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Parent Education: A Key Aspect in Prevention and Intervention of Bullying in School Communities

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Abstract

Bullying continues to be an omnipresent public health issue in school communities, affecting children's and adolescent's academic success, socio-emotional well-being, and overall development. Schools play a fundamental role in addressing bullying, yet parent and community involvement is equally critical. This article explores the significance of parent education in bullying prevention and intervention within school communities. The role of schools and community stakeholders with implications for each group are discussed. Resources are provided to share with parents/caregivers and facilitate their involvement in anti-bullying initiatives within school communities. The authors offer recommendations for school communities to promote anti-bullying awareness, facilitate parent education initiatives, and future directions for research.

Keywords

anti-bullying, bullying prevention, intervention, parent education, school communities

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Bullying is a significant and pervasive issue in schools. Media attention, bullying prevention and intervention literature, laws, and policies continuously emphasize the significance of traditional bullying and cyberbullying in the United States and globally (Craig et al., 2009; Scherman, 2020). Destructive behavioral, psychological, and educational consequences for youth include poor academic achievement, mental health concerns, suicidality, and school violence shootings which are linked to bullying victimization, perpetration, and witnessing (Bradshaw, 2015; Holt et al., 2009; Hornby, 2016; Midgett & Doumas, 2019; Shapka & Law, 2013). These prolific consequences can encompass the entire lifespan from early childhood (Saracho, 2017; Levine & Tamburrino, 2014) to high school (Hornby, 2016; Riffle et al., 2022; Rigby, 2008) and could continue into adulthood (Hornby, 2016; Farrell & Vaillancourt, 2021; Trépanier et al., 2015).

According to the 2020-21 School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 15% of students ages 12-18 reported being victims of bullying at school, and 16% reported being cyberbullied (Irwin et al., 2022). The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) reported that 14% of students in grades 9-12 were bullied at school in the past 12 months, and 15.9% were bullied via technology such as emailing, chatting, instant messaging, surfing websites, and/or texting in the past 12 months (Clayton et al., 2023). From 2011 to 2021, bullying victimization rates declined; from 19.5% prior to the COVID-19 pandemic to 15.0%. However, the reduction in bullying on school property was probably influenced by less time spent at school. The prevalence of cyberbullying remained stable, considering the pandemic increased virtual learning and general online interactions (Clayton et al., 2023).

A review of bullying literature reveals that many bullying incidents go unreported (Petrosino et al., 2010; Yerger & Gehret, 2011). However, students who report are more likely to inform their parents/guardians when they are victimized than to inform educators (Nick, 2016). Unfortunately, most literature indicates that the complexities of bullying behavior potentially hinder parents'/caregivers' awareness of their child's involvement in the bullying cycle (Holt et al., 2009; Stockdale et al., 2002). Furthermore, Harcourt and colleagues (2014) noted that parents/guardians consistently express the need for targeted information and guidelines on identifying and handling bullying. These findings suggest that providing an accurate definition and relevant parent training is instrumental in facilitating parents/caregiver's ability to recognize warning signs that their child is being bullied or is being a bully. Additionally, parents need

practical tools to prevent and intervene in all forms of bullying if the effects of bullying are to be decreased.

This article addresses the need for bullying prevention and intervention programs with parent education components within school communities. Many bullying prevention and intervention programs are available; however, many do not incorporate a social-ecological framework to include parents/caregivers, which is necessary for meaningful change. The overarching aim of this article is to delineate the necessity to involve parents/caregivers in the prevention and intervention efforts of schools and communities through anti-bullying education and awareness, which should result in collaborative efforts to establish safe and inclusive environments for all.

Definition of Bullying

Throughout scientific literature, there are a variety of definitions for bullying. Farrington (1993) and Olweus (2010) define bullying as repeated physical, verbal, or psychological aggression designed to harm, humiliate, isolate, or intimidate a weaker person. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (n.d.) defines *bullying* as "unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time." *Cyberbullying* is "any behavior performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicates hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on others" (Tokunaga, 2010, p. 278). This article will use the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' definition because it emphasizes repetition and the power imbalance.

Types of Bullying

Bullying is not limited to one type of behavior but can take various forms. Bullying behaviors are diverse and reflect the complexity of interpersonal dynamics and how individuals may exert power or control over others. Here are some common forms of bullying in school communities:

Physical bullying. Physical bullying includes acts of repeated physical aggression. Examples are hitting, hurting, kicking, pushing, shoving, locking others indoors, having personal belongings stolen or destroyed, or forcing someone to perform unwanted tasks (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNSECO, 2019).

