

A STUDY INTO THE NEED FOR A
BULLYING/HARASSMENT PROGRAM AT
ST. STEPHEN'S HIGH SCHOOL, STEPHENVILLE,
NEWFOUNDLAND, CANADA:
A SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP REPORT

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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**A Study into the Need for a Bullying /Harassment
Program at St. Stephen's High School, Stephenville,
Newfoundland, Canada:
A School Psychology Internship Report**

By

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**An Internship Report Submitted to the School of
Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Education
Educational Psychology**

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Abstract

The internship for the Master of Education (Educational Psychology) at Memorial University, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada was completed at St. Stephen's High School in Stephenville, Newfoundland. The report consists of a placement component, which includes the intern's goals and objectives; and the internship experiences (activities and learning).

A research component studied the perceptions of bullying and harassment among students at St. Stephen's High School. A questionnaire developed by a school team of teachers and students was administered to four hundred and thirty-eight students. Results indicated that bullying is a significant problem at the school and that the implementation of an anti-bullying program should be considered to help reduce bullying. This information will be useful for many schools and school boards for future planning and the delivery of anti-bullying programs. Limitations of the research are also discussed.

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1.0 Placement Component

1.1 Introduction

A school psychology internship is an option available to graduate students in the Master of Education Degree Program in Educational Psychology at Memorial University. The internship provides on-the-job experience in a wide range of professional activities. These activities are carried out under the supervision of a field supervisor and a university supervisor. The field setting provides the opportunity to further develop competence as a school psychologist and provides the opportunity to test counselling and school psychology theories through practical experience. This practical experience promotes skill development that can be transferred into the effective delivery of school psychology services within the school environment.

“An internship is a full-time practical experience for a minimum of ten weeks and is normally undertaken after or near completion of course work. The purpose of an internship is to provide a graduate student with a breadth and depth of experience in a practical setting and to provide opportunities for:

1. The development of personal and professional competencies for each intern based on perceived needs, previous experiences, and career plans;
2. practical experiences that serve to highlight the theoretical and pedagogical aspects under study in the program; and,
3. the development of a creative and reflective perspective given the stated

goals of the intern, the nature of the setting, the specific placement, and field supervisor's exchanges on knowledge of subject matter, and counselling/leadership competence." (Internship Guidelines, 1997, p. 1).

The role of the school psychologist in Newfoundland schools has had to change to meet the unique needs of today's youth. A broad knowledge and skills based program offers the intern learning experiences that go beyond that which could be offered through individual course work, or in a narrowly focused setting. Reaching beyond the scope of the required practicum for the Master Degree in Education (Educational Psychology), this internship provided the intern the opportunity to develop competence in the areas of assessment, intervention techniques, individual and group counseling, program development, consultation and liaison. The internship was chosen to provide in-depth training in the skill areas necessary to execute the multi-faceted roles of a school psychologist in the province of Newfoundland.

1.2 Internship Setting

The internship site was chosen based on the following factors:

1. The quality of professional supervision;
2. The quality of learning opportunities and experiences;
3. The relevance to, and usefulness of these experiences in the actual setting in which the intern ultimately expects to work;
4. The flexibility for part-time involvement of the intern for a minimum of six consecutive months;

5. The availability of a qualified field supervisor on-site; and,
6. Ready access to the university supervisor.

The intern, having had some experience as a school counselor (seven months), and realizing the need for specific experience in assessment and counselling, requested St. Stephen's High School as her setting. The school is located in Stephenville, Newfoundland, Canada and has an enrolment of 822 students from grades seven through twelve. The internship spanned over a twenty-three week period, on a part-time basis, from January 1998 to June 1998.

1.3 Internship Supervisors

Supervision was provided by Dr. Norman Garlie (Academic Supervisor) from the Faculty of Education at Memorial University and by Dr. Tony Alexander, (Site Supervisor) Lead Psychologist from School District #4.

1.4 Internship Goals

Based on the broad goals set by the Faculty of Education, the intern developed the following specific goals related to the chosen setting:

Goal 1

To gain an understanding and proficiency in the use of a wide variety of assessment techniques and tools. This goal was achieved through a variety of activities which are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1 - Type and Frequency of Tests Administered During the Internship

Type of Test Administered	Frequency of Administration
Boder Test of Reading and Spelling Patterns	1
Weschler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT)	3
Conners' Behavior Rating Scale (Teacher) (CTRS-R:L)	5
Conners' Behavior Rating Scale (Parent) (CPRS-R:L)	2
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-III)	4
Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children: 3 rd Edition (WISC-III)	3
Visual Motor Integration Test (VMI)	1

A description of these activities is as follows:

1. Tests were administered to students identified by the internship site supervisor as those who required assessments for learning difficulties. The assessments would be used to assist in educational placement and to develop strategies for the students to help with the difficulties. Follow-up and interpretation of assessment results were conducted with the students, parents and teachers.
2. As a follow-up to the administration of assessment devices, consultations with the intern supervisor and school-assigned psychologist were conducted. Consultations provided feedback and direction, thus enhancing the intern's skill in administration and interpretation of these assessment tools. As a result of the intern's experience with a variety of assessment tools, the intern's confidence increased in the selection, administration, scoring, and interpretation of assessment tools.

Goal 2

To gain experience in counselling.

1. During the course of the internship, the intern observed the activities of the peer-counselling program within the school. Through discussions with the internship supervisor, the intern learned how to set up a peer-counselling program, including the peer counsellor selection process, training program, and referral process. The intern also read two handbooks about training peer counsellors (Appendix C).
2. The intern provided counselling to three junior high students while under the guidance of the internship supervisor. Two grade seven students were each seen for four sessions regarding motivational issues in school. The counselling was short-term and improvements were seen in the motivation of both students regarding schoolwork. Another grade seven student was seen for ten sessions. This student was seen regarding motivational difficulties in school, and behavioral difficulties in school and at home. Although some improvements were seen in the student's effort in her schoolwork, counselling to assist with the behavioral issues was continued, with another counsellor, after the intern's placement at the school was completed.

Goal 3

To gain an understanding of the role of the school psychologist within the school setting:

1. The intern participated in four team meetings with the school psychologist, guidance counsellor, social workers, homeroom teachers and subject and special education

teachers. These meetings were held to discuss the progress and the school programs of these four students. This process was useful to the intern since she learned the team procedure used by professionals that can be utilized during future employment.

2. The intern participated in four school inservice meetings:

- a) An inservice on a mentorship program, currently being developed at the school, to provide a mentor to students with some identified need (i.e. academic, social). This inservice was provided by Kathleen Lawlor, Guidance Counsellor in Port au Port, Newfoundland, Canada. Ms. Lawlor has been involved in the mentorship program in Bishop O'Reilly School for a number of years.
- b) An inservice on learning disabilities designed to inform teachers of the identification and referral process for learning disabled students. Strategies for working with learning disabled students were also presented. This inservice was conducted by Dale McLean, the school assigned psychologist.
- c) A gambling inservice was conducted by Addictions Services of Stephenville with the guidance counsellors and school psychologists of the school board. The workshop discussed the dynamics of gambling and the possible therapies available for treatment.
- d) A two-day workshop was conducted by the three school board psychologists about the Individual Support Services Plan (ISSP). The province-wide program involves setting up an interdisciplinary meeting that includes the student's parents and all professionals (i.e. health, education, and social services) who are involved with a particular student.

