Advancement of Mental Health Practices in Schools Center (CAMHPSC), a collaboration between the Missouri Department of Mental Health and the University of Missouri-Columbia (Koller & Bertel, 2006). The center's extensive research pointed to several curricula-based skill deficits that school personnel were challenged with, including how to

intervene with bullying in the classroom (Koller & Bertel, 2006). Critically, bullying led to further complications, including further bullying, anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation (Bauman, Toomey & Walker, 2013; Foody et al., 2015; Lereya et al., 2015; Notar & Padgett, 2013). The research pointed to a need for change in pre-service training, and the implementation of coursework that specifically focused on school environmental applications of basic psychological theories and principles targeting the mental health of children and adolescents (Koller & Bertel, 2006). Specific topics in the new framework included identifying warning signs of psychosocial maladjustment and mental health problems in students (Koller & Bertel, 2006). While these efforts to train teachers were helpful, they did not always end with a significant change in skill sets. For example, some courses that could potentially help a teacher better understand the stressors a child was undergoing were limited in effect. Teacher education programs meant to help teachers gain a better comprehension of child development showed no significant gains in teacher comprehension (Anderson & Jimerson, 2007; Daniels & Shumow, 2003). Additionally, having more experience in teaching did not significantly enhance teachers' sensitivity to children's perceptions of stressors (Anderson & Jimerson, 2007; Yamamoto & Felsenthal, 1982). It may be that the nature of teaching limited the potential impact that teachers could have in managing student mental health and school violence in general. These limitations suggested an urgent need to equip teachers with accurate information on bullying as they were key stakeholders in the detection and reduction of bullying among students. (Mudhovozi, 2015).

Overall, the literature suggested that teachers had limited training specifically in school bullying intervention and that as the primary staff in schools, they needed support. School psychologists were ideal candidates to provide this support.

Bullying was an essential topic for school psychologists because they were ideal for delivering bullying intervention due to the unique nature of school psychologists. In comparison to the limited training in bullying intervention that teachers received, school psychologists had the capacity to direct intervention efforts because of core training requirements in relation to mental health and crisis intervention (Espelage et al. 2013; Morrison & Furlong, 1994). For example, school psychology training programs were mandated to provide crisis intervention training by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, 2012). Consultation for the school officials themselves was another area that school psychologists could provide service. For instance, in the 1997-1998 period, 71% of school employee poll participants reported worries of a school-based homicide, despite the limited probability of the incident occurring at a 1 in 2 million chance (Elliot et al. 1998). There was a possibility that concerns over these events will take away focus on less severe but still essential topics like bullying. School psychologists could help alleviate concerns for school officials with evidence-based consultation so they could focus on their primary professional responsibilities. They could also help ensure that this anxiety did not lead to unfounded but popular interventions like zero-tolerance policies that may have a limited impact on school safety and reducing bullying (Espelage, 2014; Borum et al. 2010). Anxiety from bullying events compromised teaching practice, and led to professional stress, burnout, and disengagement (Galand et al., 2007). Misunderstandings over the nature of school bullying could undermine the real barriers teachers face in schools, on top of leading to ineffective, misdirected, or limited interventions (Galand et al., 2007).

School psychologists in Canada had a limited role in school safety, not just because of the traditionally limited focus on proactive mental health care in schools, but also because school safety violations in schools were viewed more for their criminal nature, rather than educational

nature (Koller & Bertel, 2006; Morrison & Furlong, 1994). Morrison and Furlong (1994) emphasized that both educators and school psychologists needed to view school safety as part of the educational mission, and not something to be passed onto other professionals such as law enforcement. Although school psychologists had the knowledge and skills to provide leadership for making schools safe, their potential had not been optimized (Morrison & Furlong, 1994). This idea was even though the problem encompassed critical areas that appeared to be well within the realms of the school psychologist's domain; schooling, learning, developmental, and psychological issues (Morrison & Furlong, 1994). School psychology also traditionally focused on individual casework, especially for special education placement, rather than a broad scope public health perspective (Reschly, 2000). This idea was concerning because safe school programs were most effective at a system-wide level vs. individual casework level (Ttofi & Farrington, 2010). It was challenging to address bullying through best practice when the position of school psychologists was limited to a much more micro level.

Another aspect that may limit school psychologists from playing a more active role in school safety was through the focus and content of their pre-service training (Curtis & Batsche, 1991). Curtis and Batsche (1991) stated that several factors may influence and limit the nature of school psychology training programs, including the role of school psychologists based on the perspectives of the clinicians, the faculty's perception of what was important in program content, direction and training method, state and federal legislation determination of funding and role definitions and the accreditation and professional associations. One of these roles that school psychologists were traditionally limited to was that of a psychometrician and gatekeeper to special education funding (Dowdy et al., 2014).

With the school psychology profession searching for different delivery systems, there was a more definite need to understand education through both an educational and psychological perspective (Kosher et al., 2014; Morrison et al., 1994). Since school personnel were not confident in their mental health training, and school safety affects all parts of the school, school psychologists should have greater involvement in school safety interventions (Berkowitz et al., 2013; Dowdy et al., 2014; Jeong et al., 2013; Koller & Bertel, 2006; Morrison et al., 1994; Notar & Padgett, 2013). Within the broader context of school safety and nurturing, the phenomenon of making schools safe encompassed aspects of schooling, learning, developmental, and psychological issues that made it a problem for which school psychologists could provide highly specialized help (Cowan & Vaillancourt, 2013; Morrison et al., 1994).

Overall, there was a benefit to school psychologists being part of a school's bullying intervention efforts due to school psychologists' school wide focus and role target focus (National Association of School Psychologists, 2014). An initiative towards an intervention at the school level regarding bullying would benefit from a change at the pre-service training level, as well as an additional focus from school psychologists (Sprott et al. 2005; Koller & Bertel, 2006). Success at the primary goal of student academic performance would require a focus that went beyond class scores and into the student's mental health needs (Koller & Bertel, 2006). Therefore, the topic of bullying was a critical and essential topic for school psychology.

Conclusion

Bullying was a complex phenomenon that involved a wide range of persons across schools, communities, and other areas. Bullying had significant short and long-term effects on individuals involved and should be of concern. Current bullying intervention had mixed results,

but generally, literature had emphasized the need for collaborative efforts across all stakeholders, rather than having these stakeholders work in isolation. Of these stakeholders, there was strong support for the involvement of school psychologists in bullying intervention.

Introduction to Study

Bullying was an important topic to address because of bullying's short term and long-term effects on individuals involved including academic success, physical health, and mental health in children and adolescents (Craig & Pepler, 1999; Olweus, 1993). The use of aggression and power made through bullying could directly harm children and youth physically and emotionally and lead to further interpersonal violence in adulthood including aggressive behaviors like sexual harassment and dating aggression (Espelage & Horne, 2008; Pepler et al., 2006; Pepler et al., 2008; Pepler & Craig, 2011). Intervening earlier in an individual's life may reduce the reinforcement of power abuse that could lead to these maladaptive interpersonal behaviors (PrevNet, 2007).

This research focused on bullying intervention in Alberta. There was both legislation and public concern about bullying intervention in Alberta schools. In 2014, the Education Act in Alberta was proclaimed (Alberta Education, 2014). The law encouraged schools to be welcoming, caring, respectful, safe, and free from physical and emotional harm. To this end, the Act (2014) required school boards explicitly to have a student code of conduct that targeted bullying and provided proper support/action for those who were bullies and those who were victims of bullies. On top of this legislative impetus, Alberta citizens were concerned about bullying. Most Albertans surveyed (79%) felt that the government needed to prioritize bullying intervention, and 87% thought that their communities needed to prioritize bully intervention

(Reid, 2010). Of those surveyed, 88% felt they had a personal responsibility to reduce bullying in their community.

There were multiple factors required to create safe and caring school environments for students and minimize bullying (Furlong et al., 2005). For example, a safe and caring school environment included building a foundation that utilized all system levels and regularly assessed each school's specific needs including student outcomes on school safety and school violence (Espelage, 2014; Furlong et al., 2005). Safe and caring schools also required targeted bullying focus, as bullying was a pervasive form of violence prevalent in all schools (Furlong et al., 2005; Beran, 2006). The team ideally included a range of stakeholders who could target multiple levels of the school system to ensure efforts were comprehensive (Furlong et al., 2005).

Current interventions to create safe and caring schools tended to target these factors in isolation and lacked an overall strategic focus that coordinated their efforts (Furlong et al. 2002). In addition to requiring a coordinated intervention focus, many of these interventions lacked evidence supporting high efficacy and rigorous empirical evaluation (Pepler & Craig, 2011). Without a united and coordinated effort within and across schools and related stakeholders, these interventions might not result in significant community change (Fagan et al. 2009). There was concern that Alberta schools were currently working in isolation of each other (Claussen & Chan, 2016; Fagan et al. 2009; Kania & Kramer et al. 2011). For example, the definition of bullying might be a problem in Alberta if different definitions were being used amongst schools (Claussen & Chan, 2015; Espelage, 2014). One school might not recognize the behavior as bullying in comparison to another school that would classify that behavior as bullying.

Statement of the Problem

To build school environments where students could thrive in their social-emotional learning without barriers like bullying, schools must work beyond any one isolated intervention (Elias, 2003). Developing school environments without these barriers required community-level change (Fagan et al., 2004). Schools were intervening on bullying in isolation without a coordinated focus and using interventions that might be inappropriate, untested, or implemented improperly, among other challenges (Furlong, Pavelski, & Saxton, 2002; Greenberg et al. 2003). While schools were moving towards collaboration, there were still silos of isolation within schools that limited the effectiveness of interventions (Killgore & Reynolds, 2010). Without a more comprehensive effort to guide schools, most of these interventions might be ineffective or missing their potential impact. A coordinated effort across schools was needed to make Alberta schools welcoming, caring, respectful, safe, and free from emotional and physical harm that could come from bullying. For example, all school personnel needed to be using the same definition of bullying with bullying intervention (Espelage, 2014). Using a standard definition amongst all schools was a problem in Alberta and limited the effectiveness of bullying intervention efforts (Claussen & Chan, 2015). While Alberta's provincial legislation defined what bullying entailed, schools might not necessarily be following these definitions (Promoting Relationships & Eliminating Violence Network, n.d.). While school psychologists were ideal personnel to provide bullying intervention because of their school wide focus and case focus in their roles, there were limited studies investigating their understanding of bullying intervention based on their experiences (Espelage et al., 2013; GSA Network, 2011; Morrison & Furlong, 1994; Murphy, 2012; National Association of School Psychologists, 2014). Therefore, the

problem was what were Canadian school psychologists' understanding of bullying intervention based on their experiences?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the understanding of Canadian school psychologists of bullying intervention based on their experiences to better inform bullying intervention. Specifically, school psychologists were in an ideal position due to their training and general position in a school's staff, to provide evidence-based bullying intervention (Espelage et al. 2013; GSA Network, 2011; Morrison & Furlong, 1994; Murphy, 2012). The study focused on the challenges that school psychologists faced in providing bullying intervention in Alberta. Due to the concerns over coordination and fragmentation, isolation, inappropriate or untested program choices, and other challenges, this study aimed to understand what problems Alberta school psychologists specifically faced with providing bullying intervention in school settings (Furlong, Pavelski, & Saxton, 2002; Greenberg et al. 2003). Studies involving Alberta school personnel in general showed specific concerns over definitions, workload management, and professional accountability in Albertan schools (Claussen & Chan, 2015). This study intended to follow up on these concerns by examining school psychologist perspectives specifically and determine the barriers to bullying intervention in Alberta schools, including definition, responsibility, and workload through a cross case analysis approach. This study utilized a cross cases analysis approach through interviews with 8 school psychologists from Alberta.

The remaining thesis covered research methods applied to bullying, the methodology used in the study, and the study's results and discussions.

Research Question

In summary, based on the literature and context surrounding bullying in schools, the research question was "what is the understanding by Canadian school psychologists of bullying intervention based on their experiences?"

Chapter 2 Research Methods

Introduction

In this chapter, the rationale for the use of cross-case analysis in bullying research and the methods used in this study was discussed.

Rationale of Research Methodology in this Study

There were a variety of research methods that might be used in research on bullying. Traditionally, bullying research used quantitative designs because successful bullying prevention and intervention approaches needed to encompass the entire school and big sample sizes in quantitative research were essential for research of bullying (e.g., Burns et al., 2008; Lazarus, 2000; Lazarus, 2006; Ma et al., 2001; Rigby, 2003; Tenenbaum et al., 2011; Thornberg, 2010). Many studies in bullying were based off a priori classifications or surveys, which gave precise and dependable information (Jeffrey & Stewart, 2019). While such research provided a substantial contribution to current understandings of bullying, quantitative designs were criticized for their limitation in not being able to capture the complexity of the experiences of individuals involved with bullying intervention (Bosacki et al., 2006). These approaches in research were criticized as restricting responses for research participants, and not representing their own understandings or definitions (Canty et al., 2014). In response to this criticism, some researchers were advocating for the use of qualitative approaches in bullying research to better capture the complexities of bullying (Thornberg, 2010). Although qualitative research existed with bullying research, qualitative research tended to be rare relative to quantitative research, and there was no qualitative research regarding school psychologists and bullying to date (Powell et al. 2008). This study contributed to bullying research in two manners. First, qualitative research relative to quantitative research in bullying explored bullying within the social context bullying

resides within, and therefore an implicit understanding of the group and experiences of participants own perspectives (Torrance, 2000). Secondly, with the current number of three studies with school psychologists and bullying (with all three studies being quantitative), this study provided an expansion of the bullying research from the perspective of individuals who held ideal roles in bullying intervention and prevention because of their school wide focus and role focus (Lund et al., 2012; National Association of School Psychologists, 2014; O'Malley, 2009; Sherer & Nickerson, 2010). The following chapter reviewed the importance of cross case analysis as a qualitative method in bullying research. The article covered the importance of the following key topics; theory generation versus theory verification, exploratory versus confirmatory approach, qualitative versus quantitative method, and finally, cross case analysis itself and its application to bullying research.

Traditional Research Methodologies: Theory Generation versus Theory Verification

Traditionally, psychological research focused on deductive processes via theory verification and testing hypotheses. This approach garnered criticism that deductive methods deprived exploration and thought, and limited focus on the theory itself (Endler, 1984; Rennie et al., 1988). Specifically, the primary traditional research process involved the creation of hypotheses from existing theories and then tested these hypotheses via testing instruments in the field. The research process then tended to follow cycles of inferencing ideas and then hypothesis testing (Rennie et al., 1988). Traditional research focused on theory verification as the foremost priority. Critics noted that psychology researchers were placing more efforts on research technology and ignoring the central core of science of thinking and discovery (Bakan, 1967). There was an ongoing debate as to which element was more critical in research, the

validation/proof of theories, or the generation of theories (Rennie et al., 1988). In specific cases, the emphasis of importance lied with the production of theories, mainly when there was evidence of what bullying interventions needed to be in place. Still, there was uncertainty as to why these bullying interventions were not working, and the barriers remained unknown (Claussen & Chan, 2015). Specifically, there was no current study that focused on school psychologists understanding of bullying intervention based on their experiences. This idea led to consideration of the exploratory versus confirmatory approach.

Choosing an Exploratory Approach instead of a Confirmatory Approach

Generally, the exploratory approach involved observations, analysis of what had been observed, and then concluding these analyses. The exploratory approach contrasted with the confirmatory approach that generated hypotheses from existing theories, gathered data to assess the hypotheses, and then accepted or rejected the hypotheses. Therefore, with the emphasis on the need for theory generation rather than theory verification in psychological research, there was also a need for the exploratory rather than confirmatory approach (Endler, 1984; Rennie et al., 1988). For example, while there was an understanding of what strategies might be helpful with bullying intervention, there was limited understanding of what barriers were limiting the implementations of these strategies in Alberta schools by school psychologists (Claussen & Chan, 2015). Therefore, rather than seeking to confirm a priori beliefs of bullying, this research focused on the understanding of Alberta school psychologists' experiences of bullying intervention. For example, a theory that could specifically look at the process school psychologists in Alberta have when asked to intervene in bullying incidents. Compared to other research objectives typically covered in educational studies, exploration was the primary focus in

the exploratory approach (as opposed to description, explanation, prediction, and influence) (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Although exploration was useful, there was uncertainty in the reality that school psychologists experienced with providing bullying intervention. Therefore, the exploratory approach also fit well with the world view of constructivism. Constructivism emphasized multiple constructions of reality that were socially and experientially local by nature (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The exploratory approach fit with the epistemology of constructivism. Constructivism's focus was to find the reality experienced by the subject (in this case, school psychologists and bullying interventions) through literal creations between the researcher and topic of interest (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In turn, the exploratory approach would create an understanding of the real school psychologists' experience with bullying intervention. The next step was to determine how this exploratory method applied to choosing between the qualitative versus quantitative approaches.

Using the Qualitative Approach

To take a wide-angle and in-depth perspective on the phenomenon, researchers could employ a qualitative approach rather than a quantitative one (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The first difference between the two methods was the level of precision they employ. Quantitative research in bullying was criticized for being more narrowly focused and particular in detail (Bosacki et al., 2006). This idea was required for the testing of research hypotheses, and in turn, understanding key behaviors in controlled environments and finding causal relationships among variables. While this idea helped understand core pieces of bullying, it also could be limiting in the case of bullying research because of the complexity of the multiple variables interacting with one another in bullying. It was possible that research and application only utilized these variables

in isolation and missed the *Gestalt* (whole nature) of the phenomenon and the complex interactions and relationships that occur between the variables (Fagan et al. 2009; Furlong et al., 2002; Kania & Kramer, 2011). For example, while the definition of bullying showed some consensus amongst key bullying researchers, there were still multiple areas where there was disagreement with definitions (Olweus, 1991). For example, the UNICEF report defined bullying as a single incident occurrence, which was opposite to the more commonly accepted definition of multiple incident occurrence (UNICEF Office of Research, 2013). Thus, there might be more complex factors that were interfering with using a standard definition of bullying in schools, and a qualitative approach might be able to provide an alternative lens or a wide-angle lens to capture these barriers. A second difference between quantitative and qualitative research was the data collection instrument (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Typically, quantitative researchers used standardized and empirically validated testing protocols.

In comparison, in qualitative research, the researcher him/herself was often the data collection instrument and researched in-depth interviews and open-ended questions. This idea provided a key difference, where the meaning was created through the work of the participant and the researcher (Gordon, 1998). The format was key to opening a more comprehensive perspective for the participant because there was a possibility to not limit the participant to a set of chosen responses (Bosacki, Marini & Dane, 2006). With a complex phenomenon like bullying, this qualitative approach was useful because it allows for the exploration of the potentially complicated barriers the participants may be dealing with in their experiences. Besides, there might simply not be any evidence-based research instruments for a particular phenomenon, i.e., barriers faced in bullying intervention by school psychologists in Alberta. Qualitative research thus provided a valuable approach in achieving a deeper understanding of

the perspectives on how a phenomenon was formed through and in culture, and how the process occurred for particular individuals (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Case Study Research

Research that produced a comprehensive summary and examination of one or more cases was called case study research (Johnson & Christensen 2008). Case study research in psychology intended to recognize a specific set of challenging or remarkable relations or events that have occurred in the real world in people's lives (Mills et al., 2012). To properly understand the complexities of these events, the persons must be examined on the context of their environment (Mills et al., 2012). Case study research hoped to better understand an area of inquiry. In psychology, case study research might not just look at the individual processes and answers to challenges faced, but also looked at the processes as they exist within factions, organizations, or neighborhoods (Johnson & Christensen 2008; Mills et al., 2012). To achieve a broader comprehension of phenomenon, psychological case studies described and analyzed circumstantial influences, social constructs, and practices and how all the parts worked together to better understand the system (Johnson & Christensen 2008; Mills et al., 2012). Psychological case studies usually had a causal analysis of primary challenges and suggested solutions because of the analysis (Mills et al., 2012).

With case studies in psychology, researchers should consider the approach of the naturalist vs. the positivist (Johnson & Christensen 2008; Mills et al., 2012). The positivist aimed to create globally applicable theories through deduction and the study of literature, select theories that were appropriate, and then experiment to garner whether data support these theories (Johnson & Christensen 2008; Mills et al., 2012). In contrast, the naturalist was uncertain of the

current theories being able to appropriately capture the case under scrutiny, as human nature was unique and individualistic, and exceptional, and so all-encompassing theories were challenging to create (Mills et al., 2012). Thus, the naturalist preferred an inductive and emergent study, where theory grew from the data itself in a bottom-up approach (Johnson & Christensen 2008; Mills et al., 2012). The naturalist was looking for the qualitative elements that lied behind the objective elements, such as how individuals comprehended their own selves or their contexts (Mills et al., 2012). The naturalist was not discounting objective data but was expanding the analysis to underlying factors like sentiments, views, and understandings (Mills et al., 2012). In contrast to a nomothetic approach that aimed to work with group averages and find overarching scientific or causal laws, typical researchers with case studies used an ideographic tradition aiming to comprehend how an individual or phenomenon came to existence (Johnson & Christensen 2008; Mills et al., 2012). The ideographic approach aimed to understand the individual, because while statistics implied a model person should exist, statistics created concepts of persons that were not in existence (Johnson & Christensen 2008; Mills et al., 2012). Ultimately, this approach aimed to find meaning from the individual's experiences, rather than make globally encompassing laws about individuals (Mills et al., 2012). The nature of cases studies lent them to be both explorative and realistic by being tied closely to data through the analysis of similarities of individuals who may have appeared non-similar initially (Mills et al., 2012). Case studies might also reveal constructs that would have been passed over in larger group analyses through more in-depth understanding of a case or showed limitations in theory and provided direction to theory (Johnson & Christensen 2008; Mills et al., 2012). Overall, case studies intended to demonstrate presence, rather than frequency of a specific factor (Mills et al., 2012).

Cross Case Analysis

There were several approaches to case study research in psychology. (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Cross case analysis looked at multiple cases to see similar patterns and differences between cases, aiming to produce a conclusion that was comprehensive in breadth and depth that examined the case and the contexts the case resided within (Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Hurworth & Mathison, 2011). Cross case analysis used data triangulation such as through compound interviews for compound data sources using a single technique like the interview (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Data triangulation supported internal validity (Hurworth & Mathison, 2011). A cross-case analysis used a unit of analysis through a case, which could be defined as a bounded unit like a person. A cross-case analysis was used when the unit of analysis was a case, which was any bounded unit like a person, organization, community, or interaction (in this case, the school psychologists working with bullying) (Hurworth & Mathison, 2011; Johnson & Christensen 2008). Cross case analysis was used in both qualitative and quantitative studies, including the constant comparative method of the grounded theory approach by Glaser and Strauss (Hurworth & Mathison, 2011). Cross case analyses could help aggregate cases and make generalities about the cases (Hurworth & Mathison, 2011). While a single case study weighed closer scrutiny and elaboration of a single case, analyzing multiple cases through a cross case analysis supported greater validity, generalization, and theoretical generation (Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Mills et al., 2012; Yin, 1994).

Cross Case Analysis and Bullying Research

Considerable research has investigated the complexities associated with bullying although most of this research was quantitative (Burns et al., 2008; Lazarus, 2000; Lazarus,

2006; Rigby, 2003; Tenenbaum et al., 2011; Thornberg, 2010). Bosacki, Marini, and Dane (2006) suggested that this quantitative focus could limit participants from fully expressing their perspectives on experiencing bullying. In contrast, a qualitative approach could accurately look at interaction, meaning, and social processes (Charmaz, 2006). The qualitative approach was favorable for bullying research because it encouraged participants to express their own experiences in a format that was not restrictive, such as the allowable responses in a survey (Thornberg et al., 2013). Furthermore, the qualitative approach fostered a deeper understanding of the participants' role as social actors and the social interactions that have precipitated and perpetuated the phenomenon of interest. Conventional qualitative methods in applied psychology research included discourses analyses, grounded theory, and a range of phenomenological studies (Barker et al., 2012). Of these approaches, cross case analysis aligned well with bullying research.

Cross case analysis aligned well with bullying research because of the nature of bullying itself (Thornberg, 2013). Bullying was a social process, with multitudes of interaction and meaning making in everyday contexts of settings. In consequence, cross case analysis helped researchers understand how bullying exists in that specific mixture of local content (Patton, 2002; Thornberg, 2013). Bullying was a multi-faceted social phenomenon that needed a multi-faceted approach in theory and methodology to understand (Mishna et al., 2009; Thornberg, 2011). For example, bullying went beyond the children or youth who were bullied or were bullies (Mishna et al., 2009). Specifically, parents, teachers, school administrators, and other members of the community's attitudes, tolerance, and beliefs could precipitate and perpetuate victimization of children and youth (Mishna et al., 2009; Twemlow et al., 2003). Instead of trying to utilize the criteria of generalizing to all populaces, qualitative research in bullying

focused on interpretation (Larsson, 2009; Thornberg, 2011). Bullying research needed to go beyond looking at the deficits of bullies and victims and look at how the social psychology of day-to-day functioning in the school system through the individual school and peer cultures contribute to bullying (Thornberg, 2011).

Furthermore, bullying research had focused and been limited by the use of questionnaires and scales – despite their helpfulness as an initial step, these tools could separate the participant from the context in which he or she resided (Lazarus, 2000; Lazarus, 2006; Tenenbaum et al., 2011). For example, quantitative survey research usually used the multiple-choice format and limited the participant to one of several responses. The limitation, in turn, did not let the individual express their experiences to answer these questions in the context of their lives. Applying the qualitative analysis of interview data from the perspectives of school psychologists expanded bullying research. Conducting and analyzing personal interviews allowed participants to express their thoughts and opinions about bullying, while also maintaining a connection between the content of their ideas and the context in which their experiences took place. The in-depth nature of this qualitative analysis would be able to reveal possible complexities in the line of work that participants faced bullying (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Tenenbaum et al., 2011).

Challenges to Cross Case Analysis

There were several challenges to cross case analysis. First, as the researcher expanded the number of cases and searched for commonalities, there was a possibility of overlooking key traits if the researchers focused on only particular traits and thus reduced the amount of data gathered, and in turn the validity of the data (Mills et al., 2012). Multiple cases vs a single case study also decreased the amount of in-depth analysis that could be completed with breadth versus

depth vying for time allocation and resources (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). What was available to study versus what was needed for the study could also limit the validity of the data (Mills et al., 2012). Next, determining the amount of data that were required to support the conclusions of the study was difficult to ascertain, since knowing if all relevant cases had been covered was difficult (Mills et al., 2012). If the study extrapolated to a small population, a small sample might be sufficient, but for a larger heterogeneous population, a small sample might not be sufficient to extrapolate research findings. Hammersley (1992) suggested selecting cases that might be representative of this larger population, deciding if these cases represented that make up of the larger population, and comparing the conclusions to studies that had studied that population in the same time frame. Finally, cross case analysis found challenge with not accurately representing the population the study's conclusions hope to describe (Mills et al., 2012). Hammersley (1992) suggested considering if the conclusions of the cross-case analysis made sense, and what the repercussions of the study's conclusions were- if the conclusions had significant repercussions, the researchers needed to ensure there was more robust evidence to support those conclusions.

Methodology Used in Research Study

The qualitative cross case analysis study used an intensive interview approach to examine school psychologist experiences of bullying intervention in Alberta schools. This exploratory method was chosen to study a complicated phenomenon where no prevailing theories had emerged in previous studies (Bosacki et al., 2006; Charmaz, 2006; Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Lazarus, 2000; Lazarus, 2006; Mishna et al., 2009; Patton, 2002; Tenenbaum et al., 2011; Thornberg, 2013; Twemlow et al., 2003). This study was in contrast to the majority of bullying research that was quantitative, and where the discovery of theories was not the objective (Burns

et al., 2008; Lazarus, 2000; Lazarus, 2006; Rigby, 2003; Tenenbaum et al., 2011; Thornberg, 2010). Participants in the current study comprised 8 school psychologists who worked in public elementary, middle, and high schools in large urban areas and smaller centers. Coding through axial coding of the constant comparative analysis technique was used on school psychologist reflections to 19 questions about their perceptions on bullying behavior, bullies and victim characteristics, adaptive and maladaptive bullying intervention factors, current practice for bullying intervention, and bullying intervention reform (Scott & Medaugh, 2017). Axial coding provided a coding framework to synthesize the data into a coherent structure of categories (Scott & Medaugh, 2017). The researcher used a range of analyses, including initial coding, focused coding, memoing, in vivo coding, and constant comparison. A more comprehensive look at the data analysis and results followed in Chapter 3.