Verbal aggression. Verbal bullying entails oral or written communication initiated against a student to cause harm and includes being called derogatory names and receiving threats, offensive written notes, or imprudent hand gestures (Gladden, et al., 2014; UNSECO, 2019).

Relational aggression. Social or relational aggression (bullying) includes deliberately tarnishing someone's social status and instigating social isolation from peers. It includes gossiping, rumor spreading, social humiliation, and social exclusion (Gladden, et al., 2014; Múzquiz et al., 2023).

Sexual bullying. Sexual bullying involves making fun of others with sexual images, jokes, comments, or gestures and physically touching someone sexually (UNSECO, 2019).

Cyberbullying. Cyberbullying or electronic bullying is a form of repeated social aggression committed via digital media by groups or individuals (Rachoene & Oyedemi, 2015). It involves the deliberate use of communication technology, such as social networking sites, text messages, instant messages, website posts, chat rooms, and cell phones, to inflict psychological and emotional harm on another person (Gladden et al., 2014; UNSECO, 2019). Cyberbullying may transpire in harassment, flaming, defamation, impersonation, outing, deception, exclusion, and cyberstalking (Rachoene & Oyedemi, 2015).

Consequences of Bullying

Consequences of Bullying
Bullying is a pervasive issue in educational institutions and social settings, affecting not only the primary targets but also the perpetrators and bystanders. This section explores the multifaceted consequences of bullying for victims, bullies, and bystanders, shedding light on its long-lasting impact. Understanding these consequences is critical in developing effective intervention and prevention strategies.

Emotional and Psychological Consequences
Bullying is a form of adverse childhood experience (ACE) linked to the development of internalized mental health problems (Sigurdson et al., 2015). Experiencing bullying can cause emotional distress, leading to internalized mental health problems such as anxiety and depression (Borowsky et al., 2013; Centers for Disease Control, n.d.; Centers for Disease Control, 2014; Kaltiala-Heinom et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2020; Malecki et al., 2015). The results of a meta-analytic study indicating a significant correlation between depression and being involved

in bullying behavior among children and adolescents are noteworthy. The study indicated that the risk of depression in bullied children and adolescents was 2.77 times higher than in those not bullied and 1.73 times higher in bullying individuals (Ye et al., 2023). Researchers have also identified a relationship between bullying and suicide. Various factors often influence this complex relationship, such as depression, low self-esteem, isolation, academic struggles, and anxiety (CDC, 2014; Klomek et al., 2010). However, when these factors are controlled for, research consistently shows that adolescents with a history of bullying are at an increased risk of experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviors. In a 2017 study by Alavi et al. involving children and adolescents seeking psychiatric care in a Canadian emergency room, the findings revealed that bullying affected 77% of the children and adolescents and that at the time of presentation, 68.9% were considering suicide. Similarly, a study in the Midwest region of the United States, which included 321 young people, revealed a strong correlation between suicidal thoughts and attempts, lower social connectedness, and higher levels of bullying victimization and perpetration (Arango et al., 2016).

Contrary to misconceptions, bullies are not immune to the psychological consequences of their actions. Engaging in bullying behavior is associated with aggression, delinquency, and conduct disorders, which can persist into adulthood if left unaddressed (Espelage et al., 2012; Farrington et al., 2011; Farrington & Ttofi, 2011). Furthermore, bullies often display deficits in empathy, which can hinder their ability to form healthy relationships (Jollife & Farrington, 2011). These challenges and potential psychological distress from their actions highlight the complexity of bullying dynamics.

Bystanders to bullying are not shielded from potentially harmful consequences either. Their exposure to peer violence and the subsequent witnessing of bullying can significantly impact their mental health, leading to issues such as anxiety, depression, helplessness, paranoid ideation, suicidal thoughts, somatic symptoms, and heightened social sensitivity (Lambe et al., 2017; Rivers et al., 2009; Rivers & Noret, 2013).

Physical and Social Health Consequences

Bullying can have serious physical health consequences for both the victims and, in some cases, the bullies themselves. Numerous studies have established a clear connection between childhood bullying and adverse outcomes for victims, bullies, and bystanders, encompassing their physical, psychological, and social well-being (Armitage, 2021; Rivara & Le Menestrel, 2016). According to Feekes et al. (2006), bullied children are twice as likely to experience physical symptoms such as headaches, abdominal pain, trouble sleeping, poor appetite, and bedwetting compared to non-victims. Research conducted within the Health Behavior in School-aged Children network, Icelandic findings indicated that

students who were bullied 2-3 times per month had a higher likelihood of experiencing headaches, stomachaches, back pain, and neck/shoulder pain compared to non-bullied students (Garmy et al., 2019).