3. The intern observed the delivery of the Risky Business program, which is designed for students at risk for school dropout and/or behavioral challenges. The program coordinator was Michael O'Driscoll. Students with behavioral difficulties would have daily contact with Mr. O'Driscoll. Students either came voluntarily or were sent to Mr. O'Driscoll by their teachers when they were having behavioral difficulties in their classroom. The student's behavior was reviewed and alternative ways of improving behavior were discussed. Students either returned immediately to their classrooms, returned to them after a discussion took place with Mr. O'Driscoll and the classroom teacher, or were referred to administration for further disciplinary action. When they required additional assistance, students were given the opportunity to complete schoolwork on a one-on-one basis with Mr. O'Driscoll. In addition, good behavior was rewarded with extra-curricular activities such as skiing, nature walks, and assisting with extra work around the school grounds.
4. The intern observed and assisted in the setup of a mentorship program. The program was created to provide mentoring for students who were identified as those lacking a social network at school or at home and could benefit from an adult mentor. The program was developed to pair students, with identified needs (i.e. academic, social), with an adult mentor to provide guidance and companionship. The intern, other staff members, and volunteers were selected as mentors. The intern was assigned to two students. The intern provided tutoring for both students in their school subjects and spent time playing games and socializing with them.

5. The intern attended a meeting with all special services staff in the school, during which Paula Gillis, the Special Services Coordinator, described the criteria for obtaining new teaching staff units from the Department of Education. Teaching units are allocated to schools with students classified under the following criteria: Section E: Emotional/Behavioral Disorder, Section F: Severe Learning Disability, and Section G: Health/Neurological/ Related Disorder (Pathways to Programming and Graduation, 1998).
6. The intern attended a meeting with the internship supervisor and school assigned school psychologist to discuss students requiring psychoeducational assessments. Students were prioritized and a schedule for their assessment was developed.
7. The intern attended a meeting with the internship supervisor and all special service teachers to review the progress of students currently receiving special services and to develop a plan for services for the upcoming year.

Goal 4

To read a selection of relevant professional material (See Appendix C).

Goal 5

To develop and conduct a research component in which students' perceptions of bullying and harassment were measured. This is described in more detail in Section 2 of the internship report.

1.5 Conclusion

St. Stephen's High School offered an excellent opportunity to develop knowledge and skills in counselling and assessment beyond that achieved in the practicum placement. The internship provided the intern with exposure to a variety of learning experiences in counselling, psychoeducational assessment and interpretation and the referral process. The practical experience obtained by the supervised activities greatly improved the intern's competence in a wide range of school psychology areas and provided the opportunity for the intern to develop both personally and professionally.

The next section of this report contains a report of a research study conducted at St. Stephen's High School. The study investigated the perceptions of students on bullying and harassment at the school.

2.0 Research Component

2.1 Introduction

To fulfill the requirements of the internship in school psychology at Memorial University of Newfoundland one must undertake a research project appropriate to the particular internship setting.

The counsellor/psychologist at St. Stephen's High School encounters a variety of difficulties that are experienced by students. One difficulty that has been identified is bullying and harassment. This problem occurred a number of times while the intern worked in the school as a counsellor replacement during the 1996-1997 school year. Presently, bullying and harassment of students are identified by administration, teachers, the school counsellor and the student population as significant problems. Bullying and harassment have a negative impact on a school's climate and infringe on the rights of students to learn in a safe environment. Bullying can have negative lifelong consequences for students who bully and their victims (Banks, 1997). It has been identified as a significant problem, with many consequences to both the school and school population. Therefore, it was determined that it would be beneficial to conduct a study at St. Stephen's High School to reveal the extent of bullying and harassment and to determine what interventions could be put into place in an effort to decrease its incidence. This investigation of bullying and harassment, as well as the development of intervention measures, will also be useful to the intern in the development of future programs in her role as a counsellor/psychologist.

2.2 Rationale and Statement of Purpose

Definition of bullying

Bullying is comprised of direct behaviors such as, "teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and stealing, that are initiated by one or more students against a victim. In addition to direct attacks, bullying may also be more indirect by causing a student to be socially isolated through intentional exclusion," (Banks, 1997, p. 1). Nesbit (1999), in his recent book "Black Eyes and Bruised Souls: A Portrait of Bullying," based his definition on an extensive review of the professional literature and personal interviews with educators and students. He states "bullying is unprovoked abuse, repeated over an extended time, intended to inflict distress (physical and/or psychological) upon a person perceived to be vulnerable, in a one-way exercise of power. The behavior may be initiated by an individual or a group" (p. 26). For the purpose of this study the terms bullying and harassment will be used inter-changeably.

Incidence of bullying

Various reports and studies have established that bullying is a widespread phenomenon. In Canada, 15% of children reported bullying others more than twice a term; while 9% of children reported bullying others on a weekly basis (Craig, Peters & Konarski, 1998; Charach, Pepler & Ziegler, 1995). Virginia Galt (1996) reported that a survey of Toronto elementary school students revealed that 1 in 12 were bullied each day (Nesbit, 1999). Nesbit (1999) reported that the Toronto findings are consistent with research reports from other parts of Canada and other countries.

Impact of bullying

Bullying and harassment have negative consequences on the school climate and students. Sharp and Smith (1994) state:

...that bullying behavior can affect pupils in a number of ways. When pupils are bullied, their lives are made miserable. They may suffer injury. They may be unhappy about coming to school. Over time, they are likely to lose self-confidence and self-esteem, blaming themselves for 'inviting' the bullying behavior. This unhappiness is likely to affect concentration and learning. Some children may experience stress-related symptoms: stomach aches and headaches, nightmares and anxiety attacks. Some children will avoid being bullied by not going to school. Some children may be afraid to leave the safety of their own home. In secondary schools, pupils may be making subject choices because they want to avoid particular individuals rather than being interested in or successful at that subject (p. 3).

Victims often fear school and consider school to be an unsafe and unhappy place. As many as 7% of America's eighth-graders stay home at least once a month because of bullies (Olweus, 1993; Batsche & Knoff, 1994). There are also case reports of children who have committed suicide because of bullying (Kumpulainen, Rasanen, Henttonen, Almqvist, Linna, Moilanen, Piha, Puura, & Tamminen, 1998). As adults, victims are found to be more likely to be depressed and have poor self-esteem (Gilmartin, 1987 cited in Kumpulainen et al., 1998), and to have difficulties in later sexual relationships

(Olweus, 1993 cited in Kumpulainen et al., 1998). Olweus, a Scandinavian psychologist who has conducted extensive research on bullying since the early 1970's, states that

...a strong correlation appears to exist between bullying other students during the school years and experiencing legal or criminal troubles as adults. In one study, 60% of those characterized as bullies in grades 6-9 had at least one criminal conviction by age 24. Even more dramatically, 35-40 percent of former bullies had three or more convictions by this age. Thus, as young adults, the former school bullies had a fourfold increase in the level of relatively serious, recidivist criminality, as documented in official crime records (Olweus, 1993, p. 36).

Bullying and victimization at school are significant problems in our country (Craig, Peters & Konarski , 1998). Children who are involved in bullying and victimization are at risk of developing problems later in life; such as criminal behavior, dropping out of school, unemployment, anxiety, and generalized levels of reduced attainment and competence in adulthood (Olweus, 1989 cited in Craig et al., 1998). In addition to this, bullying and victimization and their associated behavior problems are not only chronic, but are often transmitted across generations (Farrington, 1993 cited in Craig et al. 1998). Craig et al. (1998) state that:

... the monetary costs of chronic involvement in bullying and victimization are high. These children generate life-long costs because they are involved in multiple systems such as mental health, juvenile justice, special education, and social services. Interrupting the pattern of behavior is a critical

issue... Because bullying happens at school, schools need to develop and implement anti-bullying policies. Along with the staff and parents, the principal should implement a policy of zero tolerance for bullying, an appropriate discipline program, and opportunities for professional development for teachers. The principal and school staff can work to develop a school ethos with the aims of changing attitudes towards bullying and creating a school climate that will not tolerate aggressive acts towards other students... In order to change behavior patterns and attitudes that underlie bullying and victimization, interventions must be extensive and address the problem with individual bullies and victims, the peer group, the school environment, and the families. Research has indicated that antibullying programs that are ecological in design with an implementation at the school, class, and individual levels are successful in reducing bullying by 50 % over three years (pp. 27-28).