Participants

Participants in the current study included eight school psychologists from several public-school districts in Alberta, Canada. School psychologists were chosen for their unique training amongst school professionals that enable them to be well-prepared for bullying intervention (Adamson & Peacock, 2007; Aronin, 1996; Espelage et al. 2013; Morrison & Furlong, 1994; NASP, 2012). There was a range of experience in the number of years worked as a school psychologist, and direct work with bullying. Some school psychologists were currently working with bullying interventions directly. In contrast, other school psychologists were either working indirectly with bullying intervention (i.e., one school psychologist was mentoring other school psychologists). One school psychologist noted not working with bullying intervention, while another school psychologist indicated it had been a considerable time since he/she had been

working with bullying intervention. Intensive interviewing was conducted over the telephone on a one-to-one basis with the researcher and participant between March 2019 and September 2019; school psychologists worked in a range of grades, covering elementary, middle, and high school students. School psychologists were invited to participate through snowball sampling after initial contact was made with one of the school psychologists. As the researcher reviewed the results of each interview, he considered whether this population was appropriate for subsequent research (Creswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). School psychologists were sent four documents before the interview; letter of introduction to the research, informed consent form, sample interview questions, and an initial contact email (see Appendix for documents). The researcher reviewed informed consent with the participants and obtained their permission before commencing interviews.

Interview Questions

Initially, the researcher chose the interview questions (see appendix for a list of interview questions utilized in study) after considering suggestions by Charmaz (2006). The researcher studied what types of questions could be selected to help bring forth reflection by the participants. The questions needed to be broad enough to encourage exploration of the experiences of the school psychologists, but not so broad that the questions missed the research points of interests and a starting place for research (i.e., bully intervention) (Glaser, 1978; Thornberg, 2013). Ideally, open questions would encourage more comprehensive detail, and data beyond common sense data that does not expand the existing research field (Charmaz, 2006). The researcher noted that detailed questions/completed research instruments were needed by the University of Alberta's Research Ethics Office. Charmaz (2006) indicated this problem, where

the emergent nature in exploratory research emphasized flexibility to respond by participants came into conflict with ethics boards' requirement for a formalized and particular question set (Backman & Kyngäs, 1999). In contrast to a simple single opening question that could sometimes be sufficient for an exploratory interview, the researcher created a list of questions that would be open enough to be exploratory by nature, but concrete for the ethics office to be satisfied that they posed minimal harm to research participants. Furthermore, the researcher did not want a list of questions so specific that the study merely replicated past quantitative research in bullying, where questionnaires and scales might limit the scope of data collection (Bosacki et al., 2006; Lazarus, 2000; Lazarus, 2006; Tenenbaum et al., 2011).

The researcher made an initial list of questions after doing exercises following Charmaz's (2006) suggestions; after reviewing exemplar interview questions, the researcher wrote open-ended questions related to the research topic. General topics included exploration of the school psychologists' perspective and experiences with the nature of bullies, bully-victims, and bullying behavior; core factors of bullying intervention; supporting and limiting factors to bullying intervention; and considerations of what needs to change in terms of bullying intervention. After making a list of the questions, the researcher ordered the questions, so there was some overlap in topics to allow fluid movement back to topics should the researcher want to gather more information during the interview (Charmaz, 2006).

The researcher also reviewed concerns with choosing the right questions for this study, given that asking the wrong questions may result in forcing the data (Charmaz 2006). Discussions with the researcher's thesis supervisor confirmed that if the researcher knew the "right" questions to ask, there would also be the expectation that the researcher even knew what

the "right" answers should be, or at least have an idea of what the "right" answers would be. This notion would subvert the purpose of the explorative nature of inductive and exploratory research. Choosing appropriate questions also included awareness of the researcher's assumptions and perceptions in creating the interview questions. Although the researcher would always have his/her own experiences/perspectives that will limit objectivity, it was essential to be aware of these values/assumptions (Charmaz 2006; Rennie et al., 1988). The researcher considered his understandings of bullying intervention as a graduate student and clinician, and where his experiences/beliefs may affect question creation. There were two specific examples in this case regarding definition and training. First, the researcher was aware of Olweus' (1991) bullying definitions and the adoption of Olweus' bullying definition by several prominent organizations, including the Centers for Disease Control ("What is bullying", n.d.).

Furthermore, the researcher was also aware that Alberta school professionals had endorsed problems with bullying definitions (Claussen & Chan, 2015). Second, the researcher was aware of previous arguments formulated in Chapter 1, indicating the training of school psychologists should make them ideal candidates for bullying intervention. Being aware of these two factors made the researcher more conscious to ensure these two topics were not embedded in the questions he wrote and evaluated. The researcher did not want to: a) constrain participant responses to particular issues; and b) come off as evaluative or judgemental, which may also restrict participant responses. For example, the author noted that for the study, it was essential to understand the participant's definitions of bullying but avoided labeling definitions as a specific problem in the interview questions. Writing with the assumption that school psychologists had proper training could result in the question "what part of your bullying intervention training do you find useful for intervention." This question could limit responses in two manners. First, the

research participant could feel evaluated because they may actually not have bullying intervention training and be cautious when responding to questions. Second, the question could be directive and point research participants to constrain their responses to the wording. There may be other factors they consider useful for intervention but were not part of their formal bullying intervention training, and therefore they do not elaborate on those factors.

Intensive Interviewing/Conducting the Interview

Interviews were chosen as the data collection format because they were a general standard and accepted arrangement for qualitative research (Wimpenny & Gass, 2000). There were different ways to complete an exploratory interview, including whether to include an interview guide or not (Charmaz, 2006). For some experienced researchers, an interview guide limited informal conversational tones, and they might only use a few opening questions (Charmaz, 2006). Newer researchers, however, might benefit from using an interview guide (Backman & Kyngäs, 1999). As a novice researcher, the researcher was concerned about conducting the interview appropriately with the dynamic nature of exploratory studies (Holden, 2007). The researcher used the interview guide to create structure through the written out open-ended questions that would, in turn, support better focus on the research participants in the interview, and to avoid asking loaded or limiting questions (Charmaz 2006). For example, being attentive in the interview allowed the researcher to notice the emotional effect of one of the participants. One school psychologist started laughing as a response to an emotionally neutral question. The follow up with the participant led to more enhanced data collection through a personal story regarding the stress in dealing with the severity of bullying. The researcher noted

the incongruity between the question and emotional response from the participant as a possible dimorphous expression of unexpected emotion to a strong stimulus (Aragon et al., 2015).

Being Present in Interview.

Continuing with being attentive and active in the interview process using an interview guide, the researcher used a tape recorder to record the conversations. This enabled the researcher to focus more on the research participants during the interview. However, the researcher also took memos during the interviews, to accentuate important points and/or ideas. The researcher analyzed the interviews once they were transcribed. The analysis included whether there were points that needed further elaboration, directions for subsequent questions, and whether follow up questions needed to be reframed, changed or were not working (i.e., were limiting data) (Charmaz, 2006). Being attentive and active in the interview allowed the researcher to focus on specific and compelling points for elaboration, such as when one research participant mentioned positivity as a significant point of bullying intervention in his/her school (Gorden, 1987). Further exploration revealed constraints of budget, and staff resources, on top of a negative focus in the school on bullying behaviors. Another interesting point for elaboration during an interview was when a research participant asked what the researcher meant by "what is a bully?"; the participant differentiated between what she has heard a bully defined as being, and what she sees as a bully in her personal experience. This idea led to further reinforcement of the code that each school has a unique microcosm that must be addressed, such as how bullying was conceptualized by individuals in that school.

Sensitive Questions

Interviewing participants regarding questions that might be considered intrusive by them requires special consideration, for example discussing painful stories (Charmaz, 2006). For instance, one participant noted his/her own experiences with workplace bullying and having to leave his/her place of work about the bullying he/she was personally dealing with as a school psychologist and needing his/her supports. Several principles mattered in cases like this one; participant's comfort level over rode obtaining data, being mindful of when to probe, trying to empathize with the participant's perspective and validating the significance of the event to the participant, and ending the interview on a positive note (Charmaz, 2006). In this case, the researcher focused on validating the significance of the event for the participant as she/he relayed the events. Upon evaluating the participant's apparent state of emotional regulation, the researcher proceeded with the rest of the interview. Noting the significance of the event for the participant and what she was feeling emotional seemed to help with the participant in processing her emotions and elaborating further on how the event's significance played a role in bullying intervention. In this case, the participant was discussing the importance of support for the school psychologists given the severity of bullying events students relay to school psychologists, but in tangent, the seriousness of workplace bullying the research participant experienced her/himself. This latter point signified a critical piece of culture – that bullying continues past grade school, and that staff themselves may be bullies.

Constructivist vs. Objectivist.

The focus on the interview and specific questions asked were also dependent on whether the researcher took a constructivist or objectivist approach (Charmaz 2006). The researcher

noted that this research topic was more constructivist than objectivist by nature, acknowledged the researcher's role in the study, and did not assume an external world and neutral observer of the researcher (Charmaz, 2006). The purpose of this study was to explore research participants' understanding of bullying intervention based off their own personal experiences and beliefs (Charmaz, 2006). Sub-questions to this study's purpose included participants' beliefs regarding terms like bullying, and how they were defined; situations like significant events when intervening with bullying; assumptions such as what was necessary for bullying intervention; events such as executing bullying intervention; and unspoken rules such as what their guidelines were with bullying intervention (Charmaz, 2006). The researcher wanted to know how the school psychologists constructed their ideas of bullying intervention through their own experiences, but at the same time, the researcher was monitoring his own experiences as he gathered and analyzed the data, to minimize researcher bias.

Conducting the Interviews by the Data Analyst.

Exploratory methods worked best when the researcher conducted both the data collection and the data analysis so that the researcher could explore the subtleties of meaning and process that third parties might miss (Charmaz,2006). Furthermore, conducting both data collection and data analysis provided an opportunity for the researcher to know if he or she was gathering rich data that did not undermine or demean research participants (Charmaz, 2006). For example, the researcher was able to evaluate in the interview when one research participant indicated his/her emotional distress regarding workplace bullying and whether that was resultant of the interview process being demeaning or undermining. Further expansion of the subtlety with emotional dysregulation in the research participant provided more precious data with the culture category

and workplace bullying in a health facility. The researcher was also able to evaluate if the research questions themselves needed to be changed, as a demeaning or undermining tone breached ethics in research and confined and shaped the resultant data.

Language of the Research Participants.

Focusing on the research participant's language helped connect their experiences with the research questions by exploring the research participant's meanings vs. what the researcher assumed was the research participant's meanings (Charmaz, 2006). For example, as respondents noted challenges with working with school administrators, the researcher recalled his own experiences working with school administrators in a variety of roles through personal experience. The researcher ensured that he followed up by asking respondents their meanings of terms. Otherwise, the specific properties would remain implicit and assumed and likely reflected the researcher's own beliefs of school administrators. In this case, the researcher explored the participant's meanings of a good working relationship with a school administrator in terms of bullying intervention. The researcher was also conscious about the language he chose to use in the interview questions and tried to limit wording that might only work with specific populations and be limited, or not understood by the target research sample (Charmaz, 2006). The few words that might be more specific to the target population, including "bully," "victim," and "bullying" were asked explicitly as questions. It was crucial to determine the research participant's understandings of those terms, as these were core terms for this research study, and assuming their perceptions were the same as the researcher could be problematic.

Initial Coding- Line by Line Coding

Guiding Interests. The researcher noted using guiding interests from his empirical interests because other exploratory methodologists often began their studies as points of departure from interview questions (as previously discussed), and to analyze the data (Blumer, 1969; Charmaz, 2006). The researcher used these guiding interests/sensitizing topics and disciplinary perspectives for starting analysis points rather than as limiting and ending analysis (Charmaz, 2006). The researcher was aware of these starting points by documenting them in a word file, and in exploratory study fashion, noted that as the investigation progressed, these starting points could be discarded unlike in quantitative research (Charmaz, 2006). There were several personal guiding interest points that the researcher was conscious about during the data gathering and analysis stages. These included the following points: 1) definition of bullying by Olweus that seemed to be favorably adapted by many institutions; 2) challenges working with school administrators; 3) consequence focused interventions; 4) parental involvement with interventions; 5) system-wide interventions; 6) limitations to school psychologists due to role definitions, responsibilities, and workloads; and 7) challenges for teachers with workload responsibilities. The researcher noted that while these factors were potential guiding interests, he did not want to constrain the research participants to these topics. Instead, he took these points as the researcher's assumptions of what might be essential core codes for the participants and monitored their influence while coding.

Mindfulness of Assumptions- Exploratory methodologists brought their underlying assumptions and disciplinary ideas into their research, as many professional researchers and graduate students already had extensive experience in their disciplines before conducting

research (Charmaz, 2006). This underlying experience through past intimacy with a research topic would influence the research focus and resulting constructs (Charmaz, 2006). These experiences could ignore and attend different categories of data. The researcher noted that his background with school and clinical child psychology, particularly with early intervention and systems-oriented interventions, had led him to be mindful of topics that could affect data collection and data analysis. These include parenting, working with school administrators, professional collaboration, and definitions/diagnostics of bullying. The researcher noted that while he tried to comprehend the experiences of bullying intervention through the participants, he should not have his assumptions unwittingly recreated, but rather, be conscious of his assumptions. These assumptions were not a sole objective truth, but rather were just one viewpoint about bullying while emerging perspectives from data analysis were from the data itself (Charmaz, 2006). Awareness of those aspects helped the researcher be deliberate in limiting his influence with data analysis.

False Starts. The researcher also had to contend with the possibility the qualitative data would not fit with the initial research questions. Alasrutari (1995) noted an initial failure to choose the right pathway did not mean the research was ruined- instead, the inability to select the right start and research ideas that must be discarded served to sharpen the right research idea better. The researcher noted that he initially wondered whether the ideas emerging from the data were false starts. First, some participants noted a lack of formal training in bullying. Upon hearing this, the researcher wondered if school psychologists would be able to provide valuable information-rich enough to answer the questions of what was not working about bullying intervention. Upon reflection and further analysis, the researcher concluded that the apparent lack of training reflected the situation itself, that bullying was not a priority with training or

intervention and generally not of that culture. The researcher noted worries of a possible second false start: there was no distinct program of intervention that was emerging from the initial interviews. Initially, the author believed that this might be problematic because it was not providing a lead on guidance for program selection. However, further reflection indicated that the complexity in factors, particularly with the inability for programs to be flexible with the demands of each school microcosm, reflected a problem with the programs themselves. Thus, this issue was not a false start, after all.

Choosing Line by Line Coding. There were three primary types of coding: word by word coding; line by line coding; and coding incident to incident. The researcher chose line by line coding because this approach pairs well with comprehensive interview formatted data dealing with empirical problems such as bullying intervention challenges (Charmaz, 2006). Line by line coding could aid the identification of implicit and explicit ideas and direct future research (Baas et al., 2013; Charmaz, 2006). In contrast, word by word coding appeared less fitting as it seems to be a better fit for data such as documents and Internet data (Charmaz, 2006). Incident to incident coding seemed to fit better with observational data where the data were gathered, interpreted, and presented by the researcher ideographically (Charmaz, 2006).

Line by Line Coding Guidelines.With the initial phase of coding, the researcher focused on line by line coding. The following principles suggested by Charmaz (2006) were considered when making decisions during initial coding.

First, the initial coding should stick closely to the data (Charmaz, 2006). Although the researcher was aware of different codes/pre-existing categories as the interviews progressed, he made conscious efforts to see the actions in the segments of data, vs. applying what was already

created or existing before (either in the researcher's mind before commencing interviews or in previous interviews). Furthermore, the researcher delayed analysis of two specific quantitative studies looking at school psychologists' perspectives on bullying to remain open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by the readings of the data and, in turn, be grounded in the data itself (Charmaz, 2006).

Second, the researcher tried to keep codes tied to actions vs. topics to limit leaps in concepts before analyses were complete (Charmaz, 2006). It was found in the initial coding, that while a majority of codes were tied to actions, the researcher found codes that described topics. A second and third analysis of these codes was done to see if they could be further altered, but it was concluded that the codes in their current form captured a particular context. These codes were flagged to be revisited during focused coding in case they might alter the outcomes of focused coding.

Third, the researcher considered Charmaz' (2006) warning that novice researchers/students often thought they needed a guiding framework to code to make qualitative research legitimate. Having a structured framework might limit ideas from emerging as the data was coded because there was a guiding lens already in place, directing data analysis. Instead, the openness of initial coding without such a framework lent well to sparking thoughts and new ideas (Charmaz, 2006). The researcher noted initial anxiety about the lack of such a structure when analyzing the data but was aware this was a natural reaction as a novice researcher and did not actively seek a structure to direct data analysis.

Fourth, codes were provisional and subject to change as analyses continue, and the codes were compared to other emerging categories (Charmaz, 2006). In consequence, the researcher

kept the codes provisional and was open to other analytic possibilities and created codes that best fit the data as he continued to code/interview new interviewees. The data were then gathered to explore and fill those codes to understand the meaning better. Consequently, the codes changed as analysis advanced (Charmaz, 2006). For example, the researcher initially kept role and responsibility under the school administrator code. As school psychologists indicated their role and responsibility was not just that assigned by the principal, it became apparent that role and responsibility were emerging as a category on its own in terms of criticality. The researcher then separated the two categories as distinctly strong categories on their own.

Fifth, analysis should keep codes short, simple, and precise (Charmaz, 2006). The researcher was deliberate with ensuring the codes were brief and understandable, to keep them tied to the data carefully. In contrast, broader codes might reflect a multitude of ideas and leave more room for interpretation. Charmaz (2006) noted not to focus on general terms as codes, because they might be limited in describing meaning or action. However, the researcher was uncertain what might be considered general or not general and, in turn, a non-essential category (Backman & Kyngäs, 1999; Holton, 2007). Nevertheless, he coded the items and waited to see if these codes would still be relevant during focused coding. The researcher also found that some codes, after a first, second, and third round of analysis, appeared best left in their current state, and further breakdown would lose meaning. These codes were flagged for consideration if they would alter focused coding due to being less straightforward than others.

Sixth, analysis should write codes quickly and spontaneously with what came to mind (Charmaz, 2006). Coding without excessive deliberation provided an opportunity for fresh ideas and thought provocation (Charmaz, 2006). Although some codes seemed to fit naturally with the

data, some codes seemed challenging to develop; the researcher noted that codes were provisional and could be changed later should a better fit emerge (Charmaz, 2006). Therefore, the researcher left these codes as they were initially coded, for later evaluation during focused coding, vs. deliberate on these codes, timewise. For example, one code noted the participant being uncertain if the information she knew regarding bullying was the most up to date. This idea did not fit any category initially but later emerged as an issue with time and prioritization, where bullying research was not at the forefront for school psychologists overall in their roles and responsibilities.

Initial Codes. Following the above guidelines for coding (Charmaz, 2006), the researcher did an initial coding through each interview. An excel spreadsheet was created with columns for the interview code (defining which school psychologist interview was being coded) and theme code in each tab. Seven tabs were created that captured the essence of the interview questions; 1) definition of bullying; 2) what was a bully; 3) what was a victim; 4) what was helpful for bullying intervention; 5) what was unhelpful for bullying intervention; 6) typical intervention for bullying, and 7) uncertain. The researcher created the 7th category to capture codes that did not seem to fit in the other 6 columns.. Each entry was left as an uncolored cell in the Excel sheet, as the researcher intended to color code the tabs during the second phase of coding during Focused Coding. Two separate read-throughs the initial codes were done to see if further changes could be made to these codes. This included length of the codes, or whether the codes depicted action, based on Charmaz's (2006) suggestions. The researcher found that changes could be made only to a few of the initial codes. Some of the codes, while not action-oriented or shorter by nature, seemed to the researcher best left as is, as they seemed to capture the right context.

Memos

The researcher used memos to support analysis in this cross-case analysis study. Memos encompassed ideas that manifested in the researcher's mind during the data collection and data analysis stages (Holden, 2007; Rennie et al., 1988). The researcher wrote down immediately what came to his mind as he thought about the data, in hopes that these memos would help with analysis (Charmaz, 2006). Spontaneity took precedence over deliberation with memos, as the researcher did not want to lose any ephemeral ideas. While there were several methods described concerning memo writing, there was no single correct way in which to write memos (Birks & Mills, 2010; Charmaz, 2006). The researcher wrote memos at the end of the interviews, after completing initial coding, reviewing initial codes twice over, and then once more after focused coding. These memos were then used to compare categories as they emerged, to bolster further analysis (Birks & Mills, 2010; Holden, 2007; Rennie et al., 1988). The researcher found that the memos captured several further themes upon reflection, including the prevalence of connection/disconnection between multiple factors like students and adults, or adults and other adults.

In Vivo Codes

The researcher created a collection of in vivo codes, particular terms that represent speech and meaning, and can aid with data analysis (Charmaz, 2006). These codes might be directly from the interview or describe the researcher's definition of what was occurring in the interview (Charmaz, 2006). Although in vivo codes might be captivating and reasonable on their own, they were not meant to stand on their own as core theory but instead integrated into the emerging theory (Charmaz, 2006). The researcher looked at three types of in vivo codes; a)

general terms that were condensed but significant meanings that everyone knows; b) participants innovative phrases that captured meanings and experience; c) insider shorthand terms specific to a particular group that reflected their perspective (Charmaz, 2006). The researcher looked for implicit meanings in participants' usage of in vivo codes and how they constructed and acted on these meanings (Charmaz, 2006). In turn, the researcher considered how these factors affect analytic categories. The researcher reviewed each interview transcript and made a list of in vivo codes discovered. He then compared these in vivo codes to the results of the focused coding to see if further analytic categories would emerge, or if the current analytic categories would be altered with these in vivo codes. For example, one of the participants noted he/she was "not being very therapeutic" when he/she stressed difficulties with stopping children from continuing to engage with the bully. This in vivo code reinforced the theme of the complexity in bullying intervention, and conventional methods such as therapy were struggling to meet the needs of the bullying intervention. This in vivo code also stressed the importance of approaching bullying cases at the child's level to understand what need was not being met to continue engaging with the bully. Merely coming down from a top-down/adult approach and telling them to stop was not stopping the behavior.

Focused Coding

Constant Comparative Methods -Constantly comparing data furthered analysis by analyzing data within and between interviews, between incidents of same orders, and sequential events for similarities and differences (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss 1967). This focused coding led to analyzing the relationships between the different categories (Birks & Mills, 2010; Holden, 2007; Rennie, 1984; Rennie et al., 1988). This coding helped develop richer categories

by bringing the data that was broken up in initial coding, back together but with meaningful relationships tying the data points together (Birks & Mills, 2010). The overarching categories should subsume underlying categories (Glaser & Holton, 2004; Holton, 2007). Through constant comparative methods, the researcher built the overlying core categories tying the initial codes together. There may have been times when the code did not match the construct depicted in the data. Charmaz (2006) noted to keep these ideas rather than dismiss them. It may have been possible that the researcher's ideas were describing an implicit construct that had either not manifested in the data, needed further revisiting, or might not be even explicit for the participants (Charmaz, 2006). For example, the researcher noted that in one case, the participant indicated that "*bullies are entitled*". The researcher noted he thought there was an accusatory or frustrated tone here, similar to a tone when one of the participants indicated he/she was not "being very therapeutic" but wanted just to ask "why" the child kept going back to the bully. In retrospect, there appeared to be less of an accusatory tone. Still, indeed, a frustrated tone prevails, which emerged as the researcher continuously compared further data during focused coding with these points. For the previous example, the frustration was represented by the lack of early intervention by adults (either school staff or parents). This problem then led the children to continue their bullying behaviors because they were not taught the action was not appropriate and felt they were entitled to behave in such a manner. This frustration matched other studies noting challenges with the parent, teacher, school administrators, and other members of the community's attitudes (Mishna et al., 2009; Twemlow et al., 2003).

Gaps in Data

Initial coding could help the researcher find gap areas in the data (Charmaz, 2006). The researcher identified the following data gaps that likely will be important for further research- what helped administration work more effectively with school psychologists; and making bullying a priority in school culture and community culture. Although there were indeed gaps in connecting evidence-based programs with each school's specific microcosm, the data suggested that this was a secondary problem to school administration, role responsibility, and workload, and making bullying a priority in schools. The researcher directly explored these concepts with the research participants but felt that it would be likely to lend well to a larger scale research project. Given the number of factors that contributed to the overall complexity of bullying intervention, the researcher also wondered whether bullying intervention should focus on key factors for better resource allocation (a factor in itself). The researcher also wondered if reducing bullying intervention efforts to key factors would be a two-fold problem. First, replicating intervention programs' problems of simplifying bullying so narrowly could mean they did not address each school's individual needs. Secondly, a more significant and unaddressed problem was how all these factors were working with each other.

Concluding Data Collection/Saturation

The Researcher concluded data collection at the end of the 8th interview, a number within the range of 5 to 10 protocols where data has typically become saturated (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Rennie et al., 1988). The researcher considered whether at that point, the data gathered was rich and sufficient for study. Charmaz (2006) suggested several ideas regarding this decision point. The data provided depth necessary to create clear categories and general themes

throughout the analysis from interviews, in vivo codes, memos, initial coding, and focused coding. There was enough background data to understand the full range of the contexts of the study- in this case; there were clear answers to the research question with sufficient information to fit the role of the exploratory research design. Furthermore, the data showed the background processes to bullying intervention and what lied beneath the surface, and with enough depth to develop analytic categories through comparisons between data within and between interviews, specific events, and subsequent events. Charmaz (2006) noted saturation occurred when gathering new data no longer sparked new theoretical insights, nor revealed unique properties of core theoretical categories- the researcher found no changes to theory insights or changes to theory categories after the fifth interview. While there were variations in smaller details, the core categories were overall unchanged, and new categories, relationships, and dimensions did not emerge (Holden, 2007). Indeed, there remained topics to explore, but the researcher noted these topics were suitable for the exploratory nature vs. a poorly defined category. For example, the researcher observed the critical category of the working relationship between the school psychologist and the school administration team, which played a significant role in bullying intervention. While the researcher explored with the school psychologists what could help with making these relationships more effective for bullying intervention work, future research would likely benefit from looking at that professional relationship as a whole and not just with bullying intervention. Glaser (1998) and Stern (1994) argued that large samples and minimal data were not a problem, as exploratory methods aimed to enlighten the field with category properties and relationships between categories, which was the result of this study.

Finally, the point of saturation should indicate some central category that encompassed all categories (Glaser & Holton, 2004; Holton, 2007). In this case, the central category showed

no consistent programs or interventions were noted by school psychologists as a key intervention for bullying. Instead, there was a unique and broad range of factors involved with bullying intervention in each school's microcosm that might be simply too complicated to oversimplify one single approach to bullying intervention. Indeed, this central category speaked to the need to explore beyond the bully and victim deficits into the individual school and peer cultures that contributed to bullying in the day-to-day functioning of the school system (Thornberg, 2011).

Conclusions

Qualitative methods, through cross case analysis specifically, could provide an alternative approach to bullying research that could explore new areas through a less restrictive approach that might increase a stronger probability of data that captured research participants' own understandings and definitions in bullying (Canty et al., 2014). While there were barriers and limitations to the cross-case analysis method, the plan held several key strengths that made the method a valuable alternative manner for understanding bullying. The complex nature of bullying intervention through the perspectives of school psychologists emerged through this research process and explored new areas where traditional research methods have not covered.