While the immediate repercussions of bullying can include physical harm, headaches, insomnia, or psychosomatic symptoms (Armitage, 2021), studies have also established a connection between bullying and enduring adverse consequences in adulthood, such as diminished overall health, reduced income, increased substance use, and a lower quality of life. To investigate the connection between bullying in fifth grade and later patterns of binge drinking and marijuana usage in adulthood, Kim et al. (2011) analyzed longitudinal data from a sample of 957 individuals. The study's results demonstrated that experiencing bullying during elementary school was associated with a notable increase in the likelihood of engaging in heavy drinking during adulthood (defined as consuming five or more alcoholic beverages in a row for males and four or more for females), as well as an increased likelihood of using marijuana. These associations persisted even when adjusting for individual and family demographic characteristics and peer-related risk factors. In a systematic review aimed at comprehensively exploring the relationship between bullying and health-related quality of life among adolescents, the findings indicated an overall reduction in health-related quality of life (Dubey et al., 2022)

Finally, social health consequences are also related to bullying in children and adolescents. Bullying frequently leads to victims experiencing social isolation, and the challenges they face in building and sustaining relationships are exacerbated by the stigma attached to being a bullying target (Armitage, 2021). Children who experience bullying frequently find themselves grappling with a sense of exclusion from their school environment, particularly when they are victims of covert bullying. Research has revealed that this type of bullying can negatively impact their ability to connect with peers and feel accepted (Dale et al., 2014).

Academic Consequences

Bullying, which frequently occurs in a school context, can negatively impact a child's academic performance. Bullied children are more likely to engage in school avoidance behaviors. The CDC (n.d.) reports that 5.6 % of students report not attending school due to feeling unsafe at school or on their way to school. According to research, bullied children report higher absences, dislike school, and receive lower grades and scores on standardized tests than their peers who have not experienced bullying (Evans et al., 2019; Graham, 2016; Juvonen et al., 2011). In a long-term study, Liu et al. (2014) discovered that being bullied in third grade predicted low academic performance in fifth grade. Similarly, Juvonen et al. (2011) discovered that students' grade point averages (GPAs) dropped by

0.3 grade points for every 1-point (out of a possible 4-point scale) increase in self-perceived victimization.

Although bystanders are not the direct target of bullies, they can also face negative academic consequences due to bullying. Witnessing instances of bullying can cause students to lose focus in class and negatively impact their academic performance. The fear of retaliation or being involved in bullying can also hinder the studies of all students (Fraser et al., 2018). Bullies often face disciplinary measures such as being removed from the classroom or expelled, which can hinder the learning process and lead to poor academic performance (Hamburger et al., 2011).

It is crucial to understand that bullying can have long-lasting effects that can carry into adulthood. In order to mitigate these harmful consequences and promote the well-being of those affected, it is important to address bullying through prevention, intervention, and support systems. Schools, parents, and communities all have a vital role in creating safe environments and offering resources for individuals dealing with the aftermath of bullying.

Effective Components of Bullying Prevention and Intervention Programs

Schools have implemented bullying prevention and intervention programs in response to anti-bullying legislation, court cases, and implications for associated mental health and academic achievement issues. Relevant literature estimates that there are more than 300 different bullying prevention and intervention programs. The effectiveness of most programs ranges from minimally impactful (e.g., Ferguson et al., 2007; Merrell et al., 2008) to slightly more impactful (e.g., Farrington & Ttofi, 2011) in literature conclusions. There are many factors to consider when evaluating the effectiveness of bullying prevention and intervention programs. However, researchers often have varying opinions about the most salient factors to evaluate, and it can be challenging to obtain consistent results for effectiveness studies. Nonetheless, it is critical to continue to research and evaluate these programs to ensure that they are making a positive impact on preventing and addressing bullying in schools.