In summary, the purpose of this study was to investigate the extent of bullying at St. Stephen's High School. By examining how students perceive bullying at St. Stephen's High School insight was gained into appropriate programming for intervention.

2.3 Research Questions

What is the impact of bullying on students at St. Stephen's High School?

The following sub-research questions were designed to help answer the major research question:

1. Do you think violence is a problem in your school?
2. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being the lowest, 10 being the highest), how do would you rate the level of violence in St. Stephen's High School?
3. When does bullying take place?
4. Who does the most harassing?
5. In which situations does the most harassing take place?
6. How would you react if you were harassed?
7. How did you feel as a result of being harassed?
8. What would you like to see happen to students who harass other students?

Each of these eight questions will be discussed in more detail below.

2.4 Review of Literature

Incidence of bullying

Bullying is a worldwide problem that normally exists whenever formal schooling environments exist. Bullying has a negative effect on the school climate and the school population. Research suggests that between 80% and 90% of adolescents and preadolescents will at some point in their school life face ongoing psychological and physical harassment characterized as "bullying" (Hoover, Oliver & Hazler, 1992 cited in Oliver, Young & LaSalle, 1994). Olweus (1993) reported that:

... on the basis of the nationwide survey (Norway), 15 % of the total in the Norwegian primary and junior high schools (568,000 students in 1983-1984), were involved in bully/victim problems “now and then” or more frequently – as bullies or victims. Approximately 9% were victims and 7% bullied other students with some regularity... Against this background, it can be stated that bullying is a considerable problem in Norwegian schools, a problem that affects a very large number of students. Data from other countries such as Sweden (Olweus, 1986), Finland (Lagerspetz et al., 1983), England (Smith, 1991; Whitney & Smith, 1993), USA (Perry, Kusel, & Perry, 1988), Canada (Zeigler & Rosenstein-Manner, 1991), The Netherlands (Haesalager & van Lieshout, 1992), Japan (Hiranp, 1992), Ireland (O'Moore & Slee, 1991), indicate that this problem also exists outside Norway and with similar and even higher prevalence rates (pp.13 - 14).

When does bullying take place?

Olweus (1993) reported that:

...there is a decline in bullying, for both boys and girls, starting in the primary school grades (1 through 6, roughly corresponding to ages 7 through 13 in Scandinavia). In secondary/junior high school (grades 7 through 9, roughly corresponding to ages 13 through 16) the percentage of students who are bullied continues to decrease. The average percentage of

students (boys and girls combined) who were bullied in grades 2 through 6 (11.6 percent) was more than twice as high as in grades 7 through 9 (5.4 percent) (p. 15).

In contrast to Olweus (1993), Banks (1997) reported that, “direct bullying seems to increase through the elementary years, peak in the middle school/junior high school years, and decline during the high school years,” (p. 1).

Where does bullying take place?

Sharp and Smith (1994) reported that, “for most pupils, bullying occurs in and around school; the playground being the most common location. In primary school, three-quarters of pupils who are bullied are bullied during breaks or lunchtimes. In secondary schools, bullying is evenly spread across school grounds, corridors and classrooms,” (p. 3). Olweus (1993) reported, “a clear negative association between relative “teacher density” during break time and amount of bully/victim problems,” (p. 25). This indicates that it is of great importance to have a sufficient number of adults present among the students during break times. Olweus (1993) reported that:

... it is fairly asserted that bullying takes place chiefly on the way to and from school rather than at school. The results from my recent studies in Norway and Sweden clearly show that this view is not valid. There are almost twice (in secondary/junior high school, three times) as many students who were bullied at school as on the way to and from school.

(There is a fairly strong association here; however, students who were bullied on their way to and from school tended to be bullied at school, too.) The school is without doubt where most of the bullying occurs (p. 21).

Characteristics of bullies

Olweus (1993) stated the following:

Bullies are students who have the distinctive characteristic of aggression toward peers. But bullies are often aggressive towards adults as well, both teachers and parents. Generally, bullies have a more positive attitude toward violence and use of violent means than students in general. Further, they are often characterized by impulsivity and a strong need to dominate others. They have little empathy with victims of bullying. The bullies often have a relatively positive view of themselves (Olweus, 1973a and 1978; Björkqvist et al., 1982; Lagerspetz et al., 1982). If they are boys, they are likely to be physically stronger than boys in general, and the victims, in particular (Olweus, 1978). ...As regards to the possible psychological sources underlying bullying behavior, the pattern of findings suggests at least three, partly interrelated motives. First, the bullies have a strong need for power and dominance; they seem to enjoy being "in control" and need to subdue others. Second, considering the family conditions under which many of them have been reared, it is natural to assume that they have developed a certain degree of hostility

toward the environment; such feelings and impulses may make them derive satisfaction from inflicting injury and suffering upon other individuals. Finally, there is a “benefit component” to their behavior. The bullies often coerce their victims to provide them with money, cigarettes, beer, and other things of value. In many situations bullying behavior is rewarded with prestige by the bully’s peer group (pp. 34 -35).

Bullies and their families

Nesbit (1999) stated that family dynamics play a part in whether a child grows up to be a bully.

When the home environment nurtures violence, some children grow up to be bullies. Although the modeling of parental violence is often the single focus when considering the family’s influence, a number of other domestic factors such as lack of firmness, inconsistent discipline, problematic parent-child relationship, abuse and marital upheaval have been implicated in bullying as well. Eron (1987) discovered that parents of aggressive children tended to punish their children both harshly and capriciously. Such parents alternately become incensed over a minor infraction and ignore the children’s behavior for extended periods (p. 54).

Nesbit (1999) studied Newfoundland teachers' views on bullying by interviewing sixty (60) Newfoundland teachers. When asked the question: "Does bullying relate to a dysfunctional family life?", teachers suggested a number of ways in which family dysfunction negatively impacts the child and ultimately contributes to bullying behavior:

- "1. Children seek status for themselves through bullying.
2. Children do not learn fair play or compassion at home.
3. Children carry their frustrations from home to school and act out their hostilities.
4. Children lack a sense of calmness and stability ...," (p. 69).

Oliver, Oaks and Hoover (1994) stated that such families tended to display the following characteristics:

1. A cool-to-cold emotional environment with a marginal-to-negligent lack of involvement in the life of the child by the primary caregiver is evidenced.
2. ... little in the way of family structure or rules, and few inconsistently-observed limits, which may in turn be perceived as permissiveness for aggressive behavior.
3. Social isolation and disengagement from community life is frequently evidenced.
4. General parent conflict and disharmony is common.
5. ... ineffective child management techniques: they positively reinforce aggression and fail to reward and often even punish nonaggressive, prosocial behavior (Morton, 1987).

6. Rigidity ... in maintaining the order that is present through the use of domineering, authoritarian childrearing methods, possibly punctuated with excessive physical punishment, and angry emotional outbursts. The last factor suggests that too much parental control, like too little, seems to foster inappropriate modes of behavior. Also rigidity in functioning would imply limited family ability to cope well with developmental transitions or stressful changes of circumstance (p. 200).

Nesbit (1999) stated that, "in many instances a bully is a person who is not doing well socially, emotionally and/or academically. The impact of personal failure on self-esteem is well established," (p. 57). He, also, cites Abrams (1970) who reported that experiencing, "constant failure in school may cause a child to become frustrated and lead to a strong feeling of inferiority..." When a child continues to fail he may feel stupid and to protect himself against future wounding of his pride he may bully his peers or act out against his teachers. Nesbit says, "some of these children become bullies." "Mary Ellen Lawless, Principal at St. Gabriel School in Toronto believes that a child who can't achieve recognition socially, academically, or athletically may try to gain recognition through one-upmanship or bullying" (in Sevitt, 1991 cited in Nesbit, 1999, p. 58).