Chapter 3 Results

Introduction

A cross case analysis study investigating eight school psychologists' experiences with bullying intervention in schools in Alberta was completed (Scott & Medaugh, 2017). Axial coding of the constant comparative method was used for data analysis. Analysis of their responses to 19 questions in an intensive interview format revealed a multitude of factors that were associated with bullies both in school and home. In contrast, fewer factors were identified as related to being a victim. School psychologists also described a varied process for bullying interventions from their experiences, which generally indicated psychologists followed no particular structure. School psychologists also indicated two approaches helpful for bullying intervention, including resource and intervention specific factors and buy-in/relationship factors. School psychologists indicated a wide range of problems with bullying intervention citing characteristics of school administration, culture, students, parents, school needs, resources, roles, and the nature of bullying as crucial areas. The following thesis outlined school psychologist's experiences with the nature of bullying including what was bullying; what was a bully; what was a victim; what was typically involved in the bullying intervention process; what was helpful for bullying intervention; and what was not helpful for the bullying intervention process. Directions for future research and implications were discussed.

Study Results

Overall, Focused Coding led to several conclusions. A more detailed breakdown of these conclusions and subsequent discussion followed these results.

What was bullying? School psychologists (the participants in this study) described bullying as variable intentional, complicated, a type of violence, and having variations or minimal discussions on the number of incidents and differential in power. A discussion how participants defined and depicted bullying and its manifestations followed afterwards.

What was a bully? School psychologists described bullies as having a multitude of contributing factors and that there was no typical bully. Factors included age (affecting intentionality of behavior), parental upbringing, condoning of behaviors/lack of intervention earlier by adults (which may lead to bullies being unaware of behavior), gender, self-esteem/confidence, mental health (depression), emotional state (anger), natural aggressiveness, domestic abuse, home instability (changes in caregivers), lost power in their lives, impulsivity/reactivity, social skills, being hurt themselves, and communication. Overall, there appeared to be multiple factors that were intrinsic and extrinsic to the bully.

What was a victim? School psychologists described bullying victims to include both a wide range (where anybody could be a victim of bullying) but also specific characteristics. These characteristics included victims being limited in some capacity such as mental health, physical health, assertiveness, being different from mainstream/fringe, or being bullies themselves.

What was helpful for bullying intervention? School psychologists described four major areas that were helpful for bullying intervention; buy-in/relationships between multiple factors (like students and school professionals, or school psychologists and school administrators); resource or intervention specific factors (like early intervention or resources that were flexible to each school's unique needs); overall culture (such as prioritizing bullying for

intervention or consistency with bullying intervention); and teachers (who could help report information to school psychologists).

What was not helpful for bullying intervention? School psychologists noted several core areas including administration/top-down; priorities/culture; child focus/characteristics; parents/family; school needs/school system/environment; resources; roles; and nature of bullying.

What were the typical interventions for bullying? School psychologists described their standard bully interventions, including the following key factors- collaboration; context; direct and indirect service; intervention focus; issues with school staff; parents; principal/top-down/administration; resources; student focus/characteristics; support agencies/external agencies; and teachers.

Overarching Themes. In general, the researcher noted that school psychologists did not indicate any particular resource as useful/critical. They emphasized the unique and complicated needs of each school/situation they were working with that required flexibility by the intervention to be implemented effectively.

What was Bullying?

School psychologists described bullying in several primary categories of bullying; cyberbullying, intentional harm, involving harm, involving power, and frequency of events.

Bullying was Online

"Well, its [bullying]really evolved. I guess its evolved in the way that it's happened."

"When I first started thinking about it [bullying], I was thinking kinda more along the line of schoolyard or classroom bullying, but I think it's greater than that now."

Initially, the researcher noted that school psychologists appeared to be observing the nature of bullying was changing through the severity, frequency, and manifestation of episodes. However, a closer look at the data suggested that the primary change with traditional bullying (between students face-to-face) was the relatively low frequency in some schools. One school psychologist noted he/she "could count on one hand since [she/he has] been here" the number of traditional bullying incidents he/she was aware of in the school. This low frequency in traditional bullying was not strongly reported across school psychologists interviewed, but traditional bullying had decreased with boys and remained stable with girls from 2002 to 2014 in Canada (Cosma et al., 2019). In the United States, between 1998 and 2017, traditional bullying has declined significantly (Kennedy, 2019). Worldwide, broad country variations existed with traditional bullying and cyberbullying rates (Cosma et al., 2019).

" It's [bullying] kind of moved from in-person, like face to face to online."

School psychologists reported more significant changes with cyberbullying emerging as a dominant form of bullying overall in the last decade. School psychologists' observations of cyberbullying prevalence was increasing over time match reports of overall cyberbullying incidence rates globally, particularly in South Africa, Turkey, and the United States (Newall, 2018). Notably, Canada showed a smaller increase relative to these countries in cyberbullying rates, as reported by parents from 2011 to 2018. At the same time, there was an increase from 18% to 20% of cyberbullying, according to parents surveyed (Newall, 2018). Other studies have shown worldwide, cyberbullying was systematically lower in prevalence rates than traditional

bullying (Cosma et al., 2019). School psychologists noted the change in platform from face-to-face to online interactions between students also elicited less empathy and compassion between students and altered how the students interact with each other. School psychologists' observations matched current research, that cyberbullying was significantly predicted by low empathy (Brewer & Kerslake, 2015; Zych, 2018). Cyberbullies had lower affective empathy and, particularly, cognitive empathy, in addition to having lower social competence and challenges understanding social cues (Zych, 2018). However, cyber victims showed no significant relationships with empathy (Zych, 2018).

"It can get a lot more vicious online when you take out that face to face interface where the kids aren't doing it to each other"

"Its easier to say really terrible things about others when you're not saying it right to their face"

School psychologists noted how the lack of face-to-face interaction seems to limit how students perceive another student's emotions from a comment posted online. Furthermore, school psychologists note online posted comments being viewable by multiple students vs. a single student hearing a comment in passing in the hallway also affected the severity and nature of bullying. School psychologists noted cyberbullying showed increases in perceived severity, and frequency. One school psychologist noted how an entire class of students unfriended a single student in the class and the resulting harm for that child. Teachers and parents have reported that cyberbullying was worse for victims than traditional bullying, although students have reported traditional bullying was worse for victims than cyberbullying (Campbell et al., 2019; Corby et al., 2016; Tokunaga, 2010). However, the platform of bullying may not be the problem, but rather the publicity of the bullying event and the anonymity of the bully (Sticca & Perren, 2013).

Specifically, students perceived the severity of the bullying as being worse when the bullying occurs in public space, and where the students were unable to identify the bully (Sticca & Perren, 2013). Echoing similar sentiments from school psychologists, public cyberbullying resulted in a more extensive amount of damage because more individuals witnessed the individual being victimized, and the individual was also less able to control how information about the bullying was spread amongst those observers (Sticca & Perren, 2013). Anonymous cyberbullying meant anybody could have been the bully, which was more likely to be conducive to cyberbullying versus traditional bullying (Sticca & Perren, 2013). School Psychologists reported that the anonymity of the bully seemed to be less of a problem. Although historically incidents of cyberbullying had anonymous handles (unidentifiable online names), current cyberbullying generally has identifiable handles (like full student names or profile pictures). School psychologists noted this non-anonymity did not seem to deter the students from committing cyberbullying.

"I find it very challenging to target when its cyber rather than face to face"

"Well, an interesting twist that I hadn't seen before, Facebook and Instagram and things, was where parents would join in and you would see parents getting involved in the conflict online as well. So that's certainly been a difference."

Finally, school psychologists noted the move to online bullying had changed the nature of bullying intervention. School psychologists reported online bullying has new challenges to contend with, in comparison to traditional bullying. For example, one school psychologist noted parents were now being involved in the bullying behavior. These observations corresponded with prominent cyberbullying cases showing parental involvement in cyberbullying behavior,

including the case of Megan Meier (Broll & Huey, 2015; Zetter, 2008). In the case of Megan Meier, the teen aged student committed suicide after alleged online bullying through the social networking platform MySpace; where bullying was committed by both another student and the student's mother (Zetter, 2008). Complicating this case was the absence of criminal laws targeting the online bullying that was alleged to have occurred by the parent (Zetter, 2008). Currently, some organizations have stated cyberbullying was a crime including the Edmonton Police Service, the Calgary Police Service (Calgary Police Services, n.d., para. 2; Edmonton Police Services, n.d., para. 5). Several school psychologists noted parents were bringing in pages of online transcripts for the school psychologist to review. Another school psychologist noted that online bullying brought in students from other schools. In these cases, the school psychologist was limited to just supporting the victim, as the school psychologist had no authority in another school or jurisdiction.

Bullying was Intentional

> *"Any act that is carried out with the intent to harm someone either physically, emotionally, psychologically".*
>
> *"It's like a malicious intention."*

School psychologists noted bullying was intentional. The nature of the intentionality was complicated, though. Several school psychologists noted age needed to be considered with intentionality. The school psychologists stressed that younger students might not exhibit intentionality due to lack of maturity, but a subsequent lack of intervention by adults in what appears as bullying behavior often led to children normalizing their behavior as well as being unaware that their behavior was not acceptable as they were more "*egocentric and discover it*

works" even if "*they're not really quite sure what they're doing, it works*." The latter point was challenging because the bullying behavior often resulted in the children obtaining what was desired but in an unacceptable format. As the child aged, "by the time the time youths hit those teen years, if there's been no intervention, then it becomes a little more ingrained and definitely more intentional." One school psychologist noted that he/she questions whether this behavior would be called bullying, and bullying was not a term he/she would use with this younger demographic due to an inability for the children to be as purposeful with their behaviors. While there might be aggression, the aggression was not purposefully targeted towards any one individual. However, some victims of aggression may not be able to defend themselves because of limitations like a disability. In this case, the school psychologist noted that the aggressive behavior seemed more reactionary than purposeful, and the child was lashing out to everyone, and not necessarily just to one particular target.

> *"Sometimes I don't think it's intentional, but I think it's the way they react when a little change happens…I think they're more like a victim bully at an early age."*

School psychologists also differentiated between intentional and reactive based bullying behavior and age, with one school psychologist noting the harmful behavior appeared to be more of a reaction to stressors in the home, rather than an intentional behavior. For example, "*little change*" in the bully's home might be a disruption in the structure and stability like an abusive parent, which lead to the child being reactive in school. In describing what a bully was in their schools, some school psychologists noted that bullies were in "*need*" which was fitting with the reactivity problems here; these students needed a more stable home. School psychologists' perspectives of bullies reacting to home instability through problems like abusive parenting was

reflective of general sentiments in the literature (Nocentini et al., 2019). School psychologists' perceptions of age and intentionality reflected brain development and the development of intentionality through the prefrontal cortex's decision-making functions and the protracted development of the prefrontal cortex in adolescence (Caballero et al., 2016; Hiser & Koenigs, 2018).

"There's often a challenge in sort[ing] out if it really is bullying or not in that there are some kids that are just quite aggressive and competitive "

School psychologists noted the difficulty in assessing intentionality and in turn, bullying. For example, there was an overlap in behavior between competitive children and aggressive children in sports. Although other criteria may be met between the two scenarios of somebody being harmed during a soccer game, assessing the intentionality of the behavior and distinguishing a competitive child from an aggressive child was difficult. Generally, school psychologists stated that the challenge of assessing intentionality was reflected amongst other professionals (Englander, 2017).

Overall implications of this category were that school psychologists generally reported bullying as intentionally harmful behavior, but intentionality had several factors to consider including age differences and establishing intentionality. School psychologists' observations of bullying being intentional aligned with other definitions of bullying, including recent statements from the American Federation of Teachers (Englander, 2017; Jabeen et al., 2020; Midgett, 2016).

Bullying Involved Harm

School psychologists noted that bullying was committing harm with variations of severity, which aligned with general definitions of bullying being an act of harm (Jabeen et al., 2020; Midgett, 2016). Although there was not a formal scale of severity to assess harm, researchers described physical harm from relatively milder forms such as "*running into them with somebody's shoulder just to irritate them*", to having more severe forms like "*boys [who] got together and beat another boy pretty well senseless and he is still not well to this day and scarred*". The researcher noted there seemed to be no clear differentiation between these levels of severity. They would all fall under the umbrella term of bullying, in comparison to other forms of aggression.

"It is totally inappropriate name-calling- I mean name calling is always inappropriate but it goes overboard with sexy terms that are more sexual when describing girls"

School psychologists also described harm committed verbally, such as students calling names at each other, face to face, or online. One school psychologist noted "*kids were being over the top with sexy terms*", particularly when describing words being used to bully girls.

"I don't see that as bullying. I see that as more aggression"

The researcher noted variability and diffuse nature in defining the severity of harm in the school psychologists' descriptions. Several psychologists noted this issue that they do not want to call being mean bullying, emphasizing "*you have to be really careful what you call bullying*". One school psychologist noted their school emphasized differentiation between mean vs. bullying, and they each have different consequences. The school psychologist said that students

do call being "*mean*" as a type of bullying, but he/she was trying to make the students differentiate the two terms.

"It really is all over the place, but I find that what seems to be one of the more painful ones is the ostracization"

"It could be name-calling or teasing. It could even be something like when kids shove another kid in the locker room and then they're posting it or sharing it online"

"It can be a variety of different things"

"It kind of encompasses a lot of different areas as far as I'm concerned"

Overall, school psychologists reported bullying was committing a type of harm but noted challenges differentiating the severity of harm, particularly with being mean vs. bullying. School psychologists noted the nature of the harm in bullying was variable such as ostracization, name-calling, teasing, aggressively tagging somebody or taking a ball away in a game, shoving people, and sharing the incident with other people. The variable nature of the nature of bullying reflected school psychologists' observations of the unique microcosm that makes each school unique. The researcher noted there was no clear delineation of differentiating the harm in bullying from other forms of aggression. A lack of clear definitions was likely to affect valid and effective reporting and, in turn, intervention (Cantone et al., 2015). Critically, the definition adopted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Education mentioned harm or distress might happen to the victim but did not specifically say the victim will be harmed or put under distress (Espelage, 2018; Gladden, 2014). Canadian police officers have indicated a need for differentiating cyberbullying from threats and harassment, and express worries about what they perceive as frivolous and trivial matters that divert their resources from more serious crimes

such as cyberbullying that involves criminal harassment or threats (Broll & Huey, 2015). School psychologists noted police officers have difficulty intervening with bullying because it was difficult to ascertain the level of harm in these incidents and if the police can be involved. Overall, school psychologists reported a range of harm that bullying entails, but there did not appear to be definite lines of delineation between bullying and other types of harm.

Bullying Involved Power

"I would call it ongoing emotional or physical power imbalance"

Generally, most participants did not explicitly state the term power as a component of bullying. However, power was mentioned indirectly, such as an individual holding something over another individual like blackmail. Another scenario was victims of bullying having a deficit in some manner that led to the bully having an advantage over the victims.

"I guess its I'd see it as one person using their power over another. Whether that's physical or social or emotional kind of power"

Directly, one school psychologist specifically noted the power differential between a bully and a victim, where the power was not evenly distributed between the parties of the bullying incident. Another school psychologist noted bullying was one person using his/her power over another person. Power was described as emotional or physical advantages one individual holds over another individual.

"Holding things over top of them in the sense of, you know, "I know this about you, so you'd better do what I say…"

Indirectly, school psychologists said the victims held less power than the bullies because they had a deficit in some capacity relative to the bully, including mental or physical health ailments. In such cases, the power appeared to be the ability of one student being able to blackmail another student – the bully knew something that could be used against the victim, and so the bully could coerce the victim to follow the bully's lead.

"I guess kind of conceptualize it as them trying to gain some power by doing these things to other kids."

"Yeah, I found that a lot of the kids who tended to pick on other kids often have their own insecurities or often have lost some kind of power in some areas of their life and so whether there was stuff going on at home and so it felt like bullying was kind of their way of gaining some control or getting some of their power back"

Interestingly, school psychologists also noted bullies may be bullying because they lacked power. In some cases, this was perceived power taken away from them, through an abusive family, or a chaotic family structure. The victim of such circumstances then committed bullying actions as if to gain power in some capacity. Indeed, the literature showed the abusive family structure was a risk factor for bullying (Nocentini et al., 2019).

In general, power was mentioned explicitly in some cases with school psychologists as part of bullying. Still, just one school psychologist specifically pointed out the difference in power between the bully and the victim. Other school psychologists noted power differences indirectly, with the bully either having some form of advantage over the victim in terms of power or attempting to seek that power. School psychologists' perceptions of bullying encompassing a power difference aligned with general perceptions of bully definitions (Espelage, 2018; Gladden,

2014; Jabeen et al., 2020; Midgett, 2016). A power differential between the bully and the victim was an important differentiator between bullying and normal peer conflict (Espelage, 2018).

Bullying was a Number of Incidents

School psychologists reported bullying was generally repetitive incidents, such as *"targeting an individual over and over again."* There was no consensus on the number of incidents required to define an incident as bullying. In some cases, school psychologists noted that bullying could be a singular incident.

> *"I think a lot of the times I tend to think about bullying as repetitive but as I was saying I guess it doesn't always have to be. I could say even a one-time instance could be bullying but I tend to feel like for the most part it tends to be ongoing. So not necessarily a number".*

In this case, the school psychologist noted that bullying may be a single incident, but typically the bullying was repetitive. However, there was no particular number of incidents that are typical of bullying.

> *"Like a repeated, ok hold on, let me back up…a repeated could be verbal, could be physical act that is unwanted towards another person and it's not just something that is a one-time thing."*

> *"I'd say it would probably have a repetitive component. So anytime a student is repeatedly or maybe not necessarily repeatedly but like picking on another student"*

Other school psychologists noted bullying was not a singular incident. A repeated number of incidents or a likelihood of a repeated incident was in line with some of the more

prominent definitions of bullying (Gladden, 2014). However, when noting a singular incident, general definitions of bullying pointed out although a singular event, it was highly likely the event will occur again (Espelage, 2018; Gladden, 2014). Importantly, differentiating bullying from normal peer conflict involved a repetitive element (Espelage, 2018).

What was a Bully?

Intrinsic Factors

> *"Yeah, well my experience is that when a student is labeled as a bullier there is generally a whole bunch of things going on throughout his life."*

Past literature portrayed and debated bullies as simplified individuals with a basic core set of characteristics- for example, bullies were previously thought as individuals who did not have social skills or who lacked empathy completely (Crick & Dodge, 1999; Van Noorden et al., 2015). Current literature described bullies as individuals with several social-ecological factors that influenced their makeup (Espelage, 2018). This complexity was reflected by school psychologists who reported bullies having a multitude of intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics.

> *"Sometimes they perceive themselves to be confident but when you start talking to them in counseling, they are not that confident you know they have poor self-esteem"*

Intrinsic characteristics reported by school psychologists included problems with mental health like depression, emotional regulation like anger, self-esteem and self-confidence, antisocial tendencies like impulsivity and less social skills, gender, and age. For example, gender differences were suggested in girls and some boys to be "*very dramatic and it doesn't take much to set them off*". Gender could affect the nature of bullying- females displayed higher levels of

affective empathy and cognitive empathy and would intervene more likely with bullying as a bystander than males (Del Rey et al., 2016; Haddock & Jimerson, 2017; MacCauley & Boulton, 2017). Males were more likely to have moral disengagement than females (Haddock & Jimerson, 2017). Overall, gender affected empathy and moral disengagement, and both factors played a role in bullying (Del Rey et al., 2016; Haddock & Jimerson, 2017; MacCauley & Boulton, 2017). There was some variation in the description of the intrinsic characteristics of bullies by school psychologists. Some school psychologists described bullies as being very confident, while other school psychologists noted that bullies were not confident. Studies of intrinsic characteristics of bullies showed bullies did struggle with a higher level of depression and pessimism compared to peers not involved in bullying (Meland et al., 2010). Reflecting on the variation observed by school psychologists, the relationship appeared to be dose-dependent- bullies involved with a higher degree of bullying had similar levels of depression and pessimism (Meland et al., 2010). Still, anxiety, somatic concerns, body concerns, and lack of self-confidence fell to levels where the bullies were indistinguishable from peers who did not bully (Meland et al., 2010). Further dose-dependent relationships might exist with bullies who were increasingly involved with bullying reporting improved friendship quality and quantity compared to individuals not involved in bullying (Meland et al., 2010).

"They've been hurt, and they want to hurt back."

"The bullies are very angry usually they are angry "

"I think its all over the place with anger because you try as a school psychologist you help the victim and the bully there are lots of things going on with their families whether it is divorce or

separation or alcoholism or addiction in the family it could be um, or they are going through their own mental health challenges as well"

School psychologists described bullies as being angry. In some cases, the anger was a result of an extrinsic factor like family instability. Indeed, literature showed bullies had a heightened level of anger relative to other children (Camodeca, & Goossens, 2005). Age was also linked with aggressiveness, whereas the children aged, they received less support in school and a correlated increase in aggression. One school psychologist noted there was no common source of the anger. This broad range of contributing intrinsic factors that also had interactive relationships emphasized the complicated nature of bullies.

Extrinsic Factors

School psychologists reported extrinsic characteristics of bullies, particularly with parenting problems like abusive parents, being victims of bullying themselves, condoning behaviors/lack of early intervention leading to entitlement, domestic abuse, and home instability. School psychologists also noted miscommunication problems between peers.

"Either parents were too lenient, or parents were too rigid, and the child is frustrated, the teenager is frustrated, and lashing out a lot."

Problematic parents were reported to either be too strict or too lenient with the limit setting, leading to reactivity in the child through frustration and emotional dysregulation in school. One school psychologist noted a parent stating the child in their meeting was being disrespectful to the parent, but the school psychologist thought otherwise. In this case, the school psychologist disagreed that the child was being rude and thought the parent was problematic and

not the child. School psychologists' perspectives on parental problems correlating with bullies reflected current literature (Nocentini et al., 2019).

"That was one of the things to describe the definition of bullying sometimes they don't recognize or admit they are a bully. "

"Not they don't recognize it or their behavior; if their parents are bullies so it is learned behavior and they think this is normal."

Problematic parents were also reported to have issues with condoning bullying behavior. Either parents were modeling the bullying behavior themselves, or they were not intervening when the child was exhibiting bullying behavior. School psychologists noted that the child was then normalizing these bullying behaviors and, in many cases, was not aware that their bullying behavior was inappropriate. Normalization of bullying behavior by adults was reflected in other studies as being problematic and leaves children unaccountable (Baruch-Dominguez et al., 2016; Clarke, Kitzinger & Potter, 2004)

"They may have witnessed domestic abuse, or they were part of the domestic abuse so it could be a learned behavior from home, and they become more aggressive in school."

Several school psychologists noted domestic abuse occurring with bullies, which may lead to the bullies reacting with emotional and behavior dysregulation in school, or with modeling these abusive behaviors in school. These observations reflected current bullying research linking domestic abuse and bullying behavior (Nocentini et al., 2019).

"I think a lot of it is miscommunication and so one person will say something, the other one is offended, and then from there it just escalates "

School psychologists noted miscommunication between peers, which lead to reactive behaviors and an escalation in the conflict. Students have reported miscommunication as a potential cause for bullying, where one student perceived teasing as playful, while the other student saw the teasing as bullying (Oliver et al., 1994).

Overall, school psychologists reported extrinsic factors of bullies that focused on parenting problems. These parenting problems suggested that it was essential to factor in the home life of the bullies with bullying intervention. School psychologists also observed intrinsic factors associated with bullies including self-esteem and self-confidence, mental health, emotional dysregulation, impulsivity, gender, and age.

What was a Victim?

School psychologists described two general characteristics of victims of bullying; victims could be anybody and had no particular features, and victims did have a specific feature – the victims tended to be limited in some capacity.

"You know what, it's really all over the place and I think that's because of how many different places I've worked and the difference in the demographics that I've served"

"Hmm…no I've been actually quite surprised to see even kids who appear to be quite popular being targets. Like, sometimes, you know you kinda associate these targets with those who are quieter or isolating and I actually haven't seen that at [retracted]. No, it can be anyone…is a target…and you know I've met some of the quieter kids and they're not being bullied at all."

School psychologists noted some students rotated each week in being victims, or not receiving attention from the bully, and the bully had nothing personal against the victims, emphasizing that anybody could be a victim. One school psychologist tried to get the victim to understand that the bullying problem was not personal, as this seemed to alleviate some of the victim's suffering. Another school psychologist noted that even popular students could become targets, specifically to emphasize that anybody could become a victim of the bully, even students who were not typically associated with being victims. Importantly, even children who seemed confident and not helpless can be victims of bullying (Bjereld et al., 2019; Sokol et al., 2016). Generally, the literature suggested that victims of bullying had distinct characteristics relative to their peers who were not bullied, in contrast with the school psychologists' reports (Al Ali et al., 2017; Guy, Lee & Wolke, 2017; Schoeler et al., 2019).

"The victim often is less aggressive/more gentle; less assertive; the kids come up to the psychologist and tell her; the assertive kids tend not to get bullied; there is a limit in power of some sort like a disability in the victim; they are different with a limitation"

"Sometimes you can anticipate who's going to end up being a victim just because there's not gonna be a high response cost for bullying them."

Although school psychologists noted there were instances where anybody can be a victim, victims were also limited in some capacity. Limitations included mental health, physical health, learning disabilities, assertiveness, being different from mainstream children, or being bullies themselves. School psychologists described victims as lacking functionality in some capacity that was different from their peers in the classroom, such as having a physical disability or being unable to assert themselves against the bully. One school psychologist noted that the

victim might be a bully themselves and being victimized had left them with a sense of powerlessness. Being able to bully other children provided these victims with a sense of power. School psychologists' perspectives of victims of bullying being limited in some capacity reflect the literature. Typically, victims of bullying had one or more of the following: depression; ADHD; risk-taking qualities; high BMI; lower intelligence; low self-esteem; talk or sound different than others; shyness; lower perceived popularity; and lowered social preference with how well-liked or accepted the victim was amongst peers (Al Ali et al., 2017; Guy, Lee & Wolke, 2017; Schoeler et al., 2019).

"The cases I work with are very complex – I don't know, is it the bullying causing the anxiety and depression or the other way around they have anxiety or depression? Or other learning challenges leads them to be more vulnerable to be the victim?"

School psychologists observed difficulty determining the precipitating factor into being a victim of bullying. For example, was there mental health deficits like anxiety or depression that led to the student becoming a victim of bullying or was the mental health deficit a result of them being a victim of bullying. In the former case, the mental health deficit was a risk factor for being a victim of bullying. In contrast, the latter case suggested the mental health deficit was a consequence of being a victim of bullying. These challenges of determining causality reflected the literature, where the relationships of characteristics of peers involved in bullying and effects of bullying were bi-directional and reinforcing of each other (Reijntjes et al., 2013; Sentse et al., 2015).

Overall, school psychologists identified two victim characteristics: 1) either all children could be victims, or 2) the children who were limited in some traits like assertiveness were more

prone to be victims. Awareness of this variation of what a victim could look like was essential- children noted they were not perceived as victims of bullying by adults because they did not fit the pattern of a "typical' victim (Bjereld et al., 2019). Children reported that teachers do not believe that the children were victims of bullying or were harmed, as the children did not show visible signs of distress (Bjereld et al., 2019).