The fundamental components of effective bullying prevention and intervention programs include parent activities and training, elevated playground supervision, consistent disciplinary actions, school conferences, classroom, and school-wide bullying rules, teacher training, and classroom management techniques (Bradshaw, 2014; Farrington & Ttofi, 2009; Merrell et al., 2008). The most effective component involves family connections (i.e., parents) such as parent psychoeducation, seminars, and information specifically about how to communicate with children and schools about bullying, as well as disclosing ways to help the school with anti-bullying programs (Bradshaw, 2014; Bradshaw, 2015;

Chen et al., 2021; Doss & Crawford, 2023; Rawlings & Stoddard, 2019). Research also supports the involvement of community services linked to schools and families in the schools, such as law enforcement, social service agencies (i.e., YMCA and Boys & Girls Club), faith-based organizations, and community mental health (Bradshaw, 2015; Groce, 2019; Price-Shingles & Place, 2016). See Table 1 for evidenced-based school-wide bullying prevention programs with parent components.

Table 1   Evidenced-based Bullying Prevention Programs with Parent Components

Program	URL	Special Features	Grades
Bullying Prevention Program	http://www.bullyfree.com/	Music and videos, lesson plans, parent presentation, and training components for bus drivers	Preschool through high school
Olweus Bullying Prevention Program	http://www.violenceprevention works.org/public/bullying.page	Aligns with Common Core; Tips for administrators, teacher and parents.	Elementary through high school
Safe School Ambassadors Program (SSA)	http://community-matters.org/programs-and-services/safe-school-ambassadors	Focus on bystander education; strong parent education component	Elementary through high school
Too Good for Violence: Social Perspectives (TGFV)	https://toogoodprograms.org/collections/too-good-for-violence	School- and community-based age-appropriate lessons utilizing games, music, skits, and role-play; parent component	Elementary through high school

Roles in Bullying Prevention and Interventions Parent Education

The Role of Schools

The existing literature acknowledges parent psychoeducation's critical role in bullying prevention and intervention plan effectiveness. Schools should be encouraged to incorporate a social-ecological framework such as parent activities and training (Bradshaw, 2014; Farrington & Ttofi, 2009; Merrell et al., 2008). Schools should actively work to increase parent-school involvement and provide education about effective ways to recognize warning signs and address bullying (Bradshaw, 2014; Bradshaw, 2015).

Schools are responsible for equipping parents with tools that will help them adequately address traditional and cyberbullying. Thus, parents need

resources. Resources include websites, apps, brochures, and a community resources list (Doss et al., 2016; Crawford et al., 2017). Parents could also benefit from training to use various social media platforms. Although research indicates that software does not decrease the risk of cyberbullying, parents should still learn how to monitor their child(ren) 's online activity (Doss et al., 2016). Therefore, schools could be instrumental in identifying internet monitoring programs for minors (e.g., Mobile Spy, Phone Sheriff, Norton Family Primer, and Windows Live Family Safety). Schools should also inform parents when it may be necessary to contact the police if their child is being harassed or especially cyberbullied (Crawford et al., 2016; Crawford et al., 2018).

Community Service Roles

From a socio-ecological perspective, communities influence bullying at the microsystem level similarly to family, peers, and schools. The community impact is at the most influential level due to being directly related to the child and adolescent. Comparable to other forms of school violence, increased levels of bullying are often associated with negative/unsafe neighborhoods, gang membership, and poverty (Bradshaw et al., 2009; Espelage et al., 2000; Swearer & Hymel, 2015; White & Mason, 2012).

Community members have unique strengths and skills to prevent bullying outside of school. For instance, community leaders (such as the mayor and recreation coaches/instructors) can raise awareness through social marketing campaigns that promote legislation aimed at a comprehensive approach to bullying prevention by encouraging education and policy leaders to implement effective anti-bullying programs with parent education components, disseminating anti-bullying literature and resources, and encouraging youth and adults to intervene when they witness bullying (Bradshaw, 2015). Local business owners can support this effort by providing financial resources, advertisements, and safe spaces to host anti-bullying campaigns, parent support groups, and events.

Social Service Organizations

Social service organizations such as the YMCA and the Boys and Girls Club of America provide services to numerous students during after-school and weekend hours. This is an excellent opportunity for youth to participate in supervised, structured activities to promote social-emotional learning, increase resiliency, and reinforce bullying prevention strategies. More specifically, organizational staff can be trained to provide parent education programs that increase children's healthy social development, develop salient character traits (e.g., kindness and empathy), and promote a sense of community that values safety and inclusion (Holt et al., 2013).

Faith-based organizations can also be critical to bullying prevention with parent education. Such organizations can support the community by promoting moral instruction, pro-social engagement strategies, and boundary-setting guidance. Teaching parents and students faith-based principles may prepare students to face challenges without harming others by demonstrating faith-based values (Bringham, 2012; Groce, 2019; Evans et al., 2014; Georgiou & Stavrinides, 2013).