Nesbit (1999), in his study, of Newfoundland teachers noted:

...that teachers held the perception that bullying is to some extent compensatory behavior associated with low academic achievement. Some of these teachers' comments included:

1. By bullying others, it takes the attention away from what they cannot do.
2. I have seldom seen a top student bully.
3. He is not achieving very well academically. It could be lack of ability, not trying, or a lack of interest at home... (p. 69).

Teachers also noted that some bullies seen, "as low-achievers" are really "underachievers," capable of better performance, but hindered by a variety of problems, often stemming from home," (p. 70).

Nesbit (1999) reported that current literature and extensive interviews found that bullying was caused by many factors including low self-esteem. Familial, academics and social conditions were also important elements to consider.

Characteristics of victims

Wilson (1992) pointed out that, a "relatively unambiguous" picture of victims emerges. On the basis of peer and teacher discussions, he found that victims tend to have the following common characteristics: being more anxious, insecure, cautious, sensitive, shy, quiet and physically weaker than non-victims. They also "have a negative view of themselves and their situation. They see themselves as failures and feel stupid, ashamed, and unattractive." (p. 10). Wilson (1992) also reported that parents of victimized boys

described their sons as more cautious and sensitive than their peers. It is likely that these traits along with their physical weakness have contributed to them becoming victims of bullying.

Olweus (1978 cited in Wilson, 1992) suggested that some students were victimized for a number of years. Besag (1989a) and Olweus (1978), cited in Wilson (1992), suggested a number of mechanisms that may explain why certain children get picked on over a period of several years:

1. Once a child has been identified as an easy target (appearing physically weak, not retaliating when provoked) by a few bullies, there can be a form of contagion – other peers join in...
2. According to Besag (1989a) victims of bullying become increasingly isolated and lose even more self-confidence. This, in turn, makes the victim even more vulnerable...
3. Besides having few friends, victims of peer aggression tend not to seek help from adults... (p. 10).

Nesbit (1999) summarized Newfoundland student data concerning victimization and found the most common and less common attributes of victims cited by other students were as follows:

a) Common:

1. ...size, weakness, physical appearance and clothing. Elementary students relate bullying to physical size primarily, making reference to the other three target attributes much less frequently.
2. ...academically capable rather than the academically weak. Across all three school levels, references to academic ability vis-a-vis bullying were directed toward high achievers, almost exclusively. Children with special needs, and academic weaknesses, were not frequently perceived as victims. This stands in contrast to earlier British research which reported that “ these SEN (special educational needs) children are more likely to be selected as victims of bullying than non-statemented children” (Whitney, Nabuzoka & Smith, 1992, p. 6).
3. “Friendlessness” and high academic capability are major target attributes at both the junior-high and senior-high levels. This is not the case at the elementary level according to student interview data.

b) Less Common:

1. Clothing plays an increased role in bullying with junior-high and senior-high student populations, although it has its roots in

elementary school. Some students linked fashionable clothing to jealousy on the part of the bully in instances in which clothing is a target attribute.

2. Newfoundland students do not generally perceive race as being linked to bullying. This is in contrast to other research that reported there was a racial face to bullying in which culturally different backgrounds are victimized. A study by Charach, Pepler, and Ziegler (1991) of 22 Toronto classrooms concluded: "that race appears to be a factor in victimization. Race-related bullying was reported by 43 percent of students and 36 percent of the classroom teachers," as cited in Nesbit, 1999, (p. 89).
3. Students at all three levels did not make reference to sexual orientation as a target attribute, although both Newfoundland and British educators consider it to have a minor role in victimization. Perhaps students' inhibitions precluded discussing sexual orientation with the interviewers, who were strangers... Briefly departing from consideration of Newfoundland student data, it should be noted that gay-tolerance is not an attribute common to all schools across Canada. Steven Solomon (in Galt, 1998) who works with the Toronto school sexuality program, has noted that students who would not dream of making racist or sexist remarks

consider it perfectly acceptable to utter derogatory sexual comments... It is established that gay and lesbian young people are much more prone to commit suicide and drop out of school due to bullying by intolerant peers (p. 82).

Gender differences in bullies

Banks (1997) described female bullies as more often using indirect subtle tactics like spreading rumors and socially isolating their female peers. Boys tended to use direct strategies using physical means. "Ostracism is a form which female bullying frequently takes, and, excluding a child from group membership is very damaging. Rejection is one of the most difficult things for victims to accept," (Nesbit, 1999, p.29). According to Marano (1995, cited in Nesbit, 1999), "the aggression in girls has been vastly underestimated because it takes a different form. It is a far more subtle and complex means of meanness than the overt physical aggression boys engage in" (p. 31). The percentage of boys who were bullied in this indirect way was approximately the same as that for girls. Harassment with non-physical means (words, gestures, etc.) is also the most common form of bullying among boys (Olweus, 1993). While direct physical assault seems to decrease with age, verbal abuse seems to remain constant. Boys are reported to be responsible for the most bullying of both boys and girls. Olweus (1993) found in his Bergen study that boys carried out a large part of the bullying to which girls were subjected:

More than 60 percent of bullied girls (in grades 5 through 7) reported being bullied mainly by boys. An additional 15 to 20 percent said they

were bullied by both boys and girls. The great majority of boys, on the other hand – more than 80 percent – were bullied by boys... In secondary/junior high school, more than four times as many boys as girls reported having bullied other students... In summary, Olweus noted that: boys were more often victims and in particular perpetrators of direct bullying. This conclusion is in agreement with what can be expected from research on sex differences in aggressive behavior (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974 and 1980; Ekblad & Olweus, 1986). It is well documented that relations among boys are by and large harder, tougher, and more aggressive than among girls (Maccoby, 1986). These differences certainly have both biological and social/environmental roots (p. 19).

Consequences of bullying

The consequences of bullying can be long lasting. Oliver, Hoover, & Hazler (1994) stated that chronic bullies seem to maintain their behaviors into adulthood, negatively influencing their ability to develop positive relationships. Olweus (1993) and Batsche and Knoff (1994) reported that being bullied leads to depression and low self-esteem, problems that can carry into adulthood. Roger Tredre (1998 cited in Nesbit, 1999) reported that:

...a recent survey conducted by The Observer and Short Change, the BBC consumer program for children, identified bullying as the main reason for British children skipping school. More specifically, it was the main concern of 69 percent of 7 to 14 year-olds interviewed in the survey (p. 105).

Diminished self-esteem is commonly cited in the literature as a result of bullying (Nesbit, 1999). Maher (1993 cited in Nesbit, 1999) stated that:

We are not talking about dipping Susie's pigtails in the inkwell or putting a frog in a book bag. These are very dangerous times. We are talking about bullying and violence that can destroy self-concept and self-esteem (p. 106).

Tattum (1989) cited in Nesbit, (1999) recounted:

...how bullying in Japan lead to nine suicides in 1985 and to several other instances in which victims murdered their tormentors. Similar incidents have been reported all too regularly in other countries as well during recent years (p. 107).

Hazler (1996) described the impact of bullying on children:

Young people who report being bullied overwhelmingly (90%) believed it caused them problems (Hazler, Hoover and Oliver, 1992). Twenty percent of these students felt that the problems it caused were severe. The kinds of problems caused by being victims were varied, but social and emotional problems were most common. The loss of friendships and the feelings of isolation are regular themes for these people. They feel inadequate and unable to handle their own lives. These feelings are amongst the most common themes reflected in people who give up on life at any age. What may seem like only child's play has the potential for

much greater consequences. Students giving up on their lives is reflected in school dropout rates, which remain high, and in an increasing number of informal dropouts who give up on education but stay in school. The social and emotional problems reported by victims of bullying may have been the most reported, but a significant number (17%) of students also reported academic problems along with them (pp. 15 - 16).