Conclusion

"I think the whole piece of bullying, you know one group putting down another group or…it's very slippery because I think when you scratch the surface on it, it's not so simple"

In conclusion, upon reviewing school psychologists' experiences with what was bullying, what was a bully, and what was a victim, there was a wide range of factors that make simplifying the phenomenon difficult. Likely, this wide range of factors lead to the variability in what was typically involved with bullying intervention. For example, bullying was more firmly defined as a power imbalance with intentional harm; however, there was less agreement on the number of incidents and the severity of the harm. The diffuse nature of the severity of harm in bullying reflected a global challenge with distinguishing bullying as a distinct construct from other forms of aggressive behavior (Evans, Fraser, & Cotter, 2014). School psychologists' reports on what defined bullying were generally in line with more prominent efforts to standardize definitions, including the definition completed by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Education, and bullying experts and practitioners (Espelage, 2018; Gladden, 2014). In comparison with this definition and the school psychologists' definition, there was some variation with the number of incidents, and no mention of sibling or dating partners amongst school psychologists' definitions. The variability of definitional limits with school

psychologists, and general studies on bullying where definitions and measurement tools were not distinct, standardized and widely accepted, contributed to difficulty interpreting and applying the data effectively for bullying intervention (Byrne et al., 2016; Espelage, 2018; Volk et al., 2017). Despite these concerns, there remained no distinct and widely accepted definition of bullying, and the school psychologists' reported experiences reflect the current state of bullying science (Cantone et al., 2015; Espelage, 2018). The definition of bullying remained controversial and complex (Cantone et al., 2015).

What was Typically Involved with Bullying Intervention?

School psychologists described what typical bullying intervention was like in their experiences. Although school psychologists did not follow one single intervention, there were general categories of collaboration, context consideration, direct/indirect referrals systems, intervention focus, resources, and roles. Within each category, there were variations between school psychologists, such as how much they collaborate with parents.

Bullying Intervention Involved Relationships

School psychologists reported collaborating with a range of people, including the bully, victim of the bully, teachers, emotional behavioral therapist, emotional behavioral therapist assistant, and school administrators, parents, and outside agencies, including police, children's services, social work, and aboriginal support groups. School psychologists' collaboration focused on therapy support, workload management, discovering other ways to intervene, information sharing, and providing more consistency across parties. School psychologists' observations matched those of school children's views of how adults respond to bullying reports, where typical response adults would have been to have meetings with the child, the child's

parents, teacher, principal, school counselor, and the bully and the bully's parents (Bjereld et al., 2019).

"All the time these issues are actually brought to the principal's attention, so depending on what's going on they will have a conversation with the principal, and the assistant principal will have a conversation with the students involved"

Many school psychologists reported bullying cases involved with the principal (or school administration staff) in some capacity. Typically, the principal was associated with a disciplinary role. However, some school psychologists reported cases might be delegated from the principal to the school psychologists in what the school psychologist saw as an extension of the disciplinary role. School psychologists' observations reflected similar perspectives of principals valuing post bullying interventions, including adverse consequences for bullies, severe conversations with bullies to stop the behavior, and communicating with the bullies' parents (Dake et al., 2004).

"You get the kids who are in conflict to sit at the table and to have a discussion about what took place and, you know, sometimes it appears like there are tears and there are "I'm sorrys" and stuff like this"

"We think "Ok it's fixed" and the assistant principal might say, "Yup they've worked it out,"

School psychologists reported the work done with principals was often conflict resolution, where the students involved in the bullying incident were placed together with school staff to resolve the conflict. Principals did value meetings with the victim, bully, and parents to

talk about the bullying situation and solutions (Dake et al., 2004). This approach had mixed reactions amongst school psychologists as to how effective the method was with bullying intervention. Some school psychologists reported high efficacy having the two students work their issues out in a meeting. In contrast, other school psychologists declared that students would later come back to them and state that the problem continued, and they did not wish to engage in further meetings with the principal and another student with conflict resolution. School psychologists who had difficulties with this approach with their principal reported the method provided a quick response with visible action, and that it was for appeasement that action was taken rather than resolving the bullying situation by other means. In this specific case, the school psychologist outlined the "*I'm sorrys*" the students state in the meeting as part of that response to bullying. Although there was limited evidence regarding the efficacy of having students apologize, the practice was common in many cultures (Schelien et al., 2010).

"I guess we've also recommended to some people that they go to the police to talk about what's happening although the police hate that because again it's kind of a murky situation to get involved in.- whether anybody's broken any laws that, you know, if you haven't made threats and you haven't said anything liable, like can they be involved…and then trying to track back where things originate, I think, is difficult for them too. And then now, with things like Snapchat that don't necessarily keep a record, it's also hard to have evidence that the police would want."

School psychologists reported working with police officers on bullying intervention in some instances. Sometimes this collaboration would be an option for parents to request support from the police, but police involvement was not mandatory. School psychologists reported police officers not liking these requests unless it was clear that a law was broken. This idea was often

difficult to establish before summoning the police. In some cases, the difficulty compounded because the bullying occurred on a platform like Snapchat where the evidence disappeared. Although cyberbullying online could leave a trail that was more traceable than traditional bullying, platform evolution has enabled that trail to be deleted, further complicating an assessment of the situation (Thaxter, 2010). Police officers reported similar concerns to those reported by school psychologists. Police officers said challenges of whether existing laws address cyberbullying (Thaxter, 2010). Further problems voiced by police officers included whether parents needed to be involved if Miranda warnings were required, and the student was under 17 years old, the use of school administration as an agent of law during the investigation, and the need to have a working knowledge of social networking sites (Thaxter, 2010).

Previously, cyberbullying was not a crime in Canada and the United States, and Canadian police officers expressed the view that making cyberbullying a crime would stress the judicial system (Broll & Huey, 2015). The Edmonton Police Service, and Calgary Police Service have stated cyberbullying was a crime, where some forms of online bullying were considered criminal acts (Calgary Police Services, n.d., para. 2; Edmonton Police Services, n.d., para. 5). The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, which polices the City of Red Deer has stated some forms of bullying can be considered illegal (Royal Canadian Mounted Police, n.d., para. 10). A search of the Lethbridge Police Service's websites currently did not show any statements regarding cyberbullying and the law (Lethbridge Police Services, n.d.). Now, Public Safety Canada of the Government of Canada had stated cyber bullying legislation covered specific activities that were an offense under Canada's Criminal Code that deal with bullying (Public Safety Canada, n.d.). This statement covered cyberbullying, including criminal harassment, uttering threats, intimidation, defamatory libel, and identity fraud (Public Safety Canada, n.d.). Despite reports

that cyberbullying was illegal, follow up statements on police websites indicated that only particular situations might be unlawful, which reflected the necessity for clear evidence to prove wrongdoing—an overall challenge separating the nuances between typical peer conflict and intimidation in bullying.

"We also have a [redacted for privacy)[in school]officer, I think that stands for, it's like a school youth advisor for our junior high kiddos, and so he's a retired police officer, and so he helps us in some of those situations where the kids who were doing the bullying need some education around why it's not okay, how to act differently, what are the legal ramifications if that behavior continues, and helps with contacting parents and such like that."

"But we would discuss that as well with our [redacted for privacy] [in school] officer because he might be able to go to the officer at that school and talk to the student who's the offender."

Other school psychologists emphasized that the in-school police officers were more easily accessible compared to external police services. They reported these officers could be involved with bullying intervention, even if the problem didn't have a law broken. The police officer's involvement, in this case, focused on psychoeducation, and a liaison to the home. Collaborating with the in-school police officer also provided an avenue to work with the police officer in another school, should the offending student be in a different school. Otherwise, reaching out to the offending student would be a challenging endeavor. Generally, these experiences reflected what Canadian street patrol officers and school resource officers noted as their preferred cyberbullying response- to be more preventative with cyberbullying by education and raising awareness of digital communication dangers for youth (Broll & Huey, 2015).

Collaboration with school staff was generally reported as part of bullying intervention- Canadian police officers noted working with the involved student's parents via meetings with the principal should the cyberbullying be criminal (Broll & Huey, 2015). Canadian police officers noted they provided regular consultation and contact with school administration and were an essential resource overall for school administrators (Broll & Huey, 2015).

In some cases, Canadian police officers reported their consultations with school administration only occurred when cyberbullying had become serious (Broll & Huey, 2015). Generally, the use of police officers in an educational role seemed to be more supportive of intervention than as a deterrent. Police-imposed punishment was less of an obstacle for students who bullied versus parental and school-imposed punishment (Patchin & Hinduja, 2018).

"If kids came directly to me to tell me about bullying, they didn't want the bully to be approached or reprimanded. They kinda just wanted to work on their own stuff, I guess. That was kind of a piece of it, but I think that was because they were kind of fearful of that person and kind of a social power that they had in their school and with all the other kids and they didn't want to be the one to tattle out of fear"

Like the problem of being unable to reach out to the bully if the bully was in another school, school psychologists noted that at times they can only work with the victim. In this case, the victims were reported not to want to involve the bully with intervention out of fear of retaliation and approached the school psychologist first, rather than another school staff member. This avoidance of other school staff was often explicitly tied to the principal, as the principal seemed to be consequence driven towards the bully. However, students were also wary of the school psychologist or teacher being involved with the bully. Stigma was prevalent with students

wanting to access mental health support in schools, and such a shame limited effort to provide better mental health care for students (Gronholm et al., 2018). Analogous to school psychologists' reporting, students limited themselves from mental health intervention and divulging information not only out of fear of consequences, but also because of harmful labeling by peers, self-shame, aversion to prejudiced responses, and concerns of broken confidentiality (Gronholm et al., 2018).

"It depends on what the incident was. So, if it was something that had, like they had to inform the parents or if for some reason legal authorities or whatever, then it would go back to the principal and he could manage that. But if it was kind of just a more minor kind of thing, then I would deal with it and then they'd just go back to class and they wouldn't go back to the principal."

School psychologists reported that the principal was not always involved in the bullying intervention- in some cases, it depended on the incident itself. This escalation to principal may occur if legal authorities or parents had to be involved, suggesting severe events included principal collaboration, while milder episodes stayed with the school psychologist.

"Yeah, 90% of the time I would think it would be because they're [teachers]the most frontline right? They're out on the playground every day, they're in the classroom every day, they're in the hallways all the time – if I was in a school as counselor, I would be in the hallways, but I wouldn't necessarily be in the classroom observing things. I would see things in the hallway, but I wouldn't necessarily see them out in the community, like out on the playground or anything like that."

School psychologists reported collaboration with teachers was typically for referrals for bullying intervention. For example, the teacher would formally make a referral to their principal or learning coach, and then the school psychologist would be contacted for support. In some cases, school psychologists reported teachers contacting the school psychologists directly for assistance. Teachers were a primary referral source for some school psychologists, likely due to the teacher's proximity with students. School psychologists did not have as much exposure to students as do teachers, because of their role. The school psychologist's catchment area was just larger by number, and the limited time school psychologists had with any one student would be less than a teacher. This factor applies to school psychologists who were assigned to a single school or those assigned to multiple schools.

"I think the teachers also play a valuable role in intervention in terms of, I mean, we have something like 870 students in our school, so I don't know everyone and so there are some students who feel more comfortable going to talk to their teachers about their experiences. So, I wouldn't want to leave them out because I feel like the teachers would also have that connection and that kind of support that they do offer for the kids when they need it."

School psychologists noted that collaboration with teachers provided alternative ways to reach students. For example, teachers might have had a connection with the students that facilitates comfort in confiding information or seeking support with a teacher. The school psychologists in such circumstances noted there were simply too many students to know with the same degree of intimacy as the teachers, even if they were only assigned to one school. The teachers' closer proximity and more frequent contact with students meant the teachers had a higher incidence of both reinforcing strategies and developing a close relationship with students.

This close relationship meant students may feel more comfortable confiding to such teachers. Students favored interventions that do not include non-teaching school staff (Crothers & Kolbert, 2008).

"But from our end all we can really do is block them but with the kids being at the age that they are they don't want to let go of the drama so even though we will tell them please to block that person generally they don't listen."

School psychologists noted that their work typically entails interacting with victims in bullying intervention. Direct work with the victim was usually helping them to cope with the harm from bullying or skills development, such as assertiveness skills to use against the bully. In this particular cyberbullying case, the school psychologist noted that there was limited work he/she could do with the bully due to the bully being out of that school, so instead, the school psychologist tried to help the student block the bully. A supportive element of children's mental health were conversations with adults regarding negative emotions (Armstrong, Hill, and Secker, 2000). Children noted that discussing bullying was helpful if the children felt supported and, in turn, felt they could go back to that supportive adult again if there were continued bullying (Bjereld et al., 2019).

"Well for me because it's my nature anyway is to have a conversation with the bullier, then the bullied. You know, just work through that. And the bullies, they already know that what they've done is hurtful but it's just letting them experience a bit of that talk about it, you know. Try and put yourselves in the other person's shoes and then the bullied, well again it's a manner of processing those events as well."

School psychologists reported a need for collaborative work not just with the victims, as many school psychologists had previously done when starting their careers. Several school psychologists noted that they typically work with victims. Still, in the early stages of their career, they only worked in a supportive role with the victims while the bullies received disciplinary action. School psychologists noted they now have shifted their focus to a collaborative and therapeutic relationship with the bully, developing skills like empathy for the victim, or supporting the reportedly complex nature of the bullies. This therapeutic relationship seemed vital, given the complex intrinsic and extrinsic factors school psychologists reported, which characterized bullies and likely contributed to their bullying behavior. This view was in line with current literature on the multiple socio-ecological factors involved in bullies (Espelage, 2018). In other words, bullies required help as well as victims.

"Well, definitely some of the kids who are our worst offenders they're generally the kids whose parents have less than exemplary parenting skills. Very almost like an insensitive way to parent."

"I think domestic violence is one of them because I think that a lot of the kids that I see come out who are really, are using bullying but may be more pushy who really want their own way or who do tend to get upset if they don't get their own way who are probably considered to be engaging in bullying behavior. I think a lot of those kids are coming from situations of domestic violence…I'm not saying again that it's necessary but that's I think one of them."

School psychologists noted varying degrees of working with parents and bullying intervention, ranging from no involvement unless necessary for safety, to regular engagement for intervention support. School psychologists indicated that some of the more severe cases of

bullying intervention were correlated with parents who had maladaptive parenting skills. These cases ranged in severity from poor parenting skills to child abuse. Domestic violence, single-parent families, deprived families, and child maltreatment were associated with children involved in bullying or bullying victimization in a traditional and cyberbullying format. Involving community and families was beneficial for bullying intervention (Bevilacqua et al., 2017; Bowes et al., 2009).

"If there's any kind of assault well parents are called and the child is suspended but that does not always work because, you know, we had two boys who were kind of fighting, it was all mostly fighting, but they challenged themselves anyway. They were both upset about something and they…and both kids actually were suspended, and one kid was just sent home to a mother who is so emotionally dysregulated that it was the worst thing we could have done for the kid. You know, that was not a good solution for this particular kid. So, we came to an agreement that he is not to be sent from the frying pan into the fire again."

Concerning consequences and suspensions, school psychologists noted problems with suspensions where the parent was a maladaptive factor and likely did not contribute to the betterment of the student. In this case, the school psychologist noted that parents were notified if the bullying intervention involved an assault. The researcher noted the problem with defining bullying- at what point does bullying become assault? In this case, the school psychologist also reported a similar concern from other school psychologists in that parents of bullies often had their mental health struggles.

"If they are defensive they usually do not do any intervention- their kid is their kid and too bad; and where's the proof and they ask where's the roof- prove to me that my kid is a bully what

have they done and what and you know they want proof right um but if there are the few parents the minority of the parents will say um you know that will either get their own separate psychologist to help their kid or they will talk to them at home um you know there are a few that will do that"

School psychologists reported difficulties with the bully's parents being unsupportive in the bullying intervention process, denying that their child had committed bullying behavior. School psychologists noted that a few parents of bullies might have engaged the therapy process and had a separate psychologist or work with their child at home. Many school psychologists iterated the first approach was more characteristic of the bully's parents, though, to deny that their child was a bully. Overall, school psychologists reported that the parents of the bullies were typically uninvolved unless the school reaches out to them. Similar observations were made with parents of severe bullies and cyberbullies and showed significantly lower parental competence, including engagement in their children's school responsibilities, and parental assistance (Garaigordobil & Machimbarrena, 2017).

"Sometimes it's directly, I directly become involved. Often it's parents that are complaining that there's bullying and want to get solution."

School psychologists noted when parents did get involved with the bullying intervention, parents were typically advocating for their child who was a victim of the bullying. This idea was reflected by most school psychologists who report parents were usually involved only when their child was the victim.

"And if I was doing individual counseling for that well then certainly, I'd be involving the parents in that because you want those strategies that you're working with the child and you'd be wanting the parents to be assisting the child in those strategies anyway."

"I typically try to just, like my client will just be the student. When I get consent to work with the kids that I work with, I have that conversation with parents that, you know, the kid is my client and I can share information with you, but I'm going to empower the kid to share information with their parent. Of course, that's barring if there are safety concerns or anything like that, that gets kyboshed right? But obviously I just try to keep the relationship between the kid and myself."

School psychologists reported different approaches to involving parents in counseling the student. Some school psychologists noted they included the parents regularly to reinforce strategies they were exploring in session, while other school psychologists noted that they only involved the parent if there was a safety concern. Generally, the counseling sessions were between the school psychologist and child alone. Including the parents when the seriousness of the situation had increased was reflected by other professionals. For example, Canadian police officers reported their involvement with parents only when a crime has been committed (Broll & Huey, 2015).

"She has a pretty big role with kind of bridging the gap between the school and the family. She works typically more with some of our younger students who need supports and their families in getting them connected but she does have a very…this particular one that we're working with has a very good counseling background as well."

School psychologists also reported they may not do much of the work with the parents. Instead, that may be done through the social worker who had a primary role in connecting the school and home, mainly if there were social issues at home like food, shelter, or financial constraints. School psychologists who collaborated with social workers noted the social workers were an essential bridge across the gap between school and home. Furthering the use of other professionals for support, school psychologists also noted collaborating with agencies that could provide support such as children's services, or first nations groups as needed.

Overall, collaborations were a large part of bullying intervention by school psychologists, often involving the bully, victim of the bully, principal, and at times the teachers, police officers, social workers, parents, and outside agencies when needed. School psychologists often reported working with the victims initially, but now focusing on incorporating the bully with intervention work. Varying degrees of help were reported with the collaborations, particularly with principals.

Bullying Intervention Required Understanding of the Context Where Bullying Occurred

"It's case by case but my approach to it is generally the same with all of them. I want to get some understanding of what's going on"

School psychologists reported incorporating a wide range of contextual information when doing bullying intervention. Their overall process reflected that there was no single universal solution to bullying intervention with the school psychologists. Factors that could affect their intervention process direction included age, peer relationships, severity and length of incidents, the bully, and whether the bullying was online or face-to-face. These factors would change the response of the school psychologist. For instance, a student who was bullying as a reaction to family instability at home was different than a student who was bullying because his/her peer

group consists of other bullies who were aggravating the bullying behavior. The wide range of overall factors school psychologists reported incorporating in bullying intervention reflected the diverse factors involved in the socio-ecological framework of bullying (Espelage, 2018).

> *"I found especially with junior high school, kids are so influenced by their peers and what their peers think, and I found that I always had to pay attention to all of the dynamics between different kids, especially in a smaller junior high school. It felt like I had to be really in tune to all of the context of what was happening in that classroom overall between kids."*

School psychologists reported utilizing the full dynamics between students, which helped with junior high bullying intervention. Factors included the relationships between the students (not just between those involved in the bullying situation directly but within the school context like classroom peers) and peer groups. One school psychologist emphasized that peer relationships need to be examined. The school psychologist looked at *"who's involved – cause it's never just two people. It just seems to be kids are sort of ganging up on one".* Knowing the relationships between students helped provide context to the nature of the bullying behavior. For instance, if there was a bullying incident, understanding the social dynamics of the classroom would help the school psychologist know specific details like fault better. School psychologists have noted that bullies can have better communication and assertiveness skills and can talk their way out of fault. Thus, understanding the peer dynamics in a classroom likely could provide support in deciding responsibility. Generally, the literature reflected the importance of utilizing peer dynamics with bullying intervention. Compared to family support, peer support could provide more protective elements from bully victimization for teenagers, likely due to friends being a more critical factor than family for teenagers (Mann et al., 2015; Rothon et al., 2011;

Sebald, 1992). There were limits to these protective elements. For instance, support from family and friends alone was not sufficient to protect teenagers from mental health challenges due to bully victimization (Rothon et al., 2011). Generally, bullying intervention would benefit from not just counseling the bully victim, but also other students such as supporters of the bully, or outsiders because peers play an influential role moderating bullying behavior in schools (Salmivalli, 1999).

"Well peers…usually a lot of those kids are in peer groups that are…so it becomes sort of a status that you can bully others. I think some of it is a status symbol or…I'm just kind of thinking it through here…yeah…I could probably think of other reasons later but at the moment I'd say that lots of times I think you'll see the bullies all kind of growing up together, right? Like, they tend to hang out a little bit more together than others and it's often about, well it's kind of gang-related right? So oftentimes it becomes sort of that acceptance within your group and that's what we do, anyway."

One school psychologist observed peers who were like-minded with bullying seemed to perpetuate and condone bullying behavior. In this case, it would likely be essential to intervene not just with the individual who was involved in the bullying incident, but the peer group as well. Focusing only on students directly involved in bullying ignored the bullying peer group that might have continued to aggravate the bullying behavior. For instance, higher levels of peer relationships elevated the likelihood of group bullying behavior (Mann et al., 2015).

"So, I think age would be a factor for sure, sort of not necessarily specifically like one age together but perhaps one of the groupings I would consider would be the similar age groupings so that you're looking at similar developmental strategies. And I think that that would include

the ability to reason and stuff like that too. So, you know, the factors I might be considering with the younger kid would be perhaps more cognitive/behavioral versus I might be using more of a motivational interview strategy with the older kids – just usually throwing out two different kind of things to sort of figure out…I think the older ones would be able to think it through a little bit and reason it through differently."

School psychologists reported the student's age affected the student's ability to reason, and the approach of bullying intervention. In this case, the school psychologist said a different system of psychotherapy depending on the maturity of the child. One school psychologist noted he/she might be doing more play therapy with the younger students, but more cognitive behavioral therapy with older students. Another school psychologist reported mature students could better cope with bullying, such as being able to recognize the intentionality of the bully's behavior as non-personal because they were "*not so centered in [their] thinking*". However, another school psychologist noted older students were "*a little bit more fragile emotionally*", emphasizing an overall complexity with age. Older students compared to younger students have more advanced levels of empathy and might have had a better ability to discern harm with bullying and cyberbullying because they could not comprehend and value the emotional states of other students (Antoniadou & Kokkinos, 2018; Del Rey et al., 2016). Younger students might not have had sufficient levels of affective empathy, and care should be placed on targeting this type of empathy and this age group of students for bullying intervention (Antonidaou & Kokkinos, 2018; Joliffe & Farrington, 2011).

"Yeah. I feel like often when you start to get up in grades 11 and 12 that, I don't know, I'm not sure if it's just wanting to be independent and deal with things on their own or not. Although the

whole thing with online bullying I guess has maybe got me a little more involved in higher ages than I would have in the past."

"I think about when things are difficult you do need to involve an adult but sometimes at junior high, they're really reluctant to involve an adult and so if they're adamantly telling me they're not gonna tell a teacher something's happening, then I would probably back off on that and maybe come back to it again later."

School psychologists noted the older students were less likely to seek outside support for bullying intervention since older students seem to want to be more independent. In this case, the school psychologist noted that junior high students can be adamant about not involving a teacher or other adults. Cyberbullying seemed to have increased this school psychologist's involvement with older students, though. Older students perpetrated higher levels of cyberbullying than younger students (Del Rey et al., 2016). Older students might have struggled with cyberbullying due to a lack of nonverbal communication cues limiting emotional comprehension and their levels of cognitive empathy (Cková et al., 2013; Van Heerebeek, 2010).

"I think it's that I'm not brought in as much. I think, you know, in younger grades kids are much more closely supervised and I think there are adults there to intervene with kind of specific behaviors they want to see."

School psychologists reported age affects the referrals for bullying intervention with younger students as well. There was less requested support because the younger students have a higher degree of supervision, and the adults supervising have specific intervention goals. A review of Alberta schools showed an increasing number of students per class, with kindergarten to Grade 3 averaging 20.4 students and High School averaging 25 students. However, there were

more percentages of classes exceeding size targets in kindergarten to Grade 3 compared to high school classes (Southwick & Fletcher, 2018). Should there be no increase in teacher to student ratio, the increasing class sizes would suggest by supervision alone, that there would be less support as student age through grades.

> *"If it seems like the bully is doing it more for power, I find that more difficult because their incentive to participate and to engage is lower and sometimes in that case I'm spending more time with the victim talking about what are strategies you can use to reduce your likelihood of bullying and how are you going to respond if things do happen and how do you not get sucked in so that you look like you have some blame in the situation."*

School psychologists noted that with bullying intervention, they will consider the bully's context, such as a need for power. In such cases, the school psychologists noted that bullies tended to have less engagement with intervention when power was the underlying need for bullying. Instead, the school psychologist would focus on the victim's account by reducing the risk and effect of bullying for the victim. This situation of focusing primarily on the victim also occurred with cyber-bullying. School psychologists noted that there were cases where the resource officer may be able to help coordinate with another school's resource officer if the bully was in another school. However, if the school psychologist could not work with that bully, he/she will just focus on supporting the victim. If the school psychologist could work with the bully, the school psychologist might do psychoeducation with empathy. School psychologists reported online bullying seemed to reduce the level of empathy students have with each other, and school psychologists would review "*online etiquette*" for bullying intervention.

Psychoeducation regarding online usage was a practice similar to that used by other professionals in schools, including police officers (Broll & Huey, 2015).

"I think the degree is perhaps important. For example, again the child who is hitting other kids because they don't do what he or she wants would probably not be in the same type of an intervention group as somebody who is deliberately going out of their way and being quite vicious to somebody else right?"

School psychologists reported the severity and frequency of bullying effect resulting intervention. Milder forms of bullying should not be mixed with severe forms of bullying, as there were different reasons why bullying was happening. A bullying incident that was mild, such as miscommunication, should be treated differently than a more severe bullying incident that may involve the principal or a police officer. The nature of the bully was not homogenous. For example, frequent but not severe bullies showed lower cognitive empathy than non-bullies (Van Noorden, et al., 2016). The severity of bullying also affected bystander intervention. Bystanders intervened when the bullying behavior was severe, as the bullying behavior was perceived as not mild in severity (Patterson, Allan & Cross, 2016). Meanwhile, frequent and severe victims showed higher affective empathy than non-victims (Van Noorden, et al., 2016).

"bullying isn't something that just happens in isolation, it's an outcropping of a variety of different things"

Overall, school psychologists emphasized that bullying occurred as a result of a range of factors and understanding the context in which bullying occurs was essential for intervention. This complexity contrasted with the commonly reported approach of putting the bully and victim in conflict resolution meetings, where the meeting may be insufficient to address all contextual

factors. However, some school psychologists reported success with this approach resolving simple miscommunications. In general, the context of bullying was complicated and affected the intervention direction.

Bullying Intervention was Dependent on Direct/Indirect Service Referral

"So, two ways – either the principal will bring it to us to ask us to provide support to some people involved in the situation. Or, if I have a relationship or the student pops into my office, because I have an open-door policy, then they may access me outside of admin staff and talk to me about a situation and then I usually bring that to admin based on what we determine in our session I guess."

School psychologists reported receiving bullying intervention work directly and indirectly. Each referral pathway led to different channels of intervention work. For example, direct referrals were usually from students, and these students may not have wanted to involve the school administration team or teachers. Indirect referrals might have come from the principal, teacher, or parents from their observations or being informed by students.

"the kids will tell their closest friend and then that friend tells another friend, and then you know it's just like this little factory of stories that starts up and sooner or later some adult overhears."

"…it's less that they would come directly because of that concern but more that I might be involved with them because of some other concern and then that would emerge through our discussion. I might see a kid because of anxiety or depression or even oppositional behavior and then they start to talk about being bullied."