Law Enforcement

Law Enforcement officers are experts in criminal law. Students involved in bullying incidents may also face criminal charges in some instances. Therefore, law enforcement officers, especially Student Resource Officers (SROs), are often called after assault, cyberbullying, or harassment (Patchin et al., 2013). Officers must educate other professionals, such as teachers, administrators, and parents, about their legal responsibilities and authority concerning cyberbullying. Officers should speak with parents regarding their child's behavior whenever appropriate and inform them of the significance of internet harassment (Patchin et al., 2013). Law enforcement officers could support anti-bullying efforts in school communities by developing and implementing safety initiatives and educating families about bullying, cyberbullying, and the law (Doss et al., 2016).

Community Mental Health

Community mental health professionals have expert skills in supporting students' social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs. Parent education programs related to bullying facilitated by community mental health professionals can be enriched by integrating family systems therapy principles and techniques. Students who are victims of bullying are more likely to experience mental health concerns such as anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts (Borowsky et al., 2013; Cadarerelli, 2013, as cited in CDC, 2014; Malecki et al., 2015). Likewise, students who are perpetrators of bullying are likely to experience mental health concerns, delinquent behaviors, and substance use (Espelage et al., 2012; Farrington et al., 2011; Farrington & Ttofi, 2011). Mental health professionals are uniquely positioned to assist parents and students in navigating the effects of bullying, provide psychoeducation to educators, families, and students to reduce bullying and consult with community leaders regarding anti-bullying policies.

Implications for School Communities

Schools

Effective bullying prevention programs are multifaceted and involve all stakeholders, such as school administrators, teachers, mental health providers,

school resource officers, students, and parents/caregivers. Improving parent-school cooperation can prove beneficial in counteracting bullying by expanding parents' attitudes toward bullying and teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement and efforts to confront bullying together (van Niejenhuis et al., 2020). Therefore, each school personnel should have a role in bullying prevention and intervention planning, implementation, and evaluation of specific tasks for incorporating parent education in school communities.

School Administrators

Research has revealed that a positive school climate (Wang et al., 2013) and a comprehensive bullying prevention/intervention policy that involves parents decrease bullying behavior (Hornby, 2016; Morgan, 2012; Wang et al., 2013). The school administrators are primarily responsible for the overall school climate and policies. Therefore, school administrators have the essential task of ensuring that parents are engaged in not only their child's academic success but also their overall mental health and campus safety, which includes promoting a positive school climate to prevent and intervene in bullying situations.

Schools administrators promote a positive school climate by actively encouraging a safe and positive environment that supports caring and respect for one another (i.e., Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports [PBiS]) through programs that support nonviolent approaches to conflict resolutions (Hornby, 2016; Wang et al., 2013). This is achieved by developing, implementing, and systematically evaluating a comprehensive anti-bullying policy with the school's mental health professionals, teachers, student resource officers, students, and parents. The policy should promote awareness of bullying, including a plan of action that includes evidence-based techniques for addressing bullying, outline efficient progress monitoring procedures, and provide continuous professional development for faculty and staff (Hornby, 2013). This policy should also include ongoing research-based training for parents to foster parent-school partnerships and disseminate pertinent bullying prevention and intervention information to parents to ensure a positive school environment.

Teachers

The social-ecological perspective identifies teachers as an essential social environment component, and they are usually in the best position to detect bullying at school. However, there is limited scientific literature about the importance of teachers in bullying prevention and intervention (Yoon & Bauman, 2014). Yoon and Bauman (2014) note that teachers' response to bullying incidents "reflect the larger context of classroom management and climate, and serve as socialization experiences for potential perpetrators, victims, and other students, determining students' future behaviors and thus social and emotional

adjustment (p. 310)." According to Morgan (2012), teachers are charged with maintaining a positive classroom climate while promoting discussions about bullying, using "teachable moments" about tolerance and embracing diversity, and engaging peer bystanders to involve adults during bullying incidents. The role of teachers does not end at the socializing of the classroom but extends to parent-teacher-student relations. Just as teachers are responsible for fostering an interactive relationship between parents, teachers, and students for academic success, the same is warranted in bullying prevention and intervention. Often, teachers are the first school employees, parents and students report bullying incidents to, and the teachers' response is essential to preventing further incidents and the likelihood of others engaging in bullying within the classroom. Teachers must be willing to notify parents of all involved students when a bullying incident occurs, refer involved students and bystanders to the counseling, incorporate parents in conflict resolution strategies, and provide the necessary information (Morgan, 2012; Olweus, 2010).