It must not be overlooked that the bully is damaged in the bullying process as well (Nesbit, 1999). Roberts (1998) cited in Nesbit, 1999:

described the bully, later in life, as a person who has not learned to cope, as one lacking in social adjustment. He is viewed as having diminished potential for a parenting role. The bully is no longer the mean-spirited child you remember, but research suggests that he's still taunting his way through life. He may now abuse his wife in place of the schoolyard victim, and he's likely to have committed any one of a number of crimes. He was a lousy student in school and he's an unsuccessful adult today. Odds are he's raising a bully of his own (p. 114).

As noted by Besag (1989) cited in Nesbit, 1999, " professionals have underestimated the extent of the problem and the long-term trauma and damage caused both to the victims and bullies," (p.116). "The effects of bullying and victimization can make their young lives a horrible existence and has the potential to limit their potential for happiness and success as adults," (Hazler, 1996, p.16).

Impact of bullying on peers/bystanders

Hazler, in his book *Breaking the Cycle of Violence: Interventions for Bullying and Victimization*, (1996) reported that bystanders are the most overlooked group when attention finally is given to a bullying problem. Everyone understands that we need to pay attention to the victims who suffer from bullying and that the bully needs assistance to provide them with more appropriate ways of interacting with others. However, Hazler feels that:

Bystanders, on the other hand, do not get much attention even though the impact on them can be great. It is hard on a person's self-respect and self-confidence to see someone get hurt and know that he or she has done nothing to stop it. Bystanders generally remain on the sidelines because they don't know what it is they should do. They are fearful of becoming the brunt of the bullies' attacks or they might do the wrong thing that causes even more problems. Entering in the middle of a conflict situation where who is right, who is wrong, and whether you can gain the upper hand will raise any normal person's level of fear. The emotionally safest route generally looks like the avoidance of getting involved and it is by far the most common route taken. The desired result of avoiding involvement is that any clear or obvious direct confrontation and potential failure are avoided. The negative consequence is to give bystanders a feeling of powerlessness, similar in some ways to that of victims. Victims know everyone is watching and that a loss of everyone's respect is a real

possibility because the actions are so obvious. The negative consequences for bystanders are more subtle. Their own loss of self-respect and the fear that others might recognize their failure to act is not as obvious as being involved directly. Keeping out of the situation is a way that bystanders can control their potential for failure in the eyes of others, but they forfeit a significant part of their own self-respect (pp. 11 - 12).

Nesbit (1999) also noted that bullying not only effects the bullied child. Children can carry the scars of bullying into adulthood even if they were only witnesses to the violence.

Garrity, Jens, Porter, Sager, & Short-Camilli (1997) described the silent majority or on-looker children as making up 85% of the school population. Influencing the silent majority is important in order to meet with success in an intervention program since they help support the victims and take away the bully's power. The students in the silent majority know the students who do the bullying but are afraid to intervene. Children are more likely to report bullying if they know that the school staff will respond appropriately. Changing the silent majority into a majority that takes responsibility for creating and maintaining the climate of the school will make the staff's job of policing bullying easier, reduce the amount of bullying and provide a more successful intervention program.

Disclosure

Sharp and Smith (1994) pointed out that bullying is often hidden from teachers unless adults make an effort to talk about bullying and encourage students to report bullying behavior. Most students will only tell a friend or someone at home. A majority of secondary-aged students tell no one that they have been bullied. Bullied students may fear reprisal from the bully or feel that their victimization may not be taken seriously. Bullying may be hidden from teachers and even if directly questioned by a teacher a victim may downplay the seriousness of the bullying. If parents become aware of the bullying of their children they often do not want them to contact the school to report the bullying. The victim's silence helps perpetuate the problem of bullying.

Olweus (1993) found that parents were often unaware of the bullying problem and talked about it with their children only to a limited extent. Student surveys revealed that a low percentage of students seemed to believe that adults would help. Students felt that adult intervention was infrequent and ineffective, and that telling adults would only bring more harassment from bullies. Students reported that teachers seldom or never talk to their classes about bullying (Charach, Pepler, & Zeigler, 1995). Banks (1997) stated that, "school personnel may view bullying as a harmless right of passage that is best ignored unless verbal and psychological intimidation crosses the line into physical assault or theft," (p. 3).

Nesbit (1999) in his study of Newfoundland students, found that they reinforced the common perception that bullying is not reported. Eighteen percent of these students

reported that most kids tell the teacher or someone at school if they are being bullied. Sixty-nine percent of students reported students would not tell anyone and 13% replied “sometimes.”

Nesbit reported that:

It is worth noting that elementary students (45%) indicated that they would tell the teacher or someone in school concerning bullying. In marked contrast, only 5% of junior-high students and 7% of senior-high students indicated that they would report. Reasons for reporting a bully were much less frequently presented than were reasons for not reporting a bully. Most of the reasons for reporting were contributed by elementary students, about half of whom indicated they would tell the teacher.

Reasons for reporting:

1. if it happened a lot
2. if it's really serious
3. if you are close to and like the teacher...
4. to see the bully punished

Reasons for not reporting:

1. bullying would get worse, both inside and outside school
2. bully would make fun of you
3. bully would threaten to hurt; not willing to risk it
4. don't want to be a geek; it would not be cool

5. you would get called names (i.e., baby, wimp, rat)
6. the bullying might be your own fault...
7. teachers can't stop it...
8. ashamed to show you need help - a sign of weakness...
9. would be embarrassed if my parents called the school
10. the bully wants to know that you are hurt, and by telling an adult, you let him know that you are

By far the major reason for not reporting bullying is the belief that bullying will escalate and become even more serious. Students who stated that they would not tell the teacher almost invariably made references to fear, and in some instances, offered a secondary reason such as embarrassment related to personal weakness (pp. 117 - 118).

Methods for coping with being bullied

Nesbit (1999), in his research in Newfoundland, found that:

...when asked: How did people keep from being bullied? The overwhelming response from students was to avoid the bully. At all three levels – elementary, junior-high and senior-high – the primary tactic employed by potential victims was to avoid the bully's attention. Confronting the bully and complying with the bully were perceived as alternate and/or additional strategies, but these were given very little

emphasis. Elementary students were more willing to tell the teacher than were junior-high or senior-high students who were extremely reluctant to report such events. Avoidance appears to be the common practice.

Students identified the following avoidance techniques:

- Stay home
- Stay somewhere where there is an adult
- Run away
- Don't get good marks
- Hide
- Wear clothes like the bully
- Laugh it off
- Mind your own business
- Ignore them
- Don't say anything about the bully
- Be normal as possible
- Don't do anything to make them possible

Confronting techniques such as the following were contributed by students:

- Hit them
- Bully back
- Argue
- Talk to them
- Tell them they have no right
- Learn self-defense
- Get more friends to protect you
- Be bad and boss the bully
- Get a bigger person to threaten the bully
- Be confident and stand up for yourself

Complying with the bully included the following:

- Be nice to them
- Do what they want you to do
- Wear nice things and look nice
- Get on their good side
- Say nice things to them
- Give the bullies what they want
- Join in and laugh with the bully (pp. 119 - 120)

Prevention

Preventing bullying as well as decreasing the incidence of bullying in school has met with success when a school has adopted an intervention program. Research has shown that schools can take effective action against bullying. When intervention programs were introduced the schools reported a reduction in bullying (Sharp and Smith, 1994), Olweus (1993), Smith and Sharp (1994), Eslea (1998), Hazler (1996), Nesbit (1999).