School psychologists reported bullying intervention cases could come their way unintentionally. In some cases, students would talk amongst each other, and eventually, an adult would overhear the word spread amongst the students. In other cases, the student was working with the school psychologist because of another concern like anxiety or depression, and the bullying came up during intervention work. Generally, victims of bullying did have a range of ailments, including mental health struggles (Al Ali et al., 2017; Guy et al., 2017; Schoeler et al., 2019). Interestingly one school psychologist noted that it was less likely that students would come to the school psychologist directly for bullying. This idea aligned with other school psychologists' observations of a student reluctance to approach school staff for bullying concerns, a reluctance more so with school administration.

"So, it usually comes to me when it's gotten quite extreme and so usually, I'm learning about the case from either the teacher who's calling me in saying, "Oh my God. Help," or the principal saying, "Okay, I've got this angry parent and get in here," you know that kind of thing. So, I would say usually it's coming from the teacher or the principal "

School psychologists reported that severity levels varied with how the referral was made to the school psychologist. Indirect cases coming to the school psychologist were at a higher degree of severity. Furthermore, indirect referrals were generally through the principal or teachers. Typically, school psychologists received most referrals from school staff, and such referrals were completed through a formal process (Harris et al., 1987).

"So typically, with the school I was at it tended to go often to the principal…I'd say my first involvement with a student it would go to the principal and the principal would refer either one of them or both of them or multiple of them to me. But also, other times as I got to know kids,

I'd say that kids sometimes would just come directly to me especially if they wanted to keep admin out of it and didn't want anybody to get in trouble so then they'd start coming directly to me after."

School psychologists noted that students were likely to refer directly to the school psychologist if they did not want the school administration team involved. Typically, this was because students "*did not want anybody to get in trouble*." School psychologists reported that school administration was usually associated with "*trouble*" like suspensions. Students "didn't want the bully to be approached or reprimanded" "*because they were kind of fearful of that person and kind of social power they had in their school and with all the other kids and didn't want to be the one to tattle out of fear or repercussions for what could happen to them if they did*." A barrier existed between the students and the school staff, particularly with school staff who may be implementing action against the bully. Principals reported preferring post bullying interventions that were associated with "*trouble*" for the bully, including adverse consequences for bullies, serious discussions with bullies to stop the behavior, and contacting the bullies' parents (Dake et al., 2004). The authors did not specify what negative consequences principals preferred explicitly in this study beyond disciplining the students.

"I think with the principal I felt like I had to do some interpersonal conflict resolution especially if he was sending both people to me. And so, we would kinda do that. Or I could maybe sometimes address the incident more directly whereas if a victim came to me on their own often, they wouldn't want me to talk to the bully or wouldn't want it approached and so I would work with the victim and then maybe separately"

School psychologists noted their intervention approach varied depending on how the case came their way. When the case was indirect through the principal, their role was interpersonal conflict resolution, which was a preferred intervention model for principals (Dake et al., 2004). In such cases, the school psychologist might have worked more directly with both the victim and the bully. On the other hand, the direct cases from students often did not want involvement with the bully. So, the school psychologist might not do direct work with the bully depending on the severity of the behavior. Instead, the school psychologist might work only with the victim to help cope with the bullying if the bullying was not significantly harmful to the victim. In this specific case, the school psychologist did not specify the severity of the bullying as a limiting factor in involving a bully with intervention.

"Sometimes a group of concerned students might come and talk about it and that really opens the door for group work because obviously they're initiating it and they want to see some change and they're concerned about it."

In the cases of direct reporting, the school psychologist noted he/she might be able to do more group work. That intervention might be more effective because it was a student-initiated referral. Generally, students preferred interventions where they have more control (Gronholm et al., 2018).

Overall, the type of referral to the school psychologists affected how the school psychologists conducted bullying intervention work with the student. The type of referral also reflected problems with students fearful of reporting due to consequences to the bully and subsequent retaliation against the reporting student. There appeared to be a distrust from students

feeling that they could safely report bullying without being harmed themselves as a result, which was not an unusual view from students overall (Gronholm et al., 2018).

Bullying Intervention Could Vary in Intervention Focus

School psychologists reported a broad level of intervention focus, including intervening, psychoeducation, incorporating bullies in the intervention, specific topics, and having individual and group format interventions.

"Lots of times I don't think they've got the words to express themselves and so it may start out as just a communication method that is successful, not appropriately successful but it's also successful. "

"I think with the older kids it's probably more intentional because with the little guys it tends to start out more as, I think it becomes more shaped with time, because with the little guys they sort of start out with something that's sort of egocentric and discover it works or even if they're not really quite sure what they're doing it works but by the time youths hit those teen years, if there's been no intervention then it becomes a little bit more ingrained and definitely more intentional I think."

School psychologists reported that conducting intervention on its own was part of bullying intervention. They described younger children who unintentionally found that bullying behavior to help get what they need, but not knowing that this behavior was unacceptable. However, as the children age, the behavior became more intentional, to a point where one school psychologist noted, these children act "*entitled*." In this case, intervention focus was primarily outlining what acceptable and unacceptable behavior was. School psychologists noted that lack

of intervention was an adult attitude that was either apathetic to bullying intervention or tolerating bullying as acceptable behavior (i.e., "*boys will be boys*") led to this lack of limit setting. Some school psychologists noted this attitude was changing, and there was "*more acceptance that that's not appropriate*".

"You know I usually give them the definition of bully and you know I ask them what they think the definition of a bully is and I talk about a bully, and I don't accuse them but I say to them ok these are the characteristics of a bully – you know get some information where they are coming from like they usually don't admit they are a bully, but at least it opens up their mind that this is what a bully is and this is I want you to think whether your behaviors are align with this definition"

"I remember a long time ago I read an article about kind of a "no blame" approach to bullying, and I thought that that was a good approach to take. When I work with kids in class, you know, I'm not there for discipline or to decide who's right or wrong, but this is the problem that keeps happening and this is why the principal's asking me to be involved and these are the kind of things the principal doesn't want to see anymore. And I find that that helps a little in reducing defensiveness."

School psychologists reported a non-direct manner of labeling the bullying behavior. For example, two school psychologists noted either not specifying the child was a bully or not blaming anyone in the intervention. Another case noted avoiding the use of the term bullying with parents to facilitate intervention efficacy. School psychologists reported there was a lack of appropriately limiting bullying behavior, and limit setting bullying required a non-accusatory approach. Without labeling these behaviors as unacceptable, the students were unaware their

behavior was unacceptable. Directly condemning the behavior and building empathy for the victim has a more substantial effect on changing bullying behavior in comparison to directly blaming the bully, supporting the school psychologists' reporting (Garandeau et al., 2016).

"I find it really imperative to raise awareness on online etiquette and raise awareness that once you post something it's not like saying to a kid "Oh you're stupid" and nobody else hears you…I mean the person still remembers you said that…but when you post something online like "You're a beepity-beep" your whole grade sees that, people's parents see that, it's very…kids don't understand."

Like previous intervention focused outlining bullying as inappropriate behavior, school psychologists also noted the need to do similar interventions with online bullying. In such cases, school psychologists noted that cyberbullying has more enormous ramifications than face to face bullying. A posted online comment might reach further audiences online vs. a comment said face to face in school and might be one of the main factors leading cyberbullying to have a more significant impact (Sticca & Perren, 2013). School psychologists also noted that online etiquette focused on helping children to understand the impact their comments might have on the other person, building on the empathy focus in the intervention.

"So, I think empathy is a big one. You know, looking at how the other child might feel, and I think that's a key too. You know, "How would you feel if…?" has been a really effective strategy I know with the little guys. I haven't used it as much with the big ones at this point, again because I haven't done enough of it, but I would think, you know, how do you build empathy…it goes back to relationships."

"And with our younger kids it's more about trying to bring up the empathy piece, you know, "Do you remember a time when maybe you were mean to someone and what that felt like?", and just trying to kind of bring it back to more emotions I guess."

School psychologists reported focusing on developing empathy and relationship building with the students in bullying intervention. They noted this lack of empathy could be compounded with cyberbullying, where the lack of face-to-face interaction seemed to facilitate less empathy overall. One school psychologist indicated that although the format of delivery might vary between ages, empathy was always a core component of bullying intervention. Cognitive and particularly affective empathy was negatively related to bullying enactment, and defenders held strong levels of both cognitive and affective empathy (Zych et al., 2019). However, causality in the relationship between empathy and bullying was uncertain, as were the processes that catalyzed empathic responses in bullies, victims, and defenders (Zych, Ttofi, & Farrington, 2019).

"In the beginning of my career I always focused on the victim and felt empathy to the victim; but then later I started to have more work with the bully because they are the ones that need the help; well, both need the help well you know what I mean?"

Echoing other school psychologists, this school psychologist noted their practice was focusing on the needs of the bully as well, instead of sending the bully to the administration for discipline. He/she noted doing more therapeutic work with the bully, exploring the many factors that were involved with bullies (Espelage, 2018).

"Developing self-esteem and that sense of self-worth so that people are willing to turn it off or willing to block the person and things like that. So, I think it's similar but slightly different

because you have the option of actually blocking a person versus not seeing them at school the same day."

School psychologists noted focusing on self-worth and self-esteem in bullying intervention, an area that school psychologists have reported victims to lack. In such cases, the school psychologist noted self-esteem issues were holding the student back from blocking a bully, despite having the ability to do so against online bullying. Self-esteem and self-confidence were factors involved with bullying and bully victimization (Huitsing et al., 2012; Meland et al., 2010)

"Well, I teach a lot of kids about deep breathing and being very aware of where their body is at and what they're feeling in the body and they get it. They come to me later, and they get it, they understand why I want them sometimes out of their head and into the body."

Some school psychologists reported focusing on reactive behaviors through mindfulness to help students control how they respond with bullying intervention. They noted that these students have been hurt, and they want to hurt back. The school psychologists noted focusing on responding vs. reacting to a situation. This need for controlling reactivity aligned with school psychologists' reports that some students might be predisposed to bullying because of impulsivity or fewer social skills. If the students could respond more adaptively, the bullying behavior may be more controlled. Importantly, bystanders might not identify victims when the victims lose emotional regulation through reactive and angry actions, which were typical for rejected children (Morrow et al., 2014). These reactive and rejected children were also more likely to experience continued victimization, likely due to these rejected children having fewer

peers to seek support from, and peers having little to gain from supporting rejected children (Kaufman et al., 2018).

"Well, I would say that that's something in schools in general - that's the principal's solution to it more often than not. I wouldn't say it's my way of dealing with the situation. But you know obviously having an adult or two children to interact in this way, wham bam it's done – it's kind of like the quick and easy way to solve it right? But what it misses is that it doesn't really – doesn't give the kids a chance to really engage in it fully. They're kind of being adult-directed to solve the problem but its really about them solving the problem themselves that I think really seems to have an impact on bullying."

School psychologists reported that bullying intervention meetings with the principal tend to be focused on conflict resolution. The intervention focus was noted to be adult-oriented, and in this case, suggested it satisfies an adult need such as visual confirmation that action was taken for intervention. However, this action seemed not to have solved the bullying problem and ignored a child-oriented solution where there would be more engagement from the child. This concern was reflected similarly with other psychologists, such as one who pushed for restitution over apologies. Restitution, in that case, was reported as having a more significant impact and meaning because of bullying versus an apology.

Furthermore, students preferred interventions where they had choice and control (Gronholm et al., 2018). Importantly, conflict resolution was reported by some school psychologists to be an essential part of their bullying intervention, as the school psychologists noted miscommunication between students was something they always check for in their process. Importantly, this quote, "*I wouldn't say its my way of dealing with the situation"* was

symbolic of a divide reported by some school psychologists in bullying intervention decisions between school personnel. The lack of a consistent approach finding success between professions and within professions with bullying intervention was generally reflected overall with bullying intervention research and suggested there was no clear road to follow (Bjereldet al., 2019).

"I would say part of the number of suspensions and stuff that we were seeing. We were trying to provide some education to our admin staff around, like suspensions aren't always the way to go and certainly support them in some scenarios."

School psychologists reported consequence-focused interventions were typical, usually from school administration, such as what principals reported preferring as a bullying response (Dake et al., 2004). For most school psychologists, there was no reporting of therapeutic focus from school administration involvement with the bullies.

"We do have a program through I believe it's the YMCA - it's kinda like an out-of-school program that we will send some of our kids too for out-of-school suspensions, it's like a three-day program where they aren't just sitting at home. They're actually at the YMCA doing like there are some life skills teaching that they do, or they'll actually do their homework – so it's kinda more of a restorative process…they're trying to move away from the consequences of the suspension. And at least if they're at the YMCA they're getting some information about life skills and making better choices and such."

Consequences were usually suspensions in the aforementioned school psychologist's school, where he/she noted the school was trying to have an alternative where there was a restorative process through the YMCA. The school psychologist noted he/she was also working

with shifting the school administration's consequence driven intervention, noting this was an "*old school*" approach and attitude. Generally, suspensions were not an effective bully intervention (Ayers et al., 2012).

"Individually, some kids need individual counseling, some kids need group counseling, right? So, it just depends on the circumstances."

Intervention focus could also vary in format, where school psychologists reported a range in how they reach out to students from individual, group, and guest speaker format. For example, the school psychologist might have done individual or group counseling, or have a former student speak about his/her experiences of bullying to a school-wide presentation. In comparison to individual format interventions, group format interventions could address both needs to learn strategies, as well as other needs students, have expressed including the expansion of interpersonal relationships (Midgett et al., 2018).

"If it was just being mean…sometimes depending on the circumstances. For example, I've had some of our junior high girls actually come in together to kind of work it out in kind of a conflict resolution manner if it was a mean kind of situation. Or we work on assertiveness skills if the student who had perceived the act as, obviously it's uncomfortable, but if they were on the offending end of it then we can talk about how they can be assertive and in the future, we do some role play about how that might play out differently if they could express themselves differently."

School psychologists reported differentiating interventions that focus on bullying and being mean. In such cases, the school psychologist noted conducting conflict resolution or assertive skills instruction for problems that were more about being mean rather than bullying.

Distinguishing bullying from other forms of aggression like peer conflict was an essential but difficult task (Evans et al., 2014).

"One of the things that I like to do when I go into a class and introduce myself and when I see clients individually is to ask, you know, what's cool out there now? Like obviously I'm kind of like a granny-style cause I'm like, "Ooo you guys on FaceBook?" and of course no one's on FaceBook"

School psychologists generally emphasized a need to work at the student's level in their bullying intervention work. In this case, it was to understand what the children were now using for social media, which will provide support for intervention. Understanding the nuances of current social media platforms used by students could be a daunting task for adults. Still, school psychologists reported the necessity to incorporate a student-focused perspective in bullying intervention (Thaxter, 2010). In this case, the different types of social media distinguished staff from students and trying to reduce this separation was part of this school psychologist's bullying intervention. Notably, the children knowing that persons of authority were aware of the platform seemed to help dissuade some of the cyberbullying, without persons of power, such as a teacher, doing any sort of supervisory work.

Bullying Intervention Could Involve Resource in Different Manners

School psychologists reported the use of some resources in their bullying intervention, with several themes emerging, including a range of resources with no common resource repository, and challenges with resources overall.

"Not that hard. I mean, I would just Google bullying in a school environment or that type of thing. There's lots of stuff that comes up."

"ATA has had safe and caring schools the program I don't know if they have it now, but they used to have where they would give counselors and uh information about bullying and how they could help kids so most of my information came from the Alberta school safe and caring schools and um yeah than things from teachers conventions you know I would go there being a school psychologist I was allowed to go or uh the other for victims for example sometimes Jack Hirosi I don't know if you are familiar with his conferences I would go if they have something on bullying"

School psychologists reported not using any particular resource repository. In several cases, school psychologists noted using a general search engine like Google. Others mentioned specific sources like the College of Alberta Psychologists, Jack Hirosi & Associates Inc. (a company dedicated to workshops for mental health and educational professionals), Alberta Teachers' Association, or the Safe and Caring website. Some school psychologists were not aware of resources like the Safe and Caring website. Some school psychologists noted resources were easy to access, which contrasted with other school psychologists' reporting the need for a guide to sorting the number of resources available. These school psychologists did not indicate a lack of resources, but rather a difficulty in classifying the resources that were both evidence-based and fit their particular school's needs, and the time that was required to do such a task. Overall, school psychologists had a wide range of resource access, but nothing common amongst themselves, including the internet, school training, other school districts, the news, teacher conventions, ATA, and Safe and Caring. School psychologists' access to resources aligned with

other school psychologists' and school counselors' training in bullying assessment or intervention, in that typically most training happens during in-service training or professional conferences, reflecting constrained duration and intensity (Lund et al., 2012).

"No what I also do I always when I was in the schools someone who has been bullying have them tell their story you know we do we bring them together into the gym and it doesn't have to be the whole school because I have worked in schools from kindergarten to grade 12 so I would take the grade 7 and 8s or grade 678s and bring somebody in that has been bullied and they talk about their experiences and how it made them feel and then I do it from both sides I get speakers that were bullied and speakers that were a bully you know what I mean? They were a bully, or they were a victim of bullying I find that is probably the most effective because when they hear personal stories it makes them think like am I a bully or am I victim you know? And what can I do."

Some school psychologists reported using former students or guest speakers to help communicate their experiences with bullying to students, which seemed to facilitate thought for change in students intrinsically. Generally, students preferred interventions where they had choice and control, which aligns with an intrinsic locus of change (Gronholm et al., 2018). This indirect approach was more child-oriented, where the bullying intervention was focused on internal reform, whereas an external change would be adult-oriented, such as telling kids not to go onto Snapchat because there was an age restriction. School psychologists reported the adult-oriented approaches have shown limited efficacy and had thus advocated for child-oriented interventions, which these guest speakers reportedly help facilitate.

"We did a kindness movement where we wanted kids to kinda pay attention more to other kids that were doing kind things for them or teachers were noticing that the kids were doing more kind things and we had people nominate students in the building every week for kind actions that they would take. And so, it just created this more positive environment around the school in general in that, okay, so we're not tolerating, we're not pushing bullying to the side, but we also want to then just make sure that we're reinforcing the positive behaviors that are happening in our school as well."

Generally, no school psychologist reported using a specific program for bullying intervention. Typically, the school psychologist created his/her bullying intervention program that focused on catching adaptive behaviors amongst the school and community. The lack of a standard program for bullying intervention was reflective of bullying interventions and bullying research in general. There was substantial variation in experimental designs, measurement tools, techniques, and intervention theory leading to a heterogeneous entity overall and difficulty generalizing ideas (Cantone et al., 2015; Merrell et al., 2008). The lack of specific programs by school psychologists also reflected a general lack of evidence-based programs by school-based mental health professionals, including counselors and school psychologists (Lund et al, 2012).

"Initially…it stemmed out of there's never enough money, right? So, we wanted to have someone come up from Calgary who has a bullying prevention program where they do, I think it's like a day-long workshop with each of our grades, and there just wasn't enough money in the budget to be able to do that so this was kind of like the second-best idea that we could come up with that would only use time and not our monetary resources."

School psychologists reported challenges with resources being challenging to implement due to staff, financial, and time restraints. One school psychologist created his/her intervention due to financial constraints and utilized ideas from journal evidence. Interestingly, this school psychologist also noted that despite aiming for evidence-based programming, his/her district does not have journal access. These challenges were reflected elsewhere as barriers to bullying intervention, including limited resources, training, and lower priority relative to other problems in the school (Dake et al., 2004).

Overall, school psychologists noted no specific source they were accessing bullying intervention resources from and reported difficulties with the resources themselves. Common amongst school psychologists' reporting was that resources tend to be time-intensive, and in turn, resource-intensive on account of money and staff shortages.

The Role of the School Psychologists Affected Bullying Intervention

School psychologists noted their roles with bullying intervention were dependent on the context; there did not appear to be a clear, consistent role for school psychologists; the position was based either on the school's need or the principal's need. Typical positions for school psychologists were limited to psychometrician and special education funding assessors, which some of the interviewed school psychologists reported being limited to as their duties (Dowdy et al., 2014). In a recent National Association of School Psychologist position statement on bullying prevention, the organization noted that school psychologists were uniquely positioned to take a role on bullying intervention in schools and were encouraged to take a leadership role in this area (National Association of School Psychologists, 2019; Swearer et al., 2009). NASP

(2019) distinctly outlined what that role should look like, in contrast to the role uncertainty school psychologists in this study reported.

"Bullying intervention is usually the role of the school counselor or school psychologist and the admin will get involved if parents phone- they have to do something if there is a complaint then they get involved; its mainly the job of the school psychologist, the teachers help out right, but if there is a school psychologist that would be their role"

Some school psychologists noted the responsibility for bullying intervention was for the school psychologist or school counselor. However, other school psychologists have pointed out there were other professionals who deal with behavioral concerns in the school. So, there were difficulties with determining who bullying cases should go to for follow up. These views reflected the general overlap of roles and responsibilities beyond bullying intervention.

"Because the principal would send me both of them cause he didn't want to do deal with them mostly (laughter)."

"Sometimes with the principal and sometimes I wouldn't really involve teachers unless something maybe happened in their classroom and maybe bring them in where I'd have them look for things but not typically. Typically, in the school setting, I mean everyone's so busy, it was like if they could just send them to me to do something, they just kind of wanted to not be involved anymore"

Some respondents reported that their role was to deal with bullying because the principal did not want to be involved. This sentiment was also repeated concerning teachers not wanting to

deal with bullying intervention. Typically, the reasoning was that other professionals were quite busy in their roles. For example, teachers usually were busy with academic duties.

"That's been really varied in what I've seen. Oftentimes, the school psychologist or school counselor tends to get I think more of the mental health cases or the immediate risk cases of self-identified cases, which tend I think to be more in the anxiety, depression kinds of categories. So, it really depends on how the school is using that. "

Other school psychologists noted a significant variance in their role. In such instances, the school psychologist echoed similar sentiments to other school psychologists, that their part was dependent on the school's needs, and therefore not consistent between schools.

"I think that somebody who's really involved in the school as the school psychologist can certainly put forward recommendations for intervention and things like that. But again, without sort of the blessing of the school administrative staff, it would be really hard to implement something schoolwide."

In this instance, the school psychologist noted that he/she can put recommendations forward. Still, it was the school administration that holds power with executing those recommendations and, in turn, the school psychologist's role. Generally, principals were the final decision-makers for curricular and program decisions in the schools, and school mental health professionals were rarely involved in intervention decisions (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Lund et al., 2012).

"I would think, however, that bullying itself is probably more likely to be identified to the teachers in the school than specifically by the school psychologist or school counselor because they're not out and about in quite the same way."

The school psychologist also emphasized that considering the duties of the school psychologist, it was less likely for them to identify the bullying, which likely will be teachers because of their closer proximity to the students.

Conclusion

Overall, school psychologists had several areas of focus in common with their approach to bullying intervention, including collaboration, context, direct/indirect service referral, intervention focus, resources, and role. There was variation within these areas of commonality. Generally, there did not seem to be a program the school psychologists followed. Instead, their bullying intervention was quite a context-specific based on the needs of the school and the children they were working with for response. In general, there was not a single approach that was either shared unilaterally or championed by any school psychologist. Instead, multiple components were utilized in bullying intervention, indicating an overall complexity with bullying intervention.

What was Helpful for Bullying Intervention?

School psychologists described two primary categories that were helpful for bullying intervention, relationships, and resources/intervention specific factors.

Relationships Were Helpful for Bullying Intervention

"Well, I think one of the most important things is collaboration because if I work in isolation as a school psychologist, I am not going to have very much- you know I'm going to be like an isolated island right"

School psychologists noted relationships help bully intervention either through professional relationships between staff members, child-focused relationships between staff and children, or between children, and relationships with the community. Congruent and consistent ideas between environments like home and school, and productive relationships amongst the people of those environments benefited healthy development on the whole (Sheridan et al., 2004).

"For all the students in the class if you really are able to, if they are able to come to a place where they can be vulnerable and honest and genuine – I find that that kind of speeds up the process as well."

School psychologists described the help provided with their relationships with students, where the children could feel they could be vulnerable and honest in exploring underlying concerns that may not emerge without that setting. For example, one school psychologist described the difficult task of shedding the tough junior high persona of children to address their needs.

"I think developing a relationship with the student is really important whether it be individual or in group. Rapport is always, always really important and it goes back in a sense of a therapeutic relationship that goes back to therapeutic relationship right"

"Sometimes that's, I mean in terms of on the victim's side, sometimes that's all we end up needing to do, and I think it can be super powerful to be heard I guess."

School psychologists described the help through formal relationships in counseling sessions, typically known as a therapeutic alliance between the therapist and the client. School psychologists noted a therapeutic relationship with the child and the school psychologist was helpful, such as for validation of the victim's emotions. School psychologists noted validation sometimes was all they can provide for the child, such as cases where intervening with the bully may be problematic. For example, school psychologists noted being unable to address the bully when the bully attended a different school, or the victim did not want intervention involvement with the bully.

"Yup. So, if you can identify within the group, a group of students, or even check in with the teacher and see if there's a group of students that can really embody those high levels of empathy and they're kind of the natural leaders – it's helpful to mobilize within the classroom the kids themselves to start promoting positive interactions with others and empathy campaigns, that kind of thing, kindness – that's also helpful as well."

School psychologists noted that child-level change was useful when there was a role model of the healthy behavior the school psychologist was trying to shape the children to adopt, such as positive interactions with other students, empathy, and kindness. This role model helped promote these behaviors at a level that came from other children.

"I think really meeting the needs of both the bully and the victim. I mean, again, I haven't been too into bullying interventions, but I would want them to be really collaborative and work both ways to support both parties. I think it would be important to take into account the context of the

bully and the victim and any potential other mental health issues or other dynamics that are taking place"

School psychologists generally noted working with both the victim and the bully, rather than just one or the other has been a shift in their practice. In one instance, the school psychologist noted a collaborative relationship between the bully and victim to be helpful, mainly to ensure both of their needs were being met. This point connected with school psychologists recognizing that bullies have underlying needs, their behavior was resultant of the complex socio-ecological factors in their lives, and intervention should address their needs as well (Espelage, 2018). This relationship between the bully and victim also likely related to the miscommunication school psychologists reported as being a problem between children, problem students noted sometimes happens in cases of bullying (Oliver et al., 1994).

"Well, it certainly helps to have parents on board so that they don't feed into the issue. Both in terms of justifying the students' behavior and then there are some parents that provide more attention because of their kid's bullying complaints and then the child almost goes out of their way to look for any affront during the day"

School psychologists noted work with parents helps bullying intervention. Parent collaboration reinforced the work the school psychologist was doing at the school with the child or with limiting aggravating factors that the parents may be doing, such as reinforcing bullying behavior or reinforcing attention-seeking behaviors. Positive changes through the collaboration of the home and school included learning outcomes, teacher-student relationships, behavioral problem amelioration, bullying and victimization intervention (Ayers et al., 2012; Chung et al., 2005; Eskisu, 2014; Ma et al., 2015; Sheridan et al., 2004; Webster-Strattion et al., 2001).

Parental support, time spent with parents, parent involvement in school, parent communication, parental supervision, and parental warmth and affection supports bullying intervention through a protective role against group bullying behavior, cyberbullying, traditional bullying victimization, and cyber victimization (Mann et al., 2015; Martínez et al., 2019; Moreno–Ruiz et al., 2019; Nocentini et al., 2019). Therefore, it was important to have school and parent collaboration as part of bullying intervention work (Hasan & Jessica, 2016; Lester et al., 2017; Mann et al., 2015).