School Mental Health Providers

The availability of different school mental health providers varies across school districts throughout the United States and abroad. School counselors, school psychologists, and social workers are the principal mental health providers within a school system. The location and scope of service also vary depending on multifaceted variables within a school district. However, all three school-based mental health professionals promote mental well-being and academic success in their roles.

The role of school mental health providers is highly skilled and detailed. First, school mental health providers, in conjunction with school administrators, should implement an evidenced-based comprehensive bullying (traditional and cyberbullying) prevention and intervention plan that incorporates parents, faculty and staff, students, and the community. A bullying prevention policy should be developed from the chosen plan that addresses the major components of the anti-bullying plan, including a clear definition of bullying, reporting procedures, school action plans, parental involvement, and procedural response to incidents (Steele et al., 2016; Whitted & Dupper, 2005). Second, a crisis management plan should be developed or updated to provide guidance for peer victimization. Third, school mental health providers should conduct a needs assessment and provide anti-bullying training to educators, parents, and students, incorporating data collected from the needs assessment (Whitted & Dupper, 2005). The school mental health providers should be instrumental in parent education about bullying by providing anti-bullying and community resources (Doss et al., 2016; Steele et al., 2016), conducting seminars, and teaching conflict resolution techniques for parents to implement with students to promote social skills. See Table 2 and

Table 3 for anti-bullying parent resources (e. g,, online and mobile apps). Educators should receive professional development activities throughout the year emphasizing warning signs, bullying effects, social skills training, conflict resolution skills, and promoting a positive school climate. Classroom guidance lessons and other activities to educate students about bullying, the effects of bullying for all involved, and teach conflict resolution and social skills (Crawford et al., 2018; Steel et al., 2016). Fourth, they should implement yearly collaborative activities for each entity to discuss and evaluate the bullying prevention and intervention program.

School Resource Officers

School resource officers are also essential to the effectiveness of comprehensive bullying prevention and intervention programs. According to Jeong and colleagues (2013), schools with security guards/resource officers in the corridors are less likely to have students bullied. This may be attributed to students feeling safe in this environment and limited opportunities to engage in bullying.

School Resources Officers can be instrumental in bullying prevention and intervention through parent education. SROs are generally limited to the role of law enforcement in school safety and climate, but Thompson and Alvarez (2013) recommended that SROs could participate in school-based service teams by actively engaging in a trans-disciplinary method to support the education mission of the school by working with at-risk students, parents, teacher, and community agencies. This could be beneficial in promoting a comprehensive bullying prevention plan with consideration to developing a nurturing and positive school climate. The SROs could develop and implement mentoring programs for bullies, bully-victims, and their parents. SROs can provide anti-bullying parent education training alone or in conjunction with school mental health providers about bullying/cyberbullying and the law. This is becoming increasingly important as legislation and court cases make parents responsible for their children's bullying behaviors (Doss et al., 2016). SROs can also direct parents in navigating the legal process of filing complaints and documenting bullying incidents.

Family Engagement Professionals

School–family–community partnerships provide comprehensive services to promote students' academic achievement and wellness by utilizing community and family resources to facilitate learning by reducing noneducational barriers like physical and mental health concerns, familial stress, and poverty (as cited in Ball et al., 2021; Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020; Rawlings & Stoddard, (2019). Therefore, family engagement professionals (FEPs) are uniquely qualified to bridge the gap between schools, families, and the community in developing a

collaborative and supportive environment to address bullying. FEPs roles in addressing bullying effectively involve facilitating communication and outreach, advocacy, parent education, awareness initiatives, and collaboration between schools, parents, and the community to create a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment.

Family engagement professionals can use numerous bullying prevention, intervention, and parent education strategies to promote anti-bullying (Doss & Crawford, 2023; Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020). FEPs can disseminate bullying prevention and intervention information via school and community campaigns. They can host workshops and trainings to examine ways schools, parents, and communities can partner to address bullying. FEPs could provide crisis intervention and support to families involved in bullying incidents. For example, crisis intervention and support may include providing guidance on how to navigate the bullying reporting and intervention process. They can connect families to peer support groups or online communities to build a supportive network and share resources.

Parents

Parental involvement and education may significantly positively influence school-wide initiatives and bullying prevention programs (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, n.d.-c). Parents should be aware of the school's inclusive values and behavior expectations. It is also critical to teach parents effective communication and listening skills, how to recognize behavioral changes caused by bullying, and how to stop siblings and friends from being unkind to one another. They must be well-equipped to help their students stay safe at school, refrain from bullying others, and intervene or report bullying to the appropriate authorities safely.