Olweus (1993) found that with the introduction of an intervention program:

1. There were marked reductions by 50% or more in bullying/victim problems during the two years following the introduction of the intervention program.
2. The effects of the intervention program were more marked after two years than after one year.

3. There was no “displacement” of bullying from the school to the way to and from school. There were reductions or no change as regards bully/victim problems on the way to and from school.
4. There was also a clear reduction in general antisocial behavior such as vandalism, fighting, theft, drunkenness, and truancy...
5. The intervention program not only affected already existing victimization problems; it also reduced considerably the number of new victims (Olweus, 1989 and 1992; Cowen 1984).
6. At the same time, there was an increase in student satisfaction with school life (pp. 113 -114).

Bullying and harassment occurs throughout the entire school environment. Banks (1997) stated that, “given this situation, effective interventions must involve the entire school community rather than focus on the perpetrators and victims alone,” (p. 3). Smith and Sharp (1994) focused on the need to develop whole-school bullying policies, implement curricular measures, improve the school ground environment, and empower students through conflict resolution, peer counselling, and assertiveness training. Banks (1997) outlined the intervention of Olweus (1993), an approach that involves interventions at the school, class, and individual levels. It includes the following components:

1. An initial questionnaire is distributed to students and adults. The questionnaire helps both students and adults become aware of the

extent of the problem, helps to justify intervention methods, and serves as a benchmark to measure the impact of improvements in school climate once other intervention components are in place.

2. A parental awareness campaign can be conducted during parent-teacher conference days, through parent newsletters, and at PTA meetings. The goal is to increase parental awareness of the problem, point out the importance of parental involvement for program success, and encourage parental support of program goals. Questionnaire results are publicized.
3. Teachers can work with students at the class level to develop class rules against bullying. Many programs engage students in a series of role-playing exercises and related assignments that can teach those students directly involved in bullying alternative methods of interaction. Those programs can also show other students how they can assist victims and how everyone can work together to create a school climate where bullying is not tolerated (Sjostrom and Stein, 1996).
4. Other components of anti-bullying programs include individualized interventions with the bullies and victims, the implementation of cooperative learning activities to reduce social isolation, and

increasing adult supervision at key times (i.e., recess or lunch). Schools that have implemented Olweus's program have reported a 50% reduction in bullying (p. 3).

The first stage in developing an intervention program is to measure the extent of bullying in the school. Sharp and Smith (1994) stated that you need to have a measure of the extent of bullying in order to:

1. Motivate staff and governors to take action against bullying.
2. Raise awareness of the problem amongst staff, pupils, and parents.
3. Confirm exactly where bullying happens.
4. Establish a baseline to measure against after you have intervened (p. 7).

Measurement can be done by questionnaire-based surveys, interviews individual pupil activities.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires can be bought that have been tried and tested to make sure they work well or you can make your own. Questionnaires are good for most pupils but they discriminate against pupils who find it difficult to read. Whole-school surveys are commercially available. One example of this is the Survey Service which has been run at Sheffield University. It uses the questionnaire developed by Dan Olweus in Norway, which has been adapted and used in schools for the Department for Education (London) Sheffield Anti-Bullying Project. Schools receive questionnaires

and the instructions for administration and then return the completed questionnaires for analysis. The questionnaire has been widely used both in the United Kingdom and overseas so you will be able to compare your own findings with others (Sharp and Smith, 1994, p. 8).

Schools can also develop their own questionnaire. Sharp and Smith (1994) summarized the advantages and disadvantages, as well as possible questions to use when developing your own bullying survey.

Advantages included:

1. Pupils can be involved in the design and administration of the questionnaire as well as analysis of the results. This will raise awareness of bullying and enable them to appreciate the effects of it and take it more seriously.
2. The questionnaire can be designed to meet the specific needs of your school.

Disadvantages included:

1. To be sure your questionnaire is good you will need to pilot it and double check it.
2. It is difficult to compare your results with those of other surveys.
3. Analyzing the results can be very time consuming.

Your survey can include questions about:

1. how often pupils have been bullied;
2. the different ways in which they have been bullied;
3. how they feel about it;
4. if they have told anyone about it;
5. how often they have bullied others;
6. where the bullying takes place;
7. whether any action is taking place to prevent bullying. (p. 13).

Sharp and Smith (1994) also included tips for both designing and administering a questionnaire.

Measuring levels of bullying is a useful and worthwhile way to begin your anti-bullying work. You can be more accurate in understanding bullying behavior in your school and more precise when intervening. By repeating the measurement at regular intervals you will know how successful you have been in tackling the problem (p. 18).

In summary, the present study combined the findings of Olweus (1993), Nesbit (1999), Sharp and Smith (1994), Smith and Sharp (1994), Craig et al. (1998), Kumpulainen et al. (1998), Wilson (1992), Hazler (1996), Banks (1997), Batsche and Knoff (1994), Charach and Pepler & Zeigler (1995), Oliver & Hoover & Hazler (1994), Oliver, Young, & LaSalle (1994), Oliver, Oaks, & Hoover (1994), and Garrity et al., (1997), to investigate and evaluate the extent of bullying at St. Stephen's High School.

The information gathered was used to develop appropriate interventions for bullying and harassment at the school as well as to provide valuable information for the intern for future program planning and problem solving.

2.5 Methodology

The methodology selected was survey research. A questionnaire, developed by the guidance service staff at St. Stephen's High School, the Student Empowerment Team, and Toby Smith and Blair Osmond (Community Studies students studying at the College of the North Atlantic) was selected. The questionnaire was selected to obtain an overall measure of the degree of bullying and harassment that exists in the school population. The questionnaire contains eighteen questions (Appendix A). A pilot run of the survey was completed with a group of 30 students to determine if any deficiencies existed that were not apparent by simply reviewing the items. Based on feedback from the students who participated in the pilot administration of the questionnaire the intern revised questions seven, twelve and thirteen to improve clarity and understanding. The questionnaire was administered to obtain information about the students' perception of the problem of bullying at this school, the implications of being bullied, discipline for bullies, and the demographics of bullying behavior within the school (i.e., gender, grade and age differences). The questionnaire was administered during class time to students who had obtained parental consent.

2.6 Sample

The sample included 438 students, 76 grade sevens, 71 grade eights, 71 grade nines, 85 grade tens, 74 grade elevens and 61 grade twelves. The school population is divided into senior grade levels including grades 10, 11 and 12 and junior grade levels 7, 8 and 9. Parental consent, through the signing and return of a consent form by a parent/guardian, was obtained prior to the administration of the survey. Originally the sample size was to consist of the total school population (822 students). However, due to time constraints, it was not possible to wait until all consent forms were returned by the students and the sample was reduced to include only students that had returned their signed consent forms. The survey was distributed to all students within each individual class during the same class period. All people completing the questionnaire were informed that participation was on a volunteer basis and that all information would be confidential and no students would be identified.

2.7 Analysis

This study sought to determine the extent of bullying occurring at St. Stephen's High School. The data analysis included the use of chi-square tests to compare results obtained between males and females and different grade levels for each research question. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, 1997).

2.8 Limitations

Limitations of this study included:

1. A possible response effect in which the respondent may have given inaccurate or incorrect information due to lack of motivation to respond, or by responding in a way perceived to put himself or herself in the best light. This limitation may have been minimized if the intern, rather than the teachers, had administered the questionnaire to each classroom, explained its purpose and importance to the resolution of the identified problem, and discussed the confidentiality of questionnaire responses.
2. A possible lack of generalization of the results due to a limited sample. Due to the lack of a timely response to the parental/guardian consent forms only half of the school population participated in the study. A more accurate representation of the students' perceptions of bullying at the school may have been obtained with a larger sample. For future administration of the questionnaire sufficient time should be allotted for the return of the parental consent forms.

2.9 Results

The results are presented by looking at the students' perception about bullying using both gender and grade differences. Each sub-research question will be restated so that the results pertaining to each question can be presented.