"Well, what makes my job easier is if I get support from people at the top right so if it's a priority in this school, we are going to make sure that kids are safe that they feel safe and that is a priority and whatever you need to make that happen"

"It is psych-based budgeting for the schools- the principal gets X amount of money and decides are we going to put 100000 to counseling or 50000 towards that. So its psych based money management- so that's why every schools different like the school I'm in right now is really values for example I talk to my principal and he said that the numbers next year are lower but we are going to keep you on site because I believe having a psych on site to help the kids right some principals will say no less money so you can only come 2 days a week; its depending on the values of the school"

School psychologists described having support from upper management in their schools, typically the principal as being helpful for bullying intervention. The support from the principal provided financial assistance, which might help with ensuring the school psychologist had a role in the school or prioritization of an intervention initiative, which might help with ensuring school-wide support. It was the principal that primarily decides what programs could start and

run in their schools (Hallinger & Hock, 1996). Top-down support through the school principal and school leadership, followed with engaged staff overall, was essential for bully intervention program continuation (Olweus, Solberg & Breivik, 2018). Top-down support was also noted to help change cultural attitudes in the broader catchment and greater consistency regarding topics like prioritizing and valuing the need for bullying intervention. Getting full school coverage through the classrooms, teachers, and school administration was essential for bullying intervention because bullying was a complex problem that extends beyond the basic dynamic of the bully and victim (Cantone et al., 2015; da Silva et al., 2017; Mutlu, 2018; Storer et al., 2017).

"The principal is very sensitive to the needs of the kids and is very supportive of me and my work so I'm very lucky there…and so is the assistant principal. So, I'm very, very fortunate, very fortunate."

"What I've found very, very helpful because the principal and the assistant principal are so supportive is to enlist their help. If they don't come to me, then it's not unusual for me to go to them if it's an issue of bullying"

Some school psychologists noted that the principal was an asset to collaborate with and supportive of the work he/she does in school. One school psychologist indicated that despite the school not having funding for the school psychologist that year, the principal said the school would make her/his position work regardless because the principal valued his/her work in the school. A primary front for effective programming should include allotment of sufficient multi-year financing (Black et al., 2010).

"They are there in school either every day or at least every week so if I work with the student, I want to make sure something got implemented every day or every week. I can talk to my team and make sure they can assist the student with that."

School psychologists often described challenges because of limited time, which might affect whether the school psychologist can develop a therapeutic relationship with a student, understand the complexities of the situation, or reinforce a strategy effectively. In this case, the school psychologist noted having professional relationships with other school personnel like their consultants as being helpful with bullying intervention, so that they could ensure the intervention was implemented despite the school psychologist being unable to be onsite regularly enough.

"When you're making amends to the community and being accountable for your role in the bullying and maybe oftentimes bullies are bullied themselves. So, it's a bigger system than just the perpetrator and the victim."

One school psychologist emphasized the connection of a school psychologist making restitution to the community as a more effective bullying intervention, both in terms of making the consequence more relevant to the bully, and to develop a personal connection with the community. As well, the bullying incident was often more extensive than the bully and victim, and so the community focus provided another avenue to broaden the intervention focus. For instance, children who knew more children in their area of living were more prone to group bullying, so understanding the community connection was an essential component of bully intervention (Mann et al., 2015).

"I think with most of my teachers we have a really positive relationship with. So, I think that's also helped. They help implement some of the strategies in the classroom and if they have any questions most of the time, they feel comfortable emailing me so I can follow-through and I can just go out to the school if there is anything I need to follow-through with"

School psychologists noted relationships with teachers as helpful for bullying intervention- teachers could report information, reinforce strategies, and have relationships with students that made the students more comfortable to reach out to the teachers vs. the school psychologists. Students did not prefer interventions that utilize non-teaching staff, supporting the need and benefit for teacher involvement in bullying intervention (Crothers & Kolbert, 2008).

"Yes. I would say when you have a highly empathetic teacher that's really aware of the students as people more than just kids who they have to meet certain objectives with. That makes all the difference and if they have a strong relationship with the students, that can make all the difference. I'm fully aware that I pop in and out of everywhere and so I don't have a relationship with all the kids but when that teacher really takes the time to know the kids and to build trust and all of those things, they can do some really powerful things in the classroom."

"Sometimes teachers were really helpful. Often, they would come to me and say, "Hey can you check in with these kids?" or "I noticed this in class" but some teachers who were more observant of kids and the dynamics they were pretty helpful"

Overall, teachers provided support by being closer to the children given the nature of their job, which provided both observational data and potentially stronger relationships with the children. Such proximity, in turn, enabled the teachers to provide information the school psychologists that they may otherwise not be able to obtain. One school psychologist emphasized

that this benefit materialized with a highly empathetic teacher. Teachers did have the capacity to empathize with the victim and bully for suitable bullying assessment (Murphy et al., 2018). Teacher empathy played a vital role in bullying intervention by supporting a positive school climate, higher degree of program implementation (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003; Murphy et al., 2018). One school psychologist noted that support from teachers allowed the school psychologist to pull children from the class when needed, helping facilitate bullying intervention. Finally, teachers could reinforce strategies with the children. Given the limited time many school psychologists reported having in particular schools due to the number of schools they worked at, or other priorities in their workload, having support for data gathering and intervention reinforcement through the teachers made sense.

In general, relationships professionally supported resource sharing, personal support, better reporting/data support, reinforcement of strategies, workload sharing. Relationships with school administration affected intervention focus, type, efficacy, and resource allocation. The importance of relationships in bullying intervention was reflective of the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and understanding that no specific discipline alone could support the academic and psychosocial needs of children (Allensworth & Kolbe, 1987; Bronstein, Anderson, Terwilliger & Sager, 2012). Successful systematic change required school staff to collaborate through effective relationships, particularly for bullying, which extended beyond a simple dyad of a bully and a victim (Espelage & Holt, 2001; Salmivalli, 2010; Skaar et al., 2016).

Resources and Intervention Specific Factors Were Helpful for Bullying Intervention

School psychologists noted specific aspects of resources that were helpful with bullying intervention, including the particular focus of the resource, and nature of the resource itself. Particular intervention focus included assertiveness/confidence to execute strategies, home/peer stressors, the age for earlier intervention/impact, empathy, and restitution for personal relevance.

"And not just that but I think lots of times by that age they seem to think it's okay because nobody's really stood up and said this is not right. I'm not saying that happens all the time but by that point in time oftentimes it becomes a little bit more "It's my right" and so it becomes more acceptable to them."

"I think kids can really surprise us. And we sometimes underestimate their ability to understand what's going on around them. I think that education and awareness is really, really important at all ages – doesn't matter if we're 3 or if we're 53 – but you know if it's 3 or 18, it doesn't matter.

School psychologists reported interventions were most helpful when they were implemented, particularly at an earlier age. They said concerns that no interventions were occurring with children who were committing bullying behavior in the early ages of life, and these children were maturing without being aware of how their behavior was affecting other children. In this case, the school psychologists specifically noted that empathy development was a vital target focus for intervention. In general, the need for adults to intervene with the early ages reflected challenges to bullying intervention school psychologists noted, with adults failing to speak because they either believed the behavior is normal and unneedy of intervention, or they did not want to intervene. When both empathy was aroused, and the bullying was condemned, a bully's intension to change increases (Garandeau et al., 2016). In general, younger children could

benefit from empathic oriented exercises like viewpoint taking, comprehending, and showing (Ang & Goh, 2010).

"No. I feel like things are moving in a better direction. I feel like just our tolerance for bullying and harassment in the workplace and inside in general (time 35.32) has, you know, increased and I think that makes people more aware of it in school as well. That maybe 30 years ago it was a little bit more "boys will be boys" and now there's more an acceptance that that's not appropriate."

This school psychologist noted attitude has changed on tolerance for bullying in the workplace and outside of school culture. The psychologist listed examples such as doctor's offices, which specified that bullying behavior was not tolerated. Moreover, there was an increasing belief that bullying behavior was no longer just "*boys will be boys*" and was inappropriate.

"Number one empathy and then the other thing that I've seen that has been quite successful has been kind of establishing peer-to-peer conflict resolution skills. So, empowering the kids to, you know, take charge of resolving conflict in a positive manner"

"It's that accountability piece to the entire, the whole system that has been involved in the bullying experience – like be it the classroom or be it like, you know, sometimes it's a whole grade that kind of has been involved in this bullying and I think it's not strong enough if you just make the kids come to the office and apologize to the other kid."

"Teaching kids themselves that they can speak up to each other because again the research kind of shows that peer intervention can be the strongest"

School psychologists noted having the bully develop a sense of connection, such as empathy to the victim, or the community was helpful for bullying intervention. In either case, the school psychologists emphasized a need for a more significant personal impact on the bully than just an apology. School psychologists noted that apologies appeared superficial as taking action against bullying without meaningful effect or change. In the quotes above, the school psychologists reported developing the skill of empathy or making restitution to the community provided a more profound impact on the bully. In the following quote, the school psychologist emphasized the importance of a broader scope of intervention, where the connection with the surrounding peers was helpful through peer intervention. Peers were a critical component for bullying intervention, and a failure to address peer relationships may be limiting bullying intervention efficacy (Swearer et al., 2010).

Empathy was essential for bullying intervention, as empathy was correlated with bullying, bully victimizing, and bystander behavior in traditional bullying and cyberbullying (Antoniadou & Kokkinos, 2018; Brewer & Kerslake 2015; Del Rey et al., 2016; Espelage, Hong, Kim & Nan, 2018; Haddock & Jimerson, 2017; Kokkinos & Kipritsi, 2018; Longobardi et al., 2019; Machackova & Pfetsch, 2016; Nickerson, 2015; Van Noorden et al., 2015; Walters & Espelage 2019). Importantly, empathy-based programs might struggle because these programs did not address the complexity of empathy and empathy's relationship with bullying (Van Noorden et al., 2015). Empathy might increase distress and guilt in bystanders for failing to intervene, although the distress might be a motivational factor to intervene in bullying situations (Hoffman, 2000; Tone & Tully, 2014). Generally, affective empathy (experiencing the feelings other people might experience, as opposed to cognitive empathy, which was to understand the feelings other people may experience) in the form of empathy that induces greater supportive

change for bullying intervention. Affective empathy was linked to maximum student willingness to defend against bullies, negative correlations with bullying, and a negative association with moral disengagement (Antoniadou & Kokkinos, 2018; Kokkinos & Kipritsi, 2018; López-Pérez et al., 2017; Mitsopoulou & Giovazolias; 2015; Peets et al., 2015; Van Noordenet al., 2015; Walters & Espelage, 2019). Cognitive empathy alone was inadequate to change bystander intervention (Walters & Espelage, 2019). However, victimization was associated with a negative relationship with cognitive empathy but not with affective empathy (Van Noorden et al., 2015).

Bullying and empathy had a complicated relationship (Van Noorden et al., 2015). Studies showed no significant differences of empathy in bullies and their peers, where bullies possessed normal to mildly elevated cognitive and affective empathy compared to their peers but had higher levels of moral disengagement (Haddock & Jimerson, 2017). The bullies could emotionally recognize and understand what their peers were feeling but could disengage from the internal processes that would typically induce guilt (Haddock & Jimerson, 2017). Moral disengagement was blocking self sanctioning intrinsic mechanisms that usually cause remorse, self-censure, and inhumane behavior (Bandura et al., 1996). Bullies, victims, and bully-victims were capable of experiencing empathy to the levels as individuals not involved in bullying but might be selective with their empathy depending on the target person (van Noorden et al., 2017). For example, bullies might feel lower levels of empathy to victims so they could bully without remorse (van Noorden et al., 2017). A focus on empathy alone was not sufficient to induce change- other factors including gender, social status in a group, and moral disengagement affected the resulting behavior (Kokkinos & Kipritsi, 2018; Lucas-Molina et al., 2018; Mitsopoulou & Giovazolias, 2015). Furthermore, higher levels of empathy did not ensure a bystander would not reinforce the bully (Machackova & Pfetsch, 2016).

"Sometimes it's if you're not so centered in your thinking and you can appreciate that this person is just doing this and that it's not your value as a person…then you can kind of move beyond it. I think about my time as a school counselor and the number of girls I talked to who, you know, it was an ongoing theme like, "I just wanna know why she's mad at me," "I just wanna know why she's mean to me," – you just want to say she's just a nasty person (laughter)." And then sometimes you would see that somebody would be the victim of the week kind of thing and then the next week it would be somebody else."

School psychologists noted in cases where bullying was just targeting anybody, and the behavior was not personal, it was helpful for bullying intervention to help the victim reach the conclusion they were victimized randomly. The school psychologist noted this seems to help the victim process the bullying better by not feeling the bullying was a personal attack.

"Right. I think about even if you're good at telling an adult, it's how well can you tell your story. Like I think about some kids that they end up at the principal's office and you expect the one kid to get into trouble cause you're sure he's the aggressor but if he's got really good verbal skills, he can talk himself out of it. Or if he's got much better verbal skills than the other kid." That, you know, if you could paint a good picture or if you can't paint a good picture, you're more likely to be a victim."

"In thinking about that, that would be another change that's happened is having the video cameras in the schools. A lot of times I think in the past, bullies could cover up what had happened and now sometimes it's quite a bit clearer what's going on."

School psychologists described helping the victim develop better communication skills was helpful with bullying intervention. Victims often were either unable to assert themselves

well (which has been reported by school psychologists to be a characteristic of some victims of bullying), or they were unable to report the incident to an authority figure better. In the latter case, the school psychologists noted the bully can inform the story in their favor and able to avoid meaningful consequences. Having video cameras was reported to be helpful by one school psychologist, specifically to ensure the authority figure gets a better understanding of the bullying incident, regardless of how well the bully might communicate his/her story in his/her favor. In consideration of this latter factor, school psychologists also reported that hard evidence was sometimes not enough, as parents of some bullies were reported to deny their child was a bully despite hard evidence like videos showing the bullying behavior. Further, regarding victims tended to have lower levels of communication skills, they were also reported to have lower levels of confidence. Self-efficacy affected whether a child would defend or not defend in a bullying situation (Peets et al., 2015).

"Employ proper conflict resolution skills and oftentimes it's a really silly conflict but once they really understand the power of their words and how that can make somebody else feel it tends to make a change."

Continuing with communication skills, school psychologists mentioned conflict resolution skills as helpful for bullying intervention. In this case, the school psychologist specified how learning the power of their words, and in turn, empathy could enact change.

"I think again consistency is important. Again, I kinda waffle in terms…I find bullying…it doesn't matter to me lots of times what the specific concern is. Lots of times the approach is very similar in terms of how you approach it"

"I think because everybody has the same language and so you're using a common approach"

"Something from that Red Cross program to help a little bit more with implementation - like more of a schedule or something that would be easier for teachers to even take and implement, didn't have to be a professional, it could have just been a teacher taking it and implementing it. But it wasn't as clean as it needed to be, I guess.

School psychologists reported the nature of the resource can be helpful with bullying intervention when the resource supports consistency. For instance, capturing a broader scope like a school-wide focus vs. just the individuals directly involved in the bullying incident was recommended for bullying intervention (Cantone et al., 2015; da Silva et al., 2017; Mutlu, 2018; Storer et al., 2017). School psychologists reported helpful resources were flexible to each school's needs, particularly with time and staff resource constraints, which were amongst declared constraints for bullying intervention (Dake et al., 2004).

Conclusion

Overall, school psychologists reported that relationships, resources, and intervention specific factors were helpful with bullying intervention. Relationships provided support with strategy reinforcement, data gathering, therapeutic support, child-level change, reaching the underlying needs of students, reducing aggravating factors, financial aid, prioritization of interventions school-wide, and idea collaboration. Resource specific factors included early intervention, empathy, supporting both victim and bully, communication skills, and school-wide focuses. No single item was emphasized as being essential for bullying intervention. Instead, help was spread across a multitude of topics, indicating the overall complexity of bullying intervention.

What was not Helpful for Bullying Intervention?

School psychologists described eight categories that were not helpful for bullying intervention: administration and top-down factors; culture; student-specific characteristics; parents/family; school needs; resources; roles; and the nature of bullying.

Administration/top-down Factors Were not Helpful for Bullying Intervention

"The principal is kinda where the buck stops. So sometimes, and it also depends on how hands-on the principal is. Sometimes the principals don't want to deal – I've had those ones – and they kind of ignore it and shuffle it off to me or to the teacher themselves."

Some school psychologists noted the school administration, mainly the principal, was not helpful for bullying intervention, in contrast to some other school psychologists who reported the principal was essential with bullying intervention. Generally, problems with principals were tied to how the principal's position of power affected how the school was run. In one case, the school psychologists noted that the principal was struggling with his/her mental health through professional burnout. Roland and Galloway (2004) noted in schools with smaller levels of strain with school leadership, they had lesser degrees of bullying and bully victimization.

"One challenge and actually even engaging in any kind of intervention for bullying is that sometimes you can kind of get tapped as a second admin. I know that sounds really terrible but it's the reality of the situation whereby the principal doesn't want to deal with this and you're the mental health professional so I would get frustrated, and I would find barriers when it came to actually engaging in intervention"

"So, my advice would be don't fall into the trap of becoming the second admin and to always…it's critical in those kind of bullying scenarios to always be self-reflective and self-aware of "Am I remaining neutral in this situation?" because the minute that it's perceived that you're on so-and-so's side or this group's side or whatever side, you lose that ability to really try to help motivate and promote change."

"I think that sometimes especially when I would be connected by admin there was kind of like a level of almost like authority then that I would get connected to so I think that sometimes could have been harmful with my relationship, especially with building a relationship with the bully because sometimes they might see me as more connected to admin. It's like admin didn't want to deal with them and kinda handed them off to me – there was an expectation that I was connected to their role in discipline I guess, which was not at all."

School psychologists noted that the administration tended to be associated with consequences which were typical of principals, and "*old school thinking*" which assumed the children could not change or be remediated (Dake et al., 2004). This shift from being neutral to being part of siding either with a student or a school administrator changed the school psychologist's ability to enact change. Several participants noted students tended to distance themselves from the school administration by not reporting incidents because they were afraid of consequences and resulting in retaliation from the bully. A significant number of children did not tell adults they were being bullied, despite children being encouraged to say to adults they were being bullied, particularly if the children do not believe the adults will respond helpfully (Bjereld, 2018; Bjereld et al., 2019). Differences in approach to handling bullying situations between professionals might be due to discipline-specific understandings of the situation and

were reflected with gaps between the principals' and school psychologists' approach (Anderson, 2013). School psychologists reported principals tended to conduct meetings in response to bullying disclosure. Children were reluctant to disclose bullying to adults when the process was too formal, such as a perceived serious meeting with the school counselor, teachers, notepads, and a small room, where the child thought the adults were going to create a worse situation (Bjereld et al., 2019). Children also found that being told to tell an adult undermined the complexity of the social environments the children were facing (Storer et al., 2017).

"Kind of separating yourself from admin more, not getting pulled into that part of the bullying I guess or the repercussions of bullying. Probably, I don't know, to try to set up stricter role or boundaries I guess on what intervention might look like and who you would pull in and how or trying to run groups or things like that. Kind of setting up some more clearly defined role when it comes to bullying, I guess would be my advice."

This school psychologist noted establishing firmer boundaries with the school administration team was important to be effective with bullying intervention. In this case, he/she underlined the "*repercussions of bullying"* as the aspect of the process with which the school psychologist did not want a part. One school psychologist noted his/her frustration working as a mental health professional but taking on a role that "*relieves pressure from a principal*" because "*the principal wants to offload everything like that to [him/her]*." He/she noted, "*the principal sets up these meetings with parents and says, "Oh, by the way, I have this meeting. I have to go." So, guess what? Who's doing the meeting? You.*" So, in this case, the school psychologists' role, responsibility, workload, and time allocation for work was based on the principal's direction.

"it's the principal's role to receive, kind of be the interface for the parents, so they usually have that meeting with the parents and talk about an action plan for dealing with the situation which is usually where they say, "I'm gonna get so-and-so to come in and apologize," and then…anyway it's not all better but it's an easy way to show that you're actively doing something."

School psychologists reported administration tended to focus on interventions that appear to have some superficial appeasement, like conflict resolution. Still, students often came to the school psychologist and said the bullying problem continues. In the previous quote, the particular emphasis on *"I'm gonna get so-and-so to come in and apologize,"* showed a top-down approach where the apology was because the principal made the student apologize, versus the student wanting to apologize. Getting students to apologize was a common intervention across cultures, but was poorly researched (Schelien, Ross & Ross, 2010).

"They would go one notch higher you know to the principal- if I had a supportive principal then that would be the end of that but if the principal is not supportive of you than- some principals want to please the parents – if the principal is not supportive of you then you are in trouble, I mean your hands are tied you cant you know"

"Yeah, because if the parents are not pleased with them then they go to the superintendent and they want to keep the lid on the pot so they do not want to create any controversy they don't want the parents to go to the superintendent because it comes down on them right"

In some cases, school psychologists noted that the principal will take action contrary to the school psychologists' recommendation or take the side of the parents to prevent the situation

from escalating beyond the school. This idea reflected a need to appease the parents, rather than addressing the problem between the students. Schools that had elevated levels of bullying also struggled with depressed levels of professional collaboration and low levels of agreement about professional issues (Roland & Galloway 2004).

"Anybody can implement anything from the bottom up, but it doesn't always go all the way up if your top management isn't there. So, you can start from the bottom and go up, but it can't be all inclusive without something overriding it"

School psychologists also reported making recommendations but being unable to get follow-through from the principal. Without the principal's support, the intervention would not be as encompassing across the school. School psychologists noted that there will be pockets of individuals, including students and school staff, like the school custodian or entire classrooms that were untouched because there was no buy-in from the principal. With buy-in from the principal, even if the student or staff member didn't agree with the intervention, the student or staff member would more likely follow the intervention because it was from the principal. A lack of support from the principal to make an intervention school-wide was important since bullying interventions that cover the whole school were more effective (Cantone et al., 2015; Vreeman & Carol, 2007). Despite whole-school interventions generally being helpful, the range in success was limited by the need for an intense, long duration, and high-fidelity implementation (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017). Missing pockets of individuals in the school, whether it was school staff or students, limited the efficacy of the intervention. School psychologists noted problems with reaching all pockets of the school, and fidelity being challenged when a program was under prioritized because of a lack of principal support. Furthermore, despite school

psychologists being uniquely capable of intervening with bullying and having often intervened with bullying, school psychologists were seldom deployed in systems-level of interventions such as the selection of bully interventions (Diamanduros et al., 2008; Lund et al., 2012; Sherer & Nickerson, 2010).

Overall, the principal affected the role, responsibility, workload, and time of the school psychologists with bullying intervention, as well as program decision making and implementation.

The Priorities and Culture Bullying Occurred Within Were Not Helpful for Bullying Intervention

School psychologists reported several cultural values that were not helpful with bullying intervention. Culture issues included lower prioritization of bullying, condoning of bullying behavior by not intervening, or being bullied themselves by other adults, and adults not seeing children being able to change. School psychologists noted assessment tended to take precedence over bullying intervention. One participant noted bullying takes time and effort, and this limited prioritization to take action.

"At my work environment, people engage in bullying and people who you wouldn't think are bullies bully in the work environment too."

"I'm also giggling because of the previous workplace I was also involved. I was bullied and to have some firsthand understanding of what it feels like to be that helpless and stuff, and so just having that support network is super helpful."

School psychologists noted that staff culture attitudes about bullying with adults were not helpful with bullying intervention. They noted adults themselves committed bullying either amongst their colleagues through workplace bullying, or by bullying the students themselves. Workplace bullying and teachers who bully were not uncommon phenomena in schools (Klein & Bentolila, 2019; McEvoy, & Smith, 2018).

"I've seen teachers who will make statements in front of other kids and to me it's bullying behavior. Where, you know, they're putting down another kid in front of somebody in the other class or those kids would get picked on too."

"The teachers who are bullying the kids. We've got a couple of teachers with temperaments that are maybe not the best to be around teenagers and that doesn't work. Yeah. Because the kids feel bullied, and it somehow gives them permission to act out even more."

School psychologists noted that teachers can be bullies themselves with the students. When asked how the school psychologist might work in those scenarios, one stressed he/she would work with the school administration with the teacher in changing behaviors such as the teacher's tone of voice with the students.

"When I'm in classrooms I see stuff like that happening and I just cringe because, you know, the teacher or a teaching assistant can step in and say, "There's another way to do this," and yet lots of times I see they're just ignored or it's not classified as a problem because, "Oh they're just little kids,"

In conjunction with staff culture attitudes and being bullies themselves, school psychologists also reported a staff culture of being dismissive of bullying behaviors in children.

They reported school staff dismissing the behavior as normative and not needing intervention. In turn *"[they] fail[ed] to label behavior*", instead of "*labeling and saying, "o.k. that's wrong*". This was problematic because non-intervention could be seen as condoning the behavior, as well as increasing the rift between children and staff. In such instances, children thought there was no purpose in approaching staff for support because the staff did not take action about their concerns. School psychologists also reported that teachers would offload the bullying intervention onto the school psychologists, say the bullying was a parenting problem, and not want to intervene with the bullying. This offloading of responsibility was in contrast to other teachers who believed a school and family collaboration was essential for bullying intervention, and for shaping children's attitude in school (Stamatis & Nikolaou; 2016). Parent-teacher conferences were significant factors in reducing the recurrence of bullying (Ayers et al., 2012). Finally, the problems with teachers not wanting to engage in bullying intervention were likely due to a lack of time, not understanding issues such as a mental health condition, and not having skills for bullying intervention. School psychologists who pointed out these problems with teachers were specific about recognizing helpful teachers, and overall, the school psychologists had great respect for teachers but were frustrated with the few who would not engage with bullying behavior. Time was a constraint for interdisciplinary collaboration, and some teachers might not have the training and confidence to intervene effectively with bullying (Beran, 2006; Friend & Cook, 2010; Koller & Bertel, 2006). Generally, school psychologists reported sympathizing with the position of teachers having a heavy workload in their daily routine, and yet were required to be fully engaged to address bullying, a challenge other researchers noted as a delicate balance to achieve (Liu, Wong, & Roland, 2018). Teachers dismissing bullying behavior as normative or deeming situations as unneedy of intervention because the student

would get over the bullying easily could be problematic. This behavior affected whether students felt supported, isolated, or rejected, and whether bystanders saw bullying as acceptable behavior or if bystanders would be penalized for intervening (Bjereld et al., 2019; Midgett et al., 2018; O'Moore, 2013; Storer, Casey & Herrenkohl, 2017). Worsening relationships amongst students and teachers also heightened the probability of group bullying (Mann et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the severity of an incident was difficult to ascertain. Basing the seriousness on the frequency of the bullying did not reflect what the perceived severity of the bullying was to the victim (Van Noorden, et al., 2016). Teacher empathy also decreased over time, which may have further complicated an understanding of severity for the bully-victim (Huang & Zhao, 2018).

> *"It's really interesting…schools have zero bullying policies or zero-tolerance policies, however, I find that times when people are feeling really crunched and stressed and they want to make sure that their students are meeting their PAT levels and all the things – you don't necessarily think it's a good time to do a conversation circle in their class or, you know, for me to pull a small group to talk about what's going on or to get some more information or whatever."*

"I've heard this from teachers, that there's huge stress and emphasis on assessment, assessment, assessment. Like, you know, where are they at with their reading, where are they at with math, are the PATs gonna come out okay – I think there's huge pressure on teachers to perform in the way that they get their students to succeed academically that, you know, maybe we're forgetting about something that would benefit humanity in general if we all just cared a little bit more."

School psychologists reported that school culture did not prioritize bullying highly, which was not helpful for bullying intervention. Despite policies of zero tolerance and zero bullying, when academic pressures mount, bullying took a step downwards with prioritization, which was reflective of the increasing focus on educational and learner goals in school systems (Shoshani & Steinmetz, 2013). For example, school psychologists noted difficulties pulling children out of a classroom to do interventions. School psychologists specifically noted that the efficacy of bullying intervention was benefited by having the freedom to be able to pull children out of a classroom to work with them.