Parents can play a vital role in creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment when they are knowledgeable, earnestly participate in bullying prevention and intervention efforts, and become equipped with effective anti-bullying strategies and resources (Doss & Crawford, 2023; U. S. Department of Health & Human Services, n.d.-c). Parents and caregivers can create a safe space for their children to share experiences related to bullying. They can be actively involved in school and community initiatives about anti-bullying policies, resources, legal issues, and reporting procedures. Parents should seek training and information about online safety, responsible internet use, and the potential risks associated with cyberbullying (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, n.d.-c). They should monitor their children's online activities and encourage open communication about online activities.

Community Agencies and Businesses

Community agencies and businesses can play an important role in bullying prevention and intervention (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, n.d.-b). They can sponsor anti-bullying programs with parent education by providing venues to host seminars and events, sponsoring expert guest speakers and resources, collaborating with schools and law enforcement to provide initiatives, and launching awareness campaigns to educate parents about bullying (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, n.d.-b). In conjunction with schools, community agencies/ businesses can help parents gain knowledge and skills to address and prevent bullying effectively through parent education programs (Doss & Crawford, 2023).

Conclusion

Bullying continues to be a significant problem in the United States. Effective anti-bullying programs are essential to promote the overall mental/physical health and academic success of individuals throughout the lifespan (Saracho, 2017; Hornby, 2016; Levine & Tamburrino, 2016; Riffle et al., 2022; Rigby, 2008; Farrell & Vaillancourt, 2021). School communities play a pivotal role in bullying prevention and intervention (Scherman, 2020). Relevant anti-bullying literature delineates the need for comprehensive social-ecological plans and policies that include families, particularly parents (Napolitano & Espelage, 2011; Espelage & Swearer, 2004). Since legislation and court cases mandate that schools actively work to prevent bullying and provide interventions, comprehensive anti-bullying programs that include parent education components and school-community involvement may be the critical missing pieces to improve bullying. Therefore, we have addressed the importance of providing anti-bullying parent education to promote a positive and nurturing school-community environment with all stakeholders invested.

This literature synthesis can serve as a guide to bridge the gap between theory, research, and practice by providing insights about integrating anti-bullying parent education components and incorporating parental involvement in comprehensive bullying prevention and intervention plans within school communities. There are numerous bullying prevention and intervention research investigations, but studies that evaluate the efficacy of anti-bullying programs are still needed. Future directions should evaluate anti-bullying parent education programs and initiatives with parent education components by assessing prior knowledge and measuring information learned about warning signs, intervention strategies, and local/online resources.

In conclusion, parent education is critical to preventing and addressing bullying in school communities (Doss & Crawford, 2023; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, n.d.-c). When parents are well-informed, actively

engaged, and equipped with practical techniques and resources, they can work alongside schools, community agencies, and their children to create a safe and inclusive environment. Schools, parents, and community agencies can mitigate the effects of bullying on the academic, social, and psychological functioning of students exposed to and involved in bullying.

Recommendations

Bullying prevention and intervention in school communities requires a comprehensive approach to providing resources and trainings to parents (Doss & Crawford, 2023; Lester et al. 2017), hosting parent education and community engagement activities, implementing school-wide curriculums with parent components, and an effective evaluation process.

Our first recommendation is to provide resources to parents about warning signs, online and community resources, school policies, and legal aspects of bullying prevention and intervention. We suggest the following:

- Use digital media by developing social media campaigns, newsletters, and websites.
- Offer webinars or in-person workshops (invite law enforcement, mental health professionals, and family-community engagement specialists as speakers) to help parents/caregivers address bullying.
- Create a parent resource center on campus and online (See tables 2 and 3).
- Provide a "lending library" with books, games, art supplies, puzzles, etc., that families can use at home to support the child's social-emotional learning and conflict resolution skills.

The development of parent education and engagement initiatives for bullying prevention and intervention at schools and community agencies is our second recommendation. Here are some ideas:

- Bullying Prevention and Intervention Family Night- Invite local mental health providers, law enforcement, community agencies, and social services to set up booths with information about services and bullying literature. Provide games and food options to make the event appealing for families.
- Coordinate a family library experience at the public library to share media (e.g., movies, books, and audiobooks) about bullying prevention and intervention and promoting mental health.
- Provide workshops for family members about child development topics (e.g., health, child guidance, how the young child learns, etc.).