Question #1 – Do you think violence is a problem in your school?

Table 2 shows the percentage of students in each group who indicated that violence was a problem in their school. The results indicated that 53% of students

perceive violence is a problem at their school. Table 2 also shows that a clear sex difference exists. Girls were significantly more likely (62%) than boys (44%) to perceive bullying as a problem $\chi^2 = 13.86$, 1 df, $p < .05$. There were no significant differences observed among individual grade levels.

Table 2 - Percentage of Students Indicating that Violence is a Problem at Their School

Group Classification	Number of Students	Percent (%)
Total Sample Population	438	52.7
Gender Distribution *		
Male	217	43.8
Female	221	61.5
Grade Distribution		
Grade 7	76	65.8
Grade 8	71	50.7
Grade 9	71	53.5
Grade 10	85	51.8
Grade 11	74	40.5
Grade 12	61	54.1

* χ^2 significant at $p < .05$

Question #2 – On a scale of 1-10 (1 – being lowest and 10 – being highest) how would you rate the level of violence in St. Stephen’s High School?

Table 3 shows the students’ ratings of the level of violence in their school on a scale of 1-10. Mean ratings of 4.98 and 5.28 were obtained for males and females respectively. Overall mean ratings classified according to individual grades ranged from 4.63 to 5.49. No significant difference between gender or individual grade levels was observed.

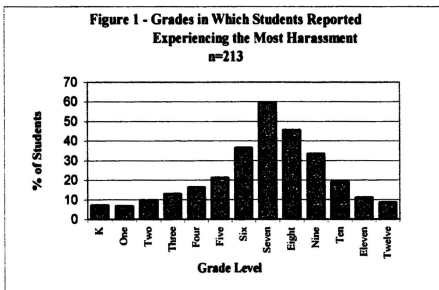
Table 3 - Student Rating of the Level of Violence at St. Stephen's High School

Group Classification	Number of Students	Mean
Total Sample Population	436	
Gender Distribution		
Male	215	4.98
Female	221	5.28
Grade Distribution		
7	75	5.49
8	72	5.17
9	71	5.31
10	84	4.98
11	73	4.63
12	61	5.26

Note: Ratings are from 1 to 10, 1 represents the lowest level of violence and 10 the highest.

Question #3 - When does bullying take place?

Students of St. Stephen's High School reported that bullying began to increase in the elementary grades (2, 3 and 4), peak in junior high (grades 6, 7, 8 and 9) and then decrease in senior high (10, 11 and 12). Results are illustrated in Figure 1.



Question #4 – Who does the most harassing?

Students were asked to indicate which groups of students were responsible for the most harassing. An overwhelming majority of students within each classification indicated that males do the most harassing. As shown in Table 4, 87% of males and 73% of females indicated that males do the most harassing. Males were significantly more likely to indicate that males do the most harassing ($\chi^2 = 13.67$, 1 d.f., $p < .05$). Furthermore, 24% of males and 46% of females indicated that females do the most harassing. Females were significantly more likely to perceive females as doing the most harassing ($\chi^2 = 24.40$, 1 d.f., $p < .05$).

Table 4 – Student Responses to the Question “Who Does the Most Harassing?” According to Gender

Gender	Total Students	Indicated Males *		Indicated Females *	
		Number of Responses	Percent (%)	Number of Responses	Percent (%)
Male	216	188	87	51	24
Female	221	161	73	102	46

Note: more than one response may be provided per student * χ^2 significant at $p < .05$

As shown in Table 5, 59% of juniors and 54% of seniors responded that juniors do the most harassing, whereas 55% of juniors and 64% of seniors indicated that seniors do the most harassing. No significant difference between the perception of who does the harassing and the grade levels was observed.

Table 5 – Student Responses to the Question of Who Does the Most Harassing? According to Grade Level

Grade Level	Total Students	Indicated Juniors		Indicated Seniors	
		# of Responses	Percent (%)	# of Responses	Percent (%)
Junior	217	128	59	119	55
Senior	220	119	54	140	64

Note: more than one response may be provided per student

Question #5 – In which situations does the most harassing take place?

Table 6 summarizes male and female responses indicating the situations that are perceived to result in the occurrence of the most harassing. A significant difference was observed between the students' perceptions of the situations in which the most harassing occurs and gender classification. Males and females perceived males to do the most harassing, males were significantly more likely to report harassment by other males ($\chi^2=11.29$, 1 d.f., $p<.05$). Smaller percentages were reported of male to female harassing, 20% of males and 31% of females reported male to female harassing. Females were significantly likely to report male to female harassment ($\chi^2=6.93$, 1 d.f., $p<.05$). Females also indicated a significantly higher amount of harassing occurring between females ($\chi^2=46.48$, 1 d.f., $p<.05$).

Table 6 – Student Perceptions of Situations in Which the Most Harassment Occurs (Based on Gender Classification)

Gender	Total Students	Indicated * Male to Male Harassment		Indicated * Male to Female Harassment		Indicated Female to Male Harassment		Indicated * Female to Female Harassment	
		Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Male	217	177	82	44	20	39	18	77	35
Female	223	151	68	70	31	34	15	152	68

Note: more than one response may be provided per student

* χ^2 significant at $p < .05$

Table 7 displays the responses of junior and senior high students identifying the situations in which the most harassment occurred, according to each classification. A significant difference was observed between juniors and seniors' perceptions of junior to senior harassment ($\chi^2 = 6.65$, d.f.1, $p < .05$). Sixteen percent of seniors and only 8% of juniors indicated that junior to senior harassment is common. Seniors were also significantly more likely to report senior to senior harassment ($\chi^2 = 20.64$, d.f.1, $p < .05$). A high percentage of seniors, 53%, indicated that senior to senior harassment occurred whereas 32% of juniors indicated that this type of harassment occurred.

Table 7 – Students' Perceptions of the Situations in Which the Most Harassment Occur (Based on School Level Classification)

School Level	Total Students	Indicated Junior to Junior Harassment		Indicated * Junior to Senior Harassment		Indicated Senior to Junior Harassment		Indicated * Senior to Senior Harassment	
		Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Junior	219	152	69	18	8	122	56	70	32
Senior	221	143	65	36	16	111	50	118	53

Note: more than one response may be provided per student

* χ^2 significant at $p < .05$

Question #6 – How would you react if you were harassed?

Student responses to how they would react to harassment are illustrated in Table 8. A gender difference is evident in student reaction to harassment. Gender differences were observed in student responses for the following reactions to harassment: ignoring the harassment ($\chi^2= 13.14$, d.f.1, $p<.05$), reacting violently ($\chi^2= 9.61$, d.f.1, $p<.05$), and threatening the harasser ($\chi^2= 8.68$, d.f.1, $p<.05$). A higher number of females responded that they would ignore the harassment whereas a higher number of males responded they would react violently and threaten the harasser in response to being harassed.

Table 8 – Student Responses on How They Would React if They Were Harassed

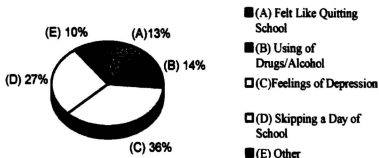
Gender	Ignore the * Harassment	React * Violently	Confront Harasser	Threaten * Harasser	Other Reaction
Male	51	27	14	22	9
Female	78	8	14	5	5

* χ^2 significant at $p<.05$

Question #7 - How did you feel as a result of being harassed?

Figure 2 on the following page shows students' responses about how students felt when they had been harassed. Thirty-six percent of students experienced feelings of depression while 27% of students felt like skipping a day of school, 14% felt like using drugs or alcohol and 13% felt like quitting school.