Although some teachers saw bullying as a low priority relative to other problems, it was critical teachers convey a clear stance of antibullying to students. A culture of limited anti-bullying attitude reduced both bystander intervention, and non-physical bullying perpetration, (Dake et al., 2003; Espelage et al., 2018; Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; Sandstrom et al., 2013). Furthermore, many schools noted the wellbeing and mental health of students, in general, was not a high priority (Patalay et al., 2016). Given that pro-bullying attitudes took place before bullying behavior and not the other way around, it was important to address pro-bullying attitudes, since attitudes were less stable, more pliable and subject to shift relative to other intervention targets like empathy (Walters & Espelage, 2018). Importantly, having a policy alone regarding antibullying was not sufficient. There was variable effectiveness of adults responding to bullying and low prioritization of wellbeing and mental health of students even with established policy (Hall, 2017; Patalay et al., 2016). An anti-bullying policy was likely to be more successful if it was based on evidence, robust theory, and was implemented with a strong degree of fidelity, which were characteristics school psychologists in this study reported having difficulty with to some degree (Hall, 2017). For example, using evidence-based decisions was

difficult if there was no access to journal articles as one school psychologist noted his/ her school district struggled with this problem. Finally, reluctance to work with parents or simply blaming the problem on the parents also was important in changing bullying attitudes since parents shaped their children's perceptions, which in turn changed the school's climate (Rodriguez, 2016).

"I saw two of the girls the following week, they came to talk to me, and I was under the impression that it had been resolved and they said no, it's not been resolved and I'm talking to them a bit more about what's going on"

"If you're being bullied, you could go to the principal but more likely that would resolve in disciplinary action, right? Or ignoring, I think, and I don't mean ignoring in the sense that nothing's done but try something, talk to them next time, or call them in and tell them that they shouldn't do it"

School psychologists reported problems with a school culture that considers bullying a non-priority, and so fewer effective interventions were implemented. Typically, interventions that were used were chosen because they were quick, and the staff did not want to spend time on bullying intervention, and at face value, the interventions appeared to be taking action. However, school psychologists reported that students told them that in such cases, the bullying had not been resolved, and they no longer wished to re-engage with the intervention process. Indeed, this furthered the rift between students and staff. Even if action was taken by staff, school psychologists reported these actions as "*ignoring it*" behavior. For example, actions like telling the children to step up or reporting the incident to an adult, which made children feel betrayed,

undermined the complexity of the social situations the children were dealing with (Storer et al., 2017).

"I mean I think preconceived notions. I think we have to put aside personal feelings about whether something will or won't work. They have to be willing to change and experiment. Yeah, I think that's probably the biggest barrier, and again it's not specific to bullying, but I think it's specific to any form of intervention if there is a lack of willingness to try. You know, preconceived notions."

"And even just some of the old-school kind of thinking in terms of consequences versus trying to provide alternative ways of disciplining the students who are involved in the act of bullying I guess."

Finally, school psychologists reported problems with school culture regarding bullying interventions. They noted an old school attitude that seemed consequence driven and an assumption that children could not change. One school psychologist specifically noted he/she *"[didn't] see necessarily that a student who is bullying is bad or good or anything like that but [was] on a path and [he/she] think[s] that they [could] learn just as readily as anybody else to manage or to work with it".* Rather than focusing on reprimanding the child, the school psychologist tried to guide the student to adaptive behaviors. The school psychologist noted that a problematic attitude existed where adults "*[saw] kids who [were] already engaging in bullying or something like that and [they] kind of [assumed] that they're lost already."* School psychologists reported that an attitude of consequence focused interventions not only seemed ineffective with changing the bully, but it also led to the victim being less willing to seek support from staff because they were afraid of retaliation from the bully. Suspensions were one of these

strategies that were noted as common consequences in schools, mainly through the school administration. Interventions that focused on the removal of the student from the school were not effective in preventing future bullying and may have served as positive reinforcement for students who struggled in the school environment (Ayers et al., 2012). Importantly, not all consequences were ineffective against recurring bullying. The loss of privileges was an effective approach in reducing bullying recurrence (Ayers et al., 2012).

Student Specific Characteristics Could be not Helpful for Bullying Intervention

"Yes, they do, they do. Even when they know it's hurtful and dislike it intensely, they have a hard time just blocking the offender".

"It depends you know on the personality you know some kids are quiet and reserved and they don't like conflict. So, they don't know how to stand up to bullies right there's a lot of factors"

School psychologists noted two characteristics of students that lead to difficulty with bullying intervention, resiliency, and assertiveness. One school psychologist noted that students seem to be less resilient now than in the past, which might be attributable to greater exposure to information, mainly through electronic media. School psychologists reported parenting styles as a challenge to resilience and, in turn, bullying intervention, an idea supported by the literature (Bernard & Australian Council for Educational Research, n.d.; Perry et al., 2018). Children seemed to have a difficult time blocking an offender online, and this scenario occurred when the school psychologist was unable to enact change on the bully, such as when the bully did not attend the same school. The school psychologist noted that despite a top-down approach like telling the child to cut off contact with the bully and the child had the means to do so, the child continued to maintain contact with the bully. There was something gained for the victim to

maintain contact with the bully that was not being addressed by the intervention of cutting off communication with the bully. This idea spoke to the complicated nature of bullying, to which the other quote referred. School psychologists noted a multitude of factors involved with child-specific factors that complicated bullying intervention, including low resiliency based on a disposition to be reserved and not stand up to bullies. School psychologists had reported similar concerns with the victims, sometimes displaying limited attributes like assertiveness. This idea combined with school psychologists' observations of bullies seeking victims with low response costs. For instance, a bully was unlikely to target an individual "*who's gonna be physical back to them or even assertive back to them*." A child's low belief in his/herself to take action would limit their subsequent behavior during a bullying episode (Peet et al., 2015).

Parents Factors Could be not Helpful for Bullying Intervention

School psychologists noted challenges with parents who were being unhelpful with bullying intervention. Such parents were reported to escalate problems in school, have their problems, had difficulty supporting the school, targeted the school psychologists themselves, not engaging (typically if a parent of a bully), and affecting the resiliency and bullying characteristics of the child negatively.

"I meet the child, I see there's a lot of anger, there's a lot of frustration, all these things and then I meet the parent and I think if only the parent could get the help they need…this could resolve. But then the parents don't have the support and the Mental Health Services or don't even realize that their way of being is destructive really, it's harmful. Now, how do you deal with that? You know, how do you deal with that, I don't know."

Parents were reported by school psychologists to have their challenges, such as anger management, that were contributing to the bully's problems. In this case, the parents had destructive mannerisms, limited support services like mental health service, and may not even realize that their mannerisms were maladaptive.

"She said that her daughter was being disrespectful towards me and I wasn't seeing that and I'm pretty sensitive when kids are being disrespectful towards me. I usually notice that. And I said, no, no she's doing fine, she's doing fine"

In this case, the school psychologist noted the parent's mental health problems were skewing their perspective of the child's emotional and behavioral functioning, such that the parent thought the child was disrespectful to the parent in that meeting. The school psychologist emphasized his/her skillset of evaluating disrespect, and he/she did not see that behavior in the child in that meeting. Furthermore, the school psychologist then noted the case later revealed the parent was physically abusing the child. Parents might have seen meetings with school personnel like teachers negatively when parents regarded their child's well being as low and being bullied, as well as viewing school staff with a negative level of competence (Cameron & Kovac, 2017).

"That parent will get very defensive sometimes they will say that's not my kid and go to the principal and say you know that psychologist phoned me and she's accusing my kid of being a bully, so they start to you know it doesn't you have to tread on thin ice when those kinds of things happen

"There are those parents of the "identified bullies" that are just in denial that this is happening and will block attempts to have the children own their role in the whole scenario and so it's hard in that sense because then they're coming to the school and saying, "Well no that's not right,"

and they're telling their kid that they didn't do this, and they're not responsible – then to have an open, genuine conversation about it is impossible because the kid says, "Well my dad says I didn't do anything wrong," or "Blah blah blah," and that makes it really hard because how do you say, "Well actually your dad's wrong."

School psychologists noted the difficulty in working with parents of the bully, which was reflective of parent non-involvement and their bullying behavior (Garaigordobil & Machimbarrena, 2017; Papanikolaou et al., 2011). Some school psychologists reporedt not using the term bully because it elicited a non-productive response in the parent. The school psychologists noted that such parents would deny that their child was a bully and would escalate this denial to the principal. This tactic was reported to work with principals siding with the parents, so the issue did not increase beyond the school. School psychologists noted they felt unsupported in these cases, if not powerless. The quotes also emphasized the effect on the bully, in that the bully would state that since the parents disagree with the school psychologist, it created a hard point with the therapeutic relationship. This idea also implied that the bully saw no wrong in their behavior. Given the support they received from their parent, bullies concluded that their behavior was not inappropriate. School personnel might have the reluctance to work with the parents if the personnel felt that they could resolve the issue on their own in the school and did not want to draw unnecessary attention and duress (Cameron & Kovac, 2017). However, it was important to work with parents for bullying intervention. Parental issues were consistently correlated with bullying involvement either through bullying or bully victimizing behavior including parent mental health problems, physical punishment, psychological aggression, parental stress, domestic violence, abuse and neglect, maladaptive parenting (Eskisu 2014; Garaigordobil & Machimbarrena, 2017; Gómez-Ortiz et al., 2016; Lereya et al., 2013; Lieu et

al., 2018; Martínez et al., 2019; Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; Moreno–Ruiz, Martínez–Ferrer, & García–Bacete, 2019; Nocentini et al., 2019; Papanikolaou et al., 2011; Swearer et al., 2010). In some cases, family factors had not been as significant with influencing bullying, although how the family factors were analyzed may have affected those results (Cook et al., 2010). Some school personnel would not work with parents until an incident occurs (Cameron & Kovac, 2017). A lack of working with the parents may have led to mixed messages of interventions for students, including basic tenets like the definition of bullying (Rodriguez, 2016).

"It was challenging to engage parents. Usually, I could get them on the phone for a phone call. Some parents might have been more involved and wanted to come in and meet with me to talk but that was challenging to get parents involved."

School psychologists reported parents generally were non-engaging when it was the parent of the bully, compared to parents of the victim (Garaigordobil & Machimbarrena, 2017; Papanikolaou et al., 2011). There was a general lack of involvement and engagement with the school psychologist overall. This idea limited one of the essential components school psychologists reported for bullying intervention, when there were widespread buy-in and reinforcement of interventions, such as across home and school. Deeper parental involvement for bullying intervention was generally good practice overall (Lieu et al., 2018).

School Needs Could be not Helpful for Bullying Intervention

School psychologists noted challenges with school needs that changed over time and differences between grades. They said cell phones being developmentally inappropriate/affecting communication and being allowed in the schools (however, some children were fine with cell phones and were not involved with bullying). Finally, they noted playgrounds needing better

surveillance because the school psychologists would usually not detect bullying on the playground given their typical roles. For example, school psychologists noted changing needs in the same school over the years, and the ensuing shift in intervention focus. One school psychologist, who described a positive, focused school-wide initiative that was successful in the previous year, had a different focus in the current year.

"Challenges in terms of time- because some schools like I've been to some schools- some schools will give you the time to run groups and some schools will not; so you know it's a time factor and if you're if they give you the time and resources to run a group then you are ok but if you do not have the time to run a group because you are doing other things then you cannot run the group ; so you know time and resources would be another factor"

School psychologists emphasized that each school has different needs and priorities and that these differences would affect how the school psychologists enact bullying interventions. In one particular case, the school psychologist was emphasizing the helpfulness of groups for bullying intervention but noted he/she was not always able to enact groups because of how each school allocates their time and resources. The school's needs were compelling, as school psychologists noted that the school needs to affect their overall roles and responsibilities. That time could be limited if the school favors assessment over interventions, which could be typical for the traditional role of the school psychologist, seen as a psychometrician and doorkeeper to funding (Dowdy et al., 2014).

"Yeah, some high schools I don't even know if they address it"

"Some elementary schools do – some of them do and some of them not so much either- but I think high school really loses out the kids are going to their various classes and the kid will have

different teacher so each teacher does not really know each of the kids as they would in elementary and junior high like a homeroom teacher and the homeroom teacher can see oh gee this kid is really quiet and they talk to them and the kid says oh I am being bullied you know whereas in high school it is not so prevalent the prevention is not prevalent in high school – that's how other school psychologists view it"

School psychologists noted that the nature of the different grades also affected bullying intervention; older classes did not address bullying intervention as much. This lack of response could be the result of several factors including lack of a homeroom, so there was less familiarity between students and teachers, students not wanting to engage with staff for intervention, or a smaller staff to student ratio compared to earlier grades. Regarding groups, the school psychologist noted that running groups in high school were challenging because of the structure of high school as there were no common classes taken by all students, which would have accommodated group work.

Resource Specific Factors Could be not Helpful for Bullying Intervention

School psychologists noted problems with resources that limited bullying interventions. They specified difficulty implementing resources that were not flexible to accommodate school needs like time or staffing constraints. Resources were selected by an administration that was not evidence-based. There was limited formal training for bullying interventions. There were current practices, not working, such as telling students what was wrong and right. Finally, there was insufficient levels or duration of conflict resolution.

"I think more clear education or resources for bullying"

"Its not an excuse but …you know the other problem is that when you look for research like it would be nice if somebody could compile it for us- like this is what the research on bullying shows basic resource so you're not looking around right it would be nice to see the relevance to Canada because you sometimes have research that talks about other countries but the research is different what they do with bullying in Finland is going to be different- the culture is different here"

School psychologists reported a need for precise education and adequate resources for bullying intervention. These needs related to the limited time school psychologists indicated they struggled with managing. Having a more natural, streamlined process to decipher the plethora of resources and education available would be helpful to them. School psychologists noted that resources used in the school often were not based on evidence of efficacy. Instead, many resources were chosen for superficial reasons such as trendiness or because a particular resource was a "cool, flashy thing". School psychologists noted a repository of evidence-based interventions would be helpful for bullying intervention, a vision reflected in the literature which could have helped manage the plethora of interventions available, which otherwise tended to overwhelm school staff (Holt et al., 2013; Patalayet al., 2016). The multitude of resources to choose from was further complicated with difficulty interpreting the resources available with bullying research. Problems with resources included measurement challenges; lack of theoretical foundations, where interventions based on theory were usually more effective (Cantone et al., 2015; Gaffney et al., 2019; Merrell, et al., 2008); heterogenous measurement tools; a general lack of commonality overall; lack of valid and reliable experimental designs like randomized controlled studies; some studies with single-session interventions; not considering confounding variables; information bias; and limited longitudinal follow up, (Cantone et al., 2015;

Chalamandaris, & Piette, 2015; Earnshaw et al., 2018; Merrell et al., 2008; Smith, 2016; Volk et al., 2017). Overall, while bullying interventions showed efficacy, the wide variation in effect sizes suggests further assessment was needed to understand why these variations of effect sizes existed to overcome challenges in generalizing these heterogeneous study results. School psychologists certainly were not alone in noting problems deciphering the available evidence on bullying interventions (Stevenson et al., 2004).

"You have to understand that you are always working within the school environment and each school is its own microcosm. Because one intervention works well in one school, it doesn't mean it's going to work somewhere else. School culture I find is so different and varied across settings that, and I don't know what school culture is better for which intervention, but I think it's a really important factor that you have to take into account."

School psychologists reported that each school environment was a unique microcosm that must be considered for bullying intervention and that interventions were not universal across schools. The school psychologist providing the previous quote emphasized she/he was not sure what interventions best fit each school microcosm, reflecting uncertainty and possibly complexity in this situation. The adoption process of an intervention in a school must be addressed to maintain program fidelity goals with interventions in schools generally (Stevens et al., 2001).

"But I think if there were more clear approaches that were evidence-based and that were built to work with busy schedules and the role of psychologists in schools – that would be helpful. Or interventions maybe that are adaptable in different ways and easy to implement for people who don't have a lot of time to prep or whatever. I think that would be good. But overall, I think more

education or knowledge or things out there that could help. Or training programs, workshops, yeah."

Further detailing the unique microcosms of each school environment, school psychologists noted the need for interventions to be flexible to fit with each school's needs. They noted interventions can be time, staff, or financially intensive, and this could hamper their implementation in the school. One school psychologist indicated that even with a free program available for the school, the staff dedication required for the program was simply too much. The school psychologist also noted limited funding prevented the adoption of other programs. In this specific case, the school psychologist ended up creating his/her bullying intervention program that was better able to suit the school's needs. Proper implementation and ensuring fidelity were critical, as the effectiveness of the program could be limited by poor fidelity, even if the program was effective (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017). School psychologists' reporting of program challenges were reflected in general for mental health support barriers through staff capacity, and school funding, in addition to lack of specialists (Patalay et al., 2016; Weist et al., 2017). For instance, without a dedicated project coordinator position in the school, school staff tended to look at what was done with other problems or resort to past behaviors, and overall showed a decrease in program implementation (Black et al., 2010). School mental health programs tended to be created and executed in a piecemeal manner with minimal coordination with other schools or programs in the school, likely due to public and legislative pressure and a plethora of intervention choices (Ademan & Taylor, 1993; Nickerson, 2019).

"When I do training in school we learn about bullying, we learn about the impact of bullying, we learn about the population that may be a little bit vulnerable, but I don't think we learn about specific bullying interventions"

School psychologists noted their training has limited exposure to bullying intervention training. This sentiment was echoed both by school psychologists who have had significant time in practice and by school psychologists who are relatively newer in practice. They noted limited exposure or training in bullying intervention and often were left to their own devices to acquire bullying intervention training.

"I don't even know if there were any and if there were, I don't know if I would have been allowed to really access them. Especially with my time being more at the discretion of the principal…I don't know that they would have done that."

Previously, there were reported challenges with school principals having a high degree of control over school psychologists and, in turn, bullying intervention efficacy. Furthermore, school psychologists noted that even if there was a transparent repository of evidence-based bullying interventions, they might not have been able to access the repository due to constraints from the principal. Importantly, this quote underlined not just limited time, but also whether the principal would allow access to the repository.

Role Factors Could be not Helpful for Bullying Intervention

"It's been so long since I've been in bullying…it's only a part of what you do as a school psychologist right? And so, it's not always at the forefront of what you might be researching or looking up or trying to know more about."

School psychologists noted their roles could limit bullying intervention. They reported difficulty with limited time to better understand the school environment, time to intervene, time to take responsibility, and time to research interventions.

"Its -schools are so busy right by the time you go home and look up research on bullying its. I don't know its not factored into our day because we are so busy"

School psychologists noted they simply did not have time to look up current research on bullying intervention. Their roles did not factor in time for research review, and therefore such activities were accorded a lower priority.

"So, I think I'm one of the only in-school psychologists. I think the others were teacher counselors in the district and even then, we really didn't meet often. It didn't feel like I really had much support at all."

School psychologists reported their roles as isolating with minimal supports. This lack of external supports limited the ability to collaborate on intervention work, such as how to apply resources in unique school systems or finding professional support for the emotional challenges that school psychologists reportedly encountered with bullying intervention.

"I don't know cause now Ellis most of my work is assessments"

"I would get paged if there was ever a crisis in classrooms, like behavior issues or things like that. I would get pulled to those too so yeah it was tough to always know what my schedule was going to be like or have enough time or effort to be able to take kids to do an intervention of some sort. It was tough."

A common theme amongst school psychologists working in areas where assessments provided access to funding for schools was that bullying intervention took a lower priority to evaluations. Some school psychologists reported not having worked with bullying intervention in some time, due to their time being consumed primarily with assessments. This assessment focus was reportedly due to the role the schools they work for expect, and what the school's priority needs were for the school psychologist. School psychologists reported also dealing with other items on top of assessments, and variability in their scheduling limited their ability to do an intervention. School psychologists were often limited to the leading role of assessment in schools (Splett et al., 2013). Although school mental health professionals should be supporting mental health, such personnel provided minimal levels of service for mental health, while teachers took a majority role in service for mental health despite having limited training and confidence in mental health intervention work (Atkins et al., 2017; Berkowitz, 2013; Dowdy et al., 2015; Koller & Bertel, 2006; Sanchez et al., 2018; Mudhovozi, 2015; Strom et al., 2013)

"I think one of the challenges being a school psychologist is when we go in for assessment, we only see the kids one or two times so we may not get a broad story as we work with kids with counseling, which we'll see them for a longer period of time"

School psychologists noted that assessment focused roles also lead to limited time in each school. This challenge was further compounded when there were a significant number of schools assigned to the school psychologist. School psychologists noted that limited time in each school, in turn, limited how much information they could gather about the children, and time spent to develop significant therapeutic relationships with the children. Limited time affected the duration of intervention focus, concerning elements like cognitive empathy, a factor associated with

bullying and victimization, decreasing over time (Williford et al., 2016). For school psychologists to have time and resources and overall school reform, school psychologists' roles must move away from being a psychometrician and decision-maker of special education support (Dowdy et al., 2015).

"The administration will usually handle that before we come into the picture or they don't know we have training in it, or they don't know what we can provide so I think that is not specifically with bullying intervention. I think it's for all. They may not be clear on what is our role so usually when we go in in September we'll explain to the principal or the learning coach or vice principal about what we do, what kind of services we can provide, like consultation, play therapy, and assessment, so that they are aware of how we are going to help so that they're able to utilize our service a little bit better."

"We all deal with behavior so I think sometimes it can be confusing who does what."

School psychologists noted that their roles were not always certain with the school administration team. Even when the school psychologists tried to explain their positions, there were several other disciplines in schools that have overlap with their focus, which lead to role confusion. School psychologists noted this role confusion was not limited to bullying intervention, but their roles overall as school psychologists. Previously in challenges with administration, school psychologists also noted difficulties with their parts being mixed with school administrators, typically in a disciplinary role. They noted that lack of boundaries and a clear distinction between the two positions left challenges with buy-in with the students or feeling the scope of dealing with parental complaints with the school as being inappropriate for their practice. Although effective collaboration across disciplines was essential in school

settings, there was the uncertainty of professional roles and duties, and often professionals would be challenged with impeding another professional's function (Anderson, 2013; Bohnenkamp et al., 2015). To overcome these barriers, professionals must outline each team member's role, duty, area of competence, and area of work with the team, a practice that one of the school psychologists interviewed in this study noted having to do with school administration (Bohnenkamp et al., 2015).

"There wasn't a big psych team and there weren't very many people especially in school-based roles and so I didn't really have any support or other psychologists who were doing the same thing as me and so I think it would have been really helpful to have a team or people who I could consult with or talk to or who were working actively with some similar issue"

"Collaborate or consult or see what they've tried, especially because so many interventions couldn't just be applied as they are and would have to be adapted. It would have been great to have people who were doing that and had tried different interventions to collaborate with."

Some school psychologists noted the nature of their positions were typically isolating, either due to the smaller school psychology teams or the kind of their work environment limited their collaboration time. They expressed a desire to collaborate with other professionals like school psychologists to brainstorm ideas such as how interventions might be applicable if their nature was not suitable for their school.

The Nature of Bullying Itself Could be not Helpful for Bullying Intervention

School psychologists reported the nature of bullying lead to challenges with bullying intervention, such as knowing when bullying occurs, who instigated the bullying, stability of

reporting/siding of different parties. Specifically, with cyberbullying, school psychologists noted some children have difficulty managing technology in their lives, and they suspected the technology was too much for them to handle.

"That's right. It's very difficult to tell because when you listen to one you believe that they're being honest, they appear to be honest, and then you talk to the other and you hear a slightly different story or maybe a very different story so it's pretty tricky."

School psychologists reported difficulty in knowing who was telling the truth in a situation between multiple parties.

"You know, it's back and forth and then some of the girls will side with one and it's back and forth…it's pretty tricky."

School psychologists reported that not only was it difficult to ascertain an objective viewpoint from reporters, but the stability of statements often changed.

"Well, I think we're just expecting too much from the kids at a particular stage. If you're going to give technology that allows them to communicate everything that comes through their little minds every second, there are going to be problems and I think at this stage of the game they're too young, too self-centered, too impulsive to manage the responsibility of a phone. They just need a bit more maturity before they can handle that device in a productive way."

The school psychologist noted that not all children who used technology ended up bullying others but suspected that the technology was simply too much for children's brains to manage given their maturity level. In general, the nature of bullying was merely challenging to

analyze, which made bullying intervention challenging to implement effectively (Englander, 2017).

Conclusion

Overall, school psychologists tended to report challenges with administration, culture, child characteristics, parents, school needs, resources, roles, and nature of bullying. These challenges often overlapped with similar factors reported as helpful for bullying intervention, such as school psychologists finding principals and teachers helpful and unhelpful with bullying intervention. Within these challenges were items specific to bullying, such as assessing a bullying incident or the heterogenous nature of bullying research. Additionally, some items were beyond bullying, such as a time constraint because of curriculum prioritization, or administrations needing to appease parents. Importantly, as concluded with what school psychologists reported as helpful for bullying intervention, there was no single item that was as unhelpful for bullying intervention. Instead, multiple factors were reported as non-beneficial, and reflected a generally complicated nature of bullying intervention overall.

Chapter 4: Overall Conclusions

"It's really sad that we've become…the internet was supposed to connect everybody, you know, you could communicate with everybody all over the world, but it feels like it's kind of like people have become more disconnected and not as engaged with each other and are able to do this to each other without any kind of remorse or caring how the impact is to the other person. It's sad."

Overall, school psychologists noted two primary categories regarding their experiences with bullying intervention: a) bullying was complex, and b) relationships were essential for bullying intervention. The above quote reflected a snippet of the general disconnects in relations between the multiple stakeholders involved with bullying. The following section analyzed the results of this study, looking at school psychologists' perspectives on what was bullying, what was typically included with bullying intervention, what was helpful with bullying intervention, and what was not beneficial with bullying intervention. The overlap and resulting lack of consistency supported an overall core category that bullying had multiple factors leading to complexity, and relationships amongst these factors, as well as relationships themselves, were a critical factor to consider. Finally, this section analyzed how this core category compared to three existing similar studies.

Bullying was a complex phenomenon. This idea was reflected by school psychologists who reported a wide range of variables that encompassed the socio-ecological framework bullying resides within (Storer et al., 2017). School psychologists in this study reflected on five factors involved in defining bullying from their experiences: online, intentionality, involving harm, involving power, and a number of incidences. Cyberbullying was reported to be emerging in frequency over time, with changes in student interaction, empathy, and compassion, perceived severity of harm, and intervention in itself, such as having parent involvement. School psychologists noted that the increasing use of online format for interaction was leading to difficulty with interaction with peers, and in turn, heightening cyberbullying events. Bullying was noted by school psychologists to be intentional. There was variation in students due to development, source of intentionality, and difficulty assessing intentionality. For example, younger students and older students had differences in cognitive capacity, which affected their

ability to be systematic with intentionality. School psychologists reported bullying was committing harm through a range in severity, in a verbal and physical format, and with some difficulty in differentiating harm vs. bullying specifically. For example, school psychologists noted a need to differentiate mean vs. bullying, as they had different consequences for each behavior type. School psychologists noted bullying directly involved power like individual holding clout over another individual, or an individual having a deficit relative to other individuals such as a mental or physical disadvantage, or a need to attain power because of feelings of powerlessness in the bully. Here, power was exhibited in bullying in a variety of manners. Power was not merely shown as a difference in power between individuals. Rather, power was reported through how that power differential exists, or why power may be involved in a bullying case. Finally, school psychologists noted there was some degree of repetition in the number of events in bullying, although some school psychologists noted bullying could be a singular event. One conclusion made previously was that while distinct categories were describing what bullying was to school psychologists, these categories did not necessarily fall cleanly within recent attempts to define bullying. These current efforts included the need to establish multiple incidences vs. singular incidences, or at least a singular incident with a high likelihood of being repeated (Espelage, 2018; Gladden, 2014; Jabeen et al., 2020; Midgett, 2016). The multiple factors involved in bullying and the numerous contexts these factors came to fruition led to multiple fronts to consider whether a case was bullying and how to prevent or intervene. For example, was intentionality a result of a bully seeking power lost because of an abusive household, or was it a result of a bully not being aware of alternative methods to attain what they wanted because they have never been reprimanded from a younger age)?