- Develop and maintain a community resource handbook that identifies various support services.
- Create parent support groups to discuss challenges with bullying, foster a community, and gain hope from shared experiences.

Our third suggestion is to implement a comprehensive anti-bullying curriculum with a parent involvement component and evaluation process. Create a task force that includes at least one parent and community representative to determine the program that will best meet the unique needs of the school community.

Future Directions

Bullying prevention and intervention research has significantly advanced through the years; however, the gaps in the literature about school communities and anti-bullying denote the need for additional research. Future studies could examine the relationship between traditional and cyberbullying incidents and the availability of behavioral health services at school-based health centers that include family counseling and parent psychoeducation. Future directions should measure the efficacy of community-based family activities that promote mental health and well-being, including bullying prevention. Additionally, future research should assess the behavioral outcomes of implementing community-based social-emotional learning programs located at community service organizations (e.g., Boys and Girls Clubs) that promote resilience, bullying prevention, self-awareness, and conflict resolution skills that include parent involvement.

Table 2   Online Anti-Bullying Resources for Parents

Resource	URL	Special Features	Considerations for Specific Groups
Stopbullying.gov	http://www.stopbullying.gov/what-you-can-do/parents/	Available in Spanish; Videos; Policies & laws; Blog; News releases; Images; Infographics	LGBT youth, Youth with disabilities or other special health needs, Race, Ethnicity, National origin, Religion, and Faith
Kids Health from Nemours: for Parents	http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/bullies.html	Available in Spanish; Variety of health and family issues addressed, including internet safety	
The Bully Project: Tools for Parents	http://www.thebullyproject.com/parents	Facebook page, Discussion and action guide; Some information in Spanish; Policies & laws; Graphics toolkit; Sample letter to schools	Students with disabilities
Violence Prevention Works	http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/bullying_tips_for_parents.page	Olweus prevention program; Some information in Spanish; addresses Dating violence and youth suicide; Online courses; Web conferences; In-person training program implementation seminars	Youth who are bullied based upon perceptions about their sexual orientation

Table 2 continued

Resource	URL	Special Features	Considerations for Specific Groups
National Crime Prevention Council	http://www.ncpc.org/topics/bullying/what-parents-can-do	Addresses a variety of safety topics; Cyberbullying outreach tools; Downloadable resources; Access to podcasts	
Eyes on Bullying	http://www.eyesonbullying.org/toolkit.html	Parent toolkit; Activities; Resources; Podcasts	
Cyberbullying Research Center	http://cyberbullying.org/resources/parents/	Newsletter; Blog; Anti-bullying and Sexting Laws; Books for Sale; Stories; Journal Articles; Multimedia.	
National Council for Missing & Exploited Children	http://www.netsmartz.org/Parents	Addresses a variety of safety topics; Videos; Presentations; Games; Comics; Handouts; Quizzes; Online educator training.	
PACER'S (Parent Advocacy Center for Educational Rights) National Bullying Prevention Center	http://www.pacer.org/bullying/resources/parents/	Videos; Real stories; Resources; Book club; Laws & policy; Tips for working with schools; Press releases; Blog; Newsletter; Handout; Books for Sale	Students with Disabilities
Common Sense Media	https://www.commonsensemedia.org/	Online Safety Tips; App, TV, Movie, Game, Book & Podcast Reviews, Available in Spanish	Diverse Cultures Represented and Discussed, Appropriate for all age groups

Table 3   Mobile Resources

Resource	Android/IOS/Both	Special Features	Considerations for Specific Groups
Bully Block	Android	Block specific phone numbers; Block SMS; Block previous callers; Capture Audio for evidence	
CyberBully Hotline App	Android http://www.cyberbullyh otline.com/mobile-app. html	Free Companion App for schools with CyberBully Hotline Account	
Bully Free Zone	Both http://www.captainmcfinn.com/b ully-free-zone-app/	Kindness calendar & activities; Bully free pledge and sing along	More appropriate for educating younger children
iCU, See it, Report It	IOS	Allows bystanders to identify; Report and alert society of issues that may have gone unreported; Video; Pin mapping data; 911 panic button; GPS positioning	Appropriate for all age groups
NetNanny	Both https://www.netnanny.com/mobile/	Blocks pornography; Profanity masking; Monitors Social Media; Indicates threat level of inappropriate or threatening contacts and communications	Appropriate for all age groups
KnowBullying	Both http://www.samhsa.gov/tribal-ttac/resources/bullying-prevention	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Articles, Organization links, and Resources	

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