Further complications included the varied manner school psychologists reported each factor to manifest in their perspective, such as whether an incident needs to be multiple or singular. This complication was reflected in the next four sections analyzing what a bully was and what was a victim, what process school psychologists were using, and what they found helpful and not helpful with bullying intervention. There was both a wide range of factors and variation within these factors.

What was a bully, and what was a victim? School psychologists described a range of intrinsic and extrinsic factors that make up bullies, painting a complex picture of what a bully entailed. Bullies were noted to have intrinsic problems such as mental health challenges, including depression, emotional regulation difficulty, self-esteem, and self-confidence issues, antisocial tendencies, and issues specific to gender and age. Additionally, there was an expansion of intrinsic issues like anger management as a result of external factors like family instability. School psychologists also noted extrinsic characteristics of bullies, including parental issues, being victims of bullies themselves, domestic abuse, home instability, and a condoning of behaviors and a lack of intervention. School psychologists also described what a victim of bullying was like with two distinctions- either the victim could be anybody, or it was an individual that was limited in some capacity, such as through mental health or physical health disability. So, in sum, several factors could go into being a bully; one school psychologist noted "*it's really all over the place*" in describing what a bully was as a general reflection of the range of characteristics in bullies in his/her experience.

Similarly, with a wide breadth, victims were described as being anybody with no attributes in particular. This idea was complicated, with victims also reported to be lacking in

some manner. In sum, there were more factors to consider with bullying intervention in being able to understand what a bully and a victim might look like, in addition to what was bullying.

School psychologists reported the process of bullying intervention, which was placed into six general categories. Collaboration occurred with multiple stakeholders, including the bully, victim, teacher, school administrators, and other school personnel. Purposes of these relationships included direct therapy, workflow management, information collaboration, and ensuring consistency. Each stakeholder had a unique role in these relationships. In some cases, the stakeholder like the principal directed the intervention direction, such as taking a disciplinary process through consequences or conflict resolution, sources of referrals like teachers, or direct therapeutic targets through addressing the bully's or victim's needs. Another factor was the context of the bullying, such as the age of the individuals involved, severity and length of the incidences, the bully's environment, and peer relationships. For example, a bully's behavior as a result of problems at home had a different driving force to maladaptive behavior than a bully's act as a result of peers who encouraged such behavior. School psychologists also reported differences with the referral system- for example, students referred directly to them seemed to be coming because they wanted to avoid school administration involvement in case this led to repercussions from the bully reacting to being disciplined by the school administrator. In turn, this referral route would affect the type of intervention implemented. Different intervention focuses were factors in interventions including topics in psychoeducation, the format of the intervention, or involving the bully in the intervention. For example, several school psychologists emphasized the lack of intervention as a primary intervention focus, particularly for younger students. Another school psychologist noted the needs of a bully were better served through therapy with the school psychologist, rather than discipline through the school

administration. Resources played a role in bullying intervention, such as the range of resources used, and a lack of a common approach in resources. Finally, school psychologists reported their role played a factor in bullying intervention, including a lack of a clear, consistent position relative to other school personnel or being an extension of discipline from the school administrator. So again, echoing sentiments above regarding complexity, the typical route of bullying intervention, as reported by school psychologists, was a complicated affair. This route involved a range of factors (six general points with a multitude of subpoints in this section) that suggested a challenging journey in trying to have one intervention fit all situations. As an example, incorporating all six categories could be a case where the victim got direct therapy to process the distress. Still, because the victim did a direct referral to avoid repercussions from the bully, the bully's behavior and causes for the action were not addressed. However, if the school administrator was extending the disciplinary focus onto the school psychologist, the above scenario may not happen, if the school psychologist was focused on a repercussion focus on the bully. These factors intertwined with each other and may not exist on their own in solitude, and thus further complicated bullying intervention. The following exploration of what was helpful and what was not useful with bullying intervention suggests credence to this idea.

School psychologists reported a set of factors of what was helpful with bullying intervention, including relationships and resource/intervention specific factors. Relationships between the school psychologist and the students and parents for therapy, child-level role models, and the students, the school psychologist, and school personnel were helpful, with the student and community. For example, a good relationship between the teacher and the students provided better opportunities for change, given that a school psychologist might not have the time or proximity to develop that closeness with students as a teacher does. Or a principal that

could ensure that interventions at a school-wide level were implemented for better consistency. School psychologists also reported intervention/resource specific factors were helpful with bullying intervention, including self-confidence, targeting early intervention, empathy, restitution, and managing home and peer stressors. For instance, if the student lacked the confidence to execute a strategy, awareness of a plan will not be sufficient to enact change. Victims with poor communication skills might not be able to assert their story, and so a bully could turn the story in their favor and avoid meaningful consequences.

Another instance was the lack of an early intervention led to normalization of the behavior. Empathy was noted to be also helpful for bullying intervention, but an exploration of the research indicates a complicated relationship with empathy and bullying. So as an example, to incorporate the above, a scenario trying to incorporate what school psychologists found helpful for bullying intervention might include focusing on the victim's communication skills so he/she could better have articulated his/her story. However, since teachers might have a better relationship with students than school psychologists, this task of developing confidence and communication skills might be pushed onto the teacher. The bully would also have needed to have some degree of support to build empathy, being mindful of the non-linear relationship of empathy and bullying and deciding who this work would fall upon- the school psychologist or the teacher will need to be determined. So again, there were multiple factors to consider with what was helpful with bullying, and these factors were not linear relationships, such as with empathy and bullying, which led to complex relationships overall with what was useful with bullying intervention.

Furthering factors to the complexity of bullying intervention were the eight areas that school psychologists reported that were not helpful with bullying intervention, including administration, priorities/culture, child-specific characteristics, parents, school needs, resources, roles, and the nature of bullying itself. The administration was said to be focused on consequences and an "old school thinking," which tended to limit reporting by students, or passed this focus onto the school psychologist and affected their roles, responsibilities, and workloads. In some cases, these actions were to appease the parents or to show that work had taken place, rather than make real-world changes. One school psychologist noted that decisions might be made to prevent escalation of concerns from the parent to the superintendent. Cultural challenges could include having a lower prioritization of bullying, lack of intervention, adults bullying themselves, or assuming children cannot change. There were frequent mentions of assessment and academic needs being prioritized over bullying. Child-specific characteristics that could limit bullying intervention include lowered resiliency and reduced assertiveness. These features led the victims to be unable to block a bully online or having a reduced response cost to a bully's actions by not being able to be assertive or physical back to the bully. Parents were noted to be limited by having their problems, difficulty supporting the school, not engaging, targeting the school psychologists, or affecting bullying characteristics of the child. For example, parents might have condoned the bullying behavior and usurped efforts by the school to condemn the bullying behavior.

School needs also played a role in limiting bullying intervention by different requirements in each school, cell phones being allowed in schools, and playgrounds being poorly supervised. For example, school psychologists noted that the different needs of each school would make the roles and responsibilities of the school psychologists change. There were

problems with resources, including inflexible resources with diverse school needs like time and staff constraints, administration selecting nonevidence based resources, and limited formal training. For example, there might not be enough staff or enough time to implement an intervention as required fully. The roles of school psychologists were noted to limit bullying intervention by how much time they could understand the school, time to intervene, time to take responsibility, and time to research interventions. For example, school psychologists were typically involved with the assessment and not intervention, and so their ability to intervene was limited by the time allocated to intervene. Finally, the nature of bullying led to difficulty with bullying intervention- such as investigating the bullying and problems with reporting. So as an example, encompassing what school psychologists reported unhelpful with bullying intervention, the administration might need to shift the focus from an "*old school thinking*" of working with bullying, as would other adults like teachers or parents who were condoning or exhibiting bullying behavior. This idea would ensure that a child was bullying because a parent excuses such behavior may change, rather than being written off as not being able to change. However, for the school psychologist to support the child, a culture shift from an assessment only model to intervention focused model for school psychologist would need to occur. School needs that were focused on funding through assessment, though, would need an alternative manner to meet their needs. A school psychologist spread thinly across multiple school sites would need fewer schools to work with to focus more on intervention with the students. Schools would need to shift their priorities to bullying, from other priorities like an academic achievement. Perhaps before any of these factors were to occur, it would be essential to know the very nature of the bullying incident. This idea was no small feat, considering that establishing intentionality as an internal factor was not easy, and reporting by children could be unstable or limited by the children's

reluctance to talk to authorities. Some of these problems, such as a shift from an assessment only model with school psychologists, were a more significant problem beyond just bullying. In conclusion, bullying intervention must consider the multiple factors of what was previously explored with what helped bully intervention, what was typically involved with bullying intervention, or what was bullying, what was a bully, and what was a victim. Also, bullying intervention must account for the multiple factors of what school psychologists reported to be not helpful with bullying intervention (eight categories here with their nuanced subcategories).

The previous exploration of the core category showed bullying was a complicated matter. There were multiple factors and intricate relationships amongst these factors with what factors defined bullying, what was typically involved in bullying intervention, what was helpful in bullying intervention, and what did not help bully intervention. There was a plethora of factors that must be considered for effective bullying intervention, including specific school needs, parents, principals, teachers, peers, assessing and defining bullying, bullying research and resources, intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics of bullies, and victim characteristics. There was also wide variation and overlap of what was helpful and not helpful within these factors, which furthers the complexity. A review of this study's overview of typical bullying intervention, which was helpful for bullying intervention, and what was not helpful for bullying intervention shows overlap. For example, school psychologists noted teachers, parents, and principals to be both helpful and not helpful with bullying intervention. Another area of inconsistency was what a bullying victim was- in some cases, victims of bullying were limited, like through a mental or physical disability. School psychologists noted that victims tended to be limited in some capacity, such that there would not be a high response cost to a bully targeting that individual due to a lack of assertiveness or being physical back to the bully. In contrast, one school

psychologist noted surprise with a popular student being bullied, in comparison to the quieter children not being bullied. This school psychologist noted that anybody could be a victim of bullying, and there was no specific characteristic of a victim of bullying. Generally, this inconsistency in what was helpful and not helpful with bullying intervention was reflected in the literature in that there was no clear path for bullying intervention (Bjereld et al., 2019). Likely, the wide range of factors involved with bullying and bullying intervention research reflected a challenge with a largely heterogeneous culture in Canada and the United States, in comparison to homogenous states like Finland. This heterogeneity meant that no single approach or pathway would successfully mitigate bullying in Canadian schools. This idea was reflective of the higher degree of success of interventions implemented in more homogenous cultures (da Silva et al., 2017; Evans et al., 2014).

Furthermore, within these factors, there was uncertainty about how some elements function, including the relationship between empathy and bullying. This idea added further to the complexity. A final issue was that the definition of bullying itself was unclear, and a universal and a widely adopted definition still does not exist. The overall complexity meant no single approach would address all factors involved because multiple factors and interactions between these factors required a multiple-front attack for bullying intervention, as opposed to a single unique factor for intervention focus (Black et al., 2010; Nocentini et al., 2019). Future research was needed to continue solidifying the complex intricacies of the framework bullying exists within heterogenous Canadian culture, as well as unifying research and understanding of bullying overall.

Relationships were essential for bullying intervention. The factors explored previously have their relationships with each other and may not exist in a vacuum of each other. For example, a principal that saw the school psychologist as an extension of the school administration team would limit the therapeutic role the school psychologist could play with the student. This idea would affect whether the school psychologist could enact therapeutic specific factors they have reported to be helpful for bullying intervention like empathy in session. Furthermore, relationships were literally an essential factor on their own for bullying intervention. School psychologists noted a wide range of relationships as being critical to bullying intervention. Relationships between the school psychologist and the victim, bully, bystanders, other students, parents, principals, teachers, and other people played an important role in bullying intervention. Relationships amongst these people and not just with the school psychologist were important for bullying intervention.

Furthermore, some relationships were essential that went beyond bullying and which would affect bullying intervention, such as problems with the principal's preferred choices of interventions and being the gatekeeper to school's programming and overall culture. Just as important to understand the complexities of bullying and bullying intervention, was understanding the working relationships of stakeholders involved with bullying, such as school personnel like the principal, or with students. For example, students were reported to be reluctant to talk to various school personnel, reflective of a barrier between adults and children in the school system (Bjereld, 2018; Bjereld et al., 2019). Future research needed to incorporate not just the relationships directly involved in bullying, but how all the stakeholder relationships interacted with each other. Whether the target of the intervention was bullying or a different topic, a maladaptive relationship with a principal would continue to be problematic.

Importantly, the core category in exploratory research should be comparing the core category to other existing theories (Rennie et al, 1988). Three studies have completed similar parameters of research. Sherer and Nickerson (2010) examined 213 random American school psychologists through a questionnaire survey on anti-bullying practices. O'Malley (2009) examined 96 random school psychologists' perceptions of the importance of available interventions for peer victimization, and types of interventions available in Northern California through a close-ended inventory survey. Finally, Lund et al., (2012) examined 560 school counselors and school psychologists through a web-based survey regarding bullying in their schools, related training, and interventions used. - although these studies were quantitative by nature, they did examine school psychologists' perspectives of bullying intervention and could be compared through three areas; how bullying intervention was conducted, what was helpful with bullying intervention, and what was not useful with bullying intervention.

What was used in bullying intervention? Direct work through the bullies and victims though discussions or individual therapy, were shared between two studies (Sherer & Nickerson, 2010; Lund et al., 2012). Disciplinary consequences such as suspension and expulsion for bullies also occurred (Sherer & Nickerson, 2010). Adult supervision increasing in less structured locations also happened (Sherer & Nickerson, 2010). Lund et al., (2012) noted although classroom-based interventions were used, individual therapy was more common, and overall, there was a variety of strategies used in interventions. Generally, these approaches mirrored the focus of the current study, with a focus on direct work with students involved with bullying. The latter point also reflected the variety of methods used by the present study with bully intervention. In contrast, O'Malley (2009) found that more interventions were focused and available on Tier 1 school-wide level, including the whole school no tolerance policies,

communication from home to school, school climate intervention, and small group social work. Furthermore, there was less availability towards higher tier interventions (i.e., towards individual work).

In summary, while there were similarities and differences between the current study and these three available studies in terms of what interventions were used in practice- certainly O'Malley's (2009) study showed the most significant contrast, with the focus being on Tier 1 level interventions over individual approaches. However, some school psychologists did report using broader-based interventions like group format with earlier grades of children. The complexity of bullying intervention certainly showed here, with multiple layers of approaching intervention through different tier levels. The differences in tier focus between these studies were also essential and would be worthwhile to explore where they come from in future studies.

What was helpful in bullying intervention? Two of the three studies commented on what school psychologists felt were necessary for bullying intervention. Sherer and Nickerson (2010) noted benefit through school-wide positive behavior tactics, adjusting space, agenda for fewer structured events, and fast responses to bullying occurrences. O'Malley (2009) noted more useful was entire school zero-tolerance policies, overall school climate interventions, teaching and collaborating with teachers and other school staff, and connecting with families in the school community. So, between these two studies, school psychologists reported more useful interventions to include a more comprehensive school focus, as opposed to individual-focused interventions, which may consist of the school, or expansion outside the school through the families and community. O'Malley's (2009) study noted the emphasis on not just a school-wide focus on students but also focused on incorporating school staff, family, and community (with some comments noting parents also being influential in particular). Similar observations were

echoed in this study, with a need to incorporate teaching staff, non-teaching staff, family, and the community with an emphasis on a unified, consistent front across all environments. Quantitative studies of a similar nature then reflected this study's focus on the importance of a macro-level approach of intervention. The current study also noted one particular school psychologists' self-created intervention was looking for positive behavior, similar to Sherer and Nickerson's (2010) study. The immediacy with bullying incident responses was also reflected similarly by school psychologists in the current student, noting the need to intervene to bring clarity to the inappropriateness of bullying behavior (Sherer & Nickerson, 2010). O'Malley's (2009) study did question the no-tolerance policy support, noting that while the school psychologists may ignore evidence suggesting these policies have limited efficacy, they did support a school-wide level of intervention focus. What was interesting was that neither of these studies emphasized individual levels of intervention focus as helpful that came to fruition in the current study, such as focusing on empathy in therapy. Helpfulness might be dependent less on whether the effect was useful at a micro level, and whether the intervention was even available. O'Malley (2009) noted that higher Tier level interventions might be considered less valuable because the logistics in completing these more top tier interventions may be a deterrent. Respondents in the current study reflected this idea.

What was not helpful in bullying intervention? Sherer and Nickerson (2010) note school psychologists found placing limits on bully and victim interactions, zero-tolerance policies with bullies and written anti-bullying policies were not helpful. The authors also noted there was a need for improvement with the reporting of bullying incidences, teaching staff, and having school-wide positive behavior enforcement programs. Sherer and Nickerson (2010) also noted school psychologists felt the most significant barriers to bullying interventions include

bullying being a lower priority, limited educated staff, limited time, and inconsistencies between what was considered helpful and unhelpful, such as staff education. Lund, Blake, Ewing, and Banks (2012) note school psychologists found unhelpful factors with bullying interventions included their limited input with choosing interventions and scarce evidence-based intervention implementation. Finally, O'Malley (2009) note school psychologists found least helpful with bullying intervention activities for social integration, interventions with peers, and peer support relationships; observations were made that increasingly higher-tiered interventions were rated as less helpful. The authors also noted that school psychologists found what was most helpful was not available in their work sites such as interventions for social integration, parent education for peer victimization, and peer intervention (O'Malley, 2009). The authors noted school psychologists found barriers to bullying intervention include a focus on academic achievement and standardized test scores.

In contrast between two studies of Sherer and Nickerson (2010) and O'Malley (2009) reported on zero-tolerance policies, reflecting a lack of consistency between school psychologists in what they felt were helpful and not helpful in bullying intervention. Similarly, school psychologists in the current study reported a lack of consistency, such as whether school administration was helpful or not helpful with bullying intervention. In the present study, one school psychologist pointed out the presence of zero-tolerance policies on bullying did not make a difference, with the school psychologists being unable to support the students, similar to notes by Sherer and Nickerson (2010). In that specific case, the school psychologist noted the prioritization of curriculum assessment outweighed bullying intervention, despite the zero-tolerance policies on bullying existing, aligning with bullying just being a lower priority in Sherer and Nickerson's study (2010). Sherer and Nickerson (2010) noted a need for

improvement with bullying reporting, reflecting the difficulty in assessing bullying incidences at a professional level in the current study, but also with reporting by students in the present study. For instance, school psychologists in the current study noted that students were often reluctant to report bullying out of fears of repercussions, mainly when talking to school administration. Like school psychologists in the present study, limited time was an unhelpful factor with bullying intervention in Sherer and Nickerson (2010) speculated to be a reason school psychologists may be deterred by higher tier interventions in O'Malley's (2009) study. A focus on other priorities was echoed between the current research and Sherer and Nickerson (2010) and reflected in comments from O'Malley's (2009) study noting school psychologists as "*slaves to special education*," reflective of the academic focus in school, and ensuing assessment focus of school psychologists in the current study. Limited control over the selection of interventions with general power in decision making falling on school administration was reflected by both Lund, Blake, Ewing, and Banks (2012) study and the current study, where a general sentiment of school administration having ultimate saying power regardless of the school psychologists' thoughts. Importantly, not all feelings saw school administration as hindering- there were reports of the support from school administration being helpful, which added to the lack of inconsistency and overall complexity. Staff education and training represent sentiments of school staff not understanding mental health in the current study (Sherer & Nickerson, 2010). A discrepancy between what was considered essential to bullying intervention but was not available on site was also reported, suggesting room for improvement still exists (O'Malley, 2009).

Overall, there were nuances of agreement and disagreement between the three quantitative studies and the current qualitative study. The overall message was a lack of a clear consistency between and within studies. Indeed, this may reflect current recognized challenges

with bullying research, on top of the complexity of bullying in general, which then lead to complexity and challenge with bullying intervention (Cantone et al., 2015; Chalamandaris, & Piette, 2015; Earnshaw et al., 2018; Merrell et al., 2008; Smith, 2016; Volk et al., 2017). This study's core category and contrasting similar studies suggest that pursuing a singular solution to solve the intricacies of bullying will be difficult. There were many variables and many relationships amongst those variables to consider. This varied nature led to many branching paths for intervention, as reflected by the school psychologists in this study. The multicultural environment and individual school system microcosms that school psychologists practiced within reflected the variableness between and within this qualitative study and the three other quantitative studies in how school psychologists conducted bullying intervention.

Study Generalizations

In summary, bullying intervention took into context a multitude of variables including defining bullying behavior, the bully, and the victim; and considering the relationships of persons involved, context of the bullying, intervening directly and indirectly, what to target the intervention towards, resources to utilize, the role of the persons involved, the culture of the school and community, school administration, student specific characteristics, parents of the students involved, needs of the school, and the nature of the bullying behavior itself. The large number of variables required for bullying intervention in the experiences of school psychologists in this study suggested the following contingency theory; therefore, "Bullying intervention was a complex contingency, because bullying intervention required the consideration of a multitude of factors and therefore, bullying intervention was not a linear process".

Study Limitations and Implications

While this study showed some conclusive statements from the research participants' experiences, there were limitations to these conclusions. There were 8 participants in this study- while this number maybe sufficient for saturation in this study design, this would limit its generalizability to a larger population (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Rennie et al., 1988). For example, other school psychologists might have different perspectives on bullying intervention in other geographical areas. The format of the data collection in itself could be limiting. The format required the researcher to be the studying tool and there were questions of obtaining absolute objectivity and removing the researcher's lens from obscuring the data analysis. In order to challenge this limitation, the researcher had documented his own perspectives and biases in the methodology chapter, in order to be aware of how his own perspectives may bias the data analysis and limit those biases when possible. The researcher was also aware of his role with the participants- he was not simply an instrument collecting information. Rather, the participants were interacting with the researcher, and the researchers' role might affect their responses, and in turn limit the study. For example, knowing the researcher was a graduate student at a university or a registered psychologist may make concerns about evaluation and judgment, and responses may be more carefully curated in turn. Research investigation in this study's format was never neutral as there will be effects on individuals or organizations just because there was someone asking questions (Mills et al., 2012). This study was limited by the participants themselves; while school psychologists were ideal candidates for bullying intervention and should provide rich data to study bullying intervention, they were one of many individuals involved with bullying intervention, as this study has shown. Therefore, while their perspectives held merit for consideration of what to do with bullying intervention, other individuals may have showed a

different perspective, and it was important to consider their perspectives as well for a comprehensive understanding of a complicated phenomenon. This study was also limited by time; it was a capture of the school psychologists' experiences at the period of collecting data. As the study has shown, bullying has evolved over time, and therefore the study's results may not be relevant for future interpretation. Time also limited this study's ability to garner richer data- while an unlimited amount of time might have enabled further explorations and expansion of topics like the relationship between the school psychologist and school administration or looking at school psychologists in other geographical areas. However, in the limits of time for program completion for this thesis, the study was limited. Finding causal relationships was difficult in this study because it did not aim to eliminate extraneous variables, which also limited generalization. The smaller sample size in this study also limited generalization, but it did span a chasm between individual case studies and multiple case studies. This sample pool size provided an opportunity for exploration of idiosyncratic, idiographic phenomenon, while advocating for evidence replication over a single case study. This push for saturation and in-depth intimacy vs external replication did allow a unique perspective that researchers could add to the literature on bullying. Finally, there were challenges to using verbal reports as data. Given that the purpose of this study was to capture the unique, idiosyncratic perspectives of persons, there was a possibility that researcher may not obtain that which was not conscious to the participants, in other words, tacit knowledge (Rennie et al., 1988). Additionally, there was a possibility that the participants may mislead research conclusions, either intentionally or inadvertently, by not providing accurate information.

Implications

While there were limitations to this study, there were implications to practice and research. While there was greater awareness in research and practice of the non-linear pathway of bullying intervention, this study added an emphasis on recognizing the complexity and contingency of bullying intervention. The study called for greater cohesion between the parties involved with bullying and expanded on the understanding that bullying was not simply between two individuals. For example, the culture surrounding bullying in the community and home, could affect whether an action was defined as bullying in schools. In addition to direct relation with bullying, the study also showed how factors not directly related to bullying could affect bullying intervention. For example, the role of the school psychologist or the relationship between the school psychologist and the school administration affected bullying intervention. The implications of the need for cohesion between involved parties in bullying, and external factors affecting bullying also emphasized that if bullying intervention was not working, it may be that other factors have not been addressed. With the large number of factors discussed in this study, there was a possibility of not addressing a factor, or interaction effects to be occurring between factors. Furthering this discussion and expanding on the idea of role in this study, it was likely beyond any one individual to successfully manage all factors involved in bullying intervention, which emphasized collaboration between individuals again. Further research would also benefit this study, including the use of a search for negative cases to disconfirm the hypotheses established in this study (Mills et al., 2012). For example, searching for experiences of school psychologists who find bullying intervention linear, straightforward, and non-contingent would help strengthen the hypotheses of this study. Further case studies should involve other members involved in school bullying to compare case material from the perspective of other members to better triangulate data.

The implications of this study, particularly regarding cohesion between those involved with bullying intervention, such as defining bullying, were supported through a position statement from the National Association of School Psychologists (2019) regarding Bullying Prevention and Intervention Among School -Age Youth. The organization outlined a clear definition of bullying as indicated through the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Gladden et al., 2014). The nuances of defining bullying, including the scenario school psychologists in this study referenced- delineating bullying from targeted violence, were outlined in this position statement as well as intervening with bullying were discussed in detail in the position paper. Although the position paper might be unable to address some of the problems school psychologists in this study discussed, including limitations through individual school needs for role and responsibility or school administration, it would be important for school psychologists to review this position statement in regards of their own bullying intervention practice.

Conclusion

"I think its really complex"

Overall, school psychologists indicated bullying intervention was likely limited in Alberta schools due to the complex and contingent nature of bullying from a system of multiple factors, the relations between these factors, and literal relationships between stakeholders. Precisely, the study reflected a) commentary that Canadian schools were too heterogenous in comparison to relatively more homogenous schools where significant efficacy in bullying intervention programs had been demonstrated; and b) that bullying was a systemic problem that required work with the system because bullying went beyond just the students immediately

involved (da Silva et al., 2017; Evans et al., 2014; Vreeman & Carol, 2007). Overall, this qualitative study showed there was no clear pathway to bullying intervention in a heterogenous culture like Canada, and systemic problems that went beyond bullying needed to be addressed, particularly with relationships between all the stakeholders involved in bullying (Bjereld et al., 2019).

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Appendix - Interview Questions

Sample Interview Questions

Initial Open-Ended Questions

1. What age group do you work with bullying intervention?
2. How long have you been working in this area?
3. How would you describe bullying?
4. How would you describe bullying intervention?
5. Tell me about your work with bullying intervention.
6. Tell me what factors you consider when providing bullying intervention.
7. What do you think are the most important components of bullying intervention?

Intermediate Questions

1. What do you know about bullying intervention?
2. Who is involved with bullying intervention? How are they involved with bullying intervention?
3. Could you describe the most important lessons you learned through doing bullying intervention?

4. As you look back on bullying intervention, are there any other events that stand out in mind? Could you describe the events?

5. What or who has been the most helpful when providing bullying intervention? How has he/she/it been helpful?

6. What or who has been the most unhelpful when providing bullying intervention? How has he/she/it been unhelpful?

7. What, if anything, do you think needs to be changed regarding bullying intervention in the future?

Ending Questions

1. What advice would you give to a school psychologist who is getting involved with bullying intervention?

2. Is there anything you might not have thought about before that occurred to you during this interview?

3. Is there anything else you think I should know to understand bullying intervention better?

4. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

5. Are there any school psychologists that you think I should be in contact with?