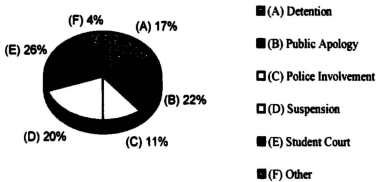
**Figure 2 - Student Responses of How They Felt
Because of Harassment
n=213**



Question #8 – What would you like to see happen to students who harass other students?

Figure 3, on the following page, shows that 26% of students opted for student court for students who harass other students. Twenty-two percent reported that a public apology should be given, 20% opted for suspension for harassers, 17% for detention, and 4% reported another method to be used when students harassed other students.

Figure 3 - Suggested Methods to Discipline Harassers
n=438



2.10 Discussion

Bullying is a world wide problem in schools today. Bullying, which may involve physical and /or psychological harassment can have long-reaching consequences for the victim as well as the bully. The intern investigated the problem of bullying at her internship site, St. Stephen's High School. A questionnaire was administered to students at the school to determine the extent of the school's bullying problem.

Incidence of bullying

The results of the questionnaire indicated that 53% of the student population reported that violence was a problem at their school. Sixty-two percent of females, 44% of males and 49% of the total population perceived bullying to be a problem at their school. This supports Olweus' (1993) view that a significant number of students are bullied regularly or are the initiators of bullying behavior in the school environment.

Also, consistent with Olweus' (1993) research, both males and females reported that males do most of the bullying to both sexes. Senior students reported experiencing the most bullying either by other seniors or by junior students. Females were more likely to report female to female harassment than males. On a rated scale of 1-10 (1 being the lowest rating and 10 being the highest), students at St. Stephen's High School rated the level of violence in their school between 5 and 6 or about midway on the scale.

When does bullying take place?

Consistent with Banks (1997), students in this study reported that the bullying they experienced peaked in middle/junior high and declined in high school.

Where does the bullying take place?

Students' comments from the questionnaire indicated that bullying takes place most often in unsupervised areas. This is consistent with research by Sharp and Smith (1994) and Olweus (1993) that indicated that bullying occurs on school grounds during breaks and lunchtimes. As well, the present research indicated that more supervision is needed during break times to reduce the amount of bullying that occurs at this time. Some students' comments include:

- A lot of the harassment at St. Stephen's takes place in the washroom or outside the school building, or on school grounds. Teachers should be patrolling outside the school building.
- I get harassed in Gym class.

- I think the school should open their eyes to the problem. There are lots of things that go on around the school that teachers don't know about.
- I think several teachers should walk around at lunch to try to keep things in order.

Consequences of bullying

Bullying is a school problem that needs to be addressed since it has a detrimental effect on a student's well-being and sense of belonging in their school. Bullying is a serious issue and its effects include absenteeism, depression, low self-esteem, fear of coming to school, dropping out of school, stomach aches, nightmares, anxiety attacks and suicide in the most severe incidences (Nesbit, 1999; Smith & Sharp, 1994; Kumpulainen et al., 1998; Olweus, 1993; and Batsche & Knoff, 1994).

Students of St. Stephen's High school reported experiencing similar consequences as a result of bullying. The effects of bullying included: a fear of coming to school, wanting to quit school, skipping a day of school, using drugs/alcohol, being depressed and thinking about suicide. These findings are consistent with what is reported in the literature concerning the negative effects that victims experience as a result of bullying at school.

Twenty-two percent of males and 30% of females in the questionnaire reported that they have feared coming to school because of this harassment. There were 36% of males and 44% of females who felt like skipping school after being harassed. Students reported having feelings other than those listed on the survey; some quoted feeling

suicidal (four females and three males) when they were harassed. One senior female student reported that, "I felt like killing myself to end all the pain I was feeling."

Some St. Stephen's High School students commented:

- There is a lot of violence and harassment in our school and I think something should be done about it. A lot of students and even some of my friends are afraid to come to school because of one person in the school and I think something should be done or someone may get hurt.
- I was being harassed so bad in my old school I had to move up town to go to school with relatives so I could concentrate on my work. Down there I was so afraid I started passing out. St. Stephen's has less harassment but is not harassment free that's for sure.
- Harassment in schools is really serious; people don't realize what it's like to go through school like I did. Nobody should feel like life's not worth living when it really is.
- The vast majority of harassment is verbal, which in high school is more detrimental to impressionable kids with low self-esteem.
- The student may not let on that being picked on or made fun of bothers them much when actually it does.

How do students cope with bullying?

Most students in the study coped with bullying by trying to ignore the harassment. Males were more likely than females to react violently or threaten the bully when harassed. Thirty percent of males and 21% of females have sought help because they were bullied. This reluctance to ask for help is consistent with the literature that secondary students are less likely than elementary students to ask for help when being harassed (Sharp and Smith, 1994; Olweus, 1993; Charach, Pepler & Zeigler, 1995).

Possible interventions to be used to deal with harassers

Students indicated that bullies should have consequences for their actions. These included: bullies/harassers receiving detention or suspension, giving a public apology to the victim, attending student court, or police involvement. Students' comments regarding punishment for bullying included:

- If you are going to stop it you have to act "really" harshly at the beginning. You can't depend on the students because if we try and stop it we end up getting harassed. By acting strictly at first you will deter it.
- I think that if both teachers and students make it clear that verbal harassment is not acceptable we would see a decline. "Making fun" is still seen as a normal occurrence and not always punishable.
- The teachers should make better penalties instead of just telling students to stop which I see a lot of.

- I think anybody who harasses should be suspended for a while cause it really hurts. They shouldn't hold it inside cause it will build up after a long period of time.

Schools need to recognize the importance of this issue in a student's life and help to reduce the amount of bullying that occurs in the school system. The introduction of a bullying intervention program is the first step to decrease the incidence of bullying in our schools. Students at St. Stephen's High School indicated that interventions are required and would be useful in their school. Research indicates that when intervention programs are introduced they can significantly reduce bullying and improve the school climate (i.e. Olweus, 1991; Craig et al., 1998). Some of the students' comments included:

- Thank you for trying to help but there will always be people being harassed in this school. You might be able to stop some.
- I thought the survey was a good way to find out what ways people get harassed. If something like this is going on we should find a way to help out.
- I hope the Student Empowerment Team deals with this problem and helps students out.
- This is a good survey because I was severely harassed from grades 7 to 9.
- I think our school should pay more attention to harassment than anything else. Our school would be such a better place.
- Something should be put in place for next year so these things will not end up happening.

- At St. Stephen's High we have a lot of problems which have to be addressed. A stop has to come to this; we can't even enjoy school with people like this.
- I hope there will be an end put to it. I used to do it but I stopped so everyone else should too.

In summary, this study showed that the incidence of bullying has a significant impact at St. Stephen's High School. The results of the questionnaire provided the intern with valuable information about bullying and harassment at her internship site. Further information could also be obtained by analyzing the remaining questions in the questionnaire that were not used in the intern's research project. Bullying was shown to be a significant problem at the internship site, causing some students to experience negative feelings such as depression, wanting to quit school, the desire to use drugs or alcohol and in some cases to consider suicide. The introduction of a bullying prevention program should be considered at St. Stephen's High School. The initial questionnaire could be repeated at regular intervals during the implementation of the prevention program to evaluate the success of the program.

The various activities that the intern participated in during her placement enhanced her assessment, counselling and research skills. The newly acquired skills and knowledge will be useful in the intern's future employment. The research component provided the intern with the opportunity to expand her knowledge of the problem of bullying and the implementation of a bullying prevention program. She has learned that

bullying is a counselling issue that will be encountered by the intern in the future. The study also provided the internship setting with feedback for future planning of a bullying prevention program.

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Appendix A - Bullying Questionnaire

Bullying and Harassment Questionnaire

Survey On Violence/Harassment In Our School

The following survey is a combined effort of the Student Empowerment Team, Guidance Services and Ms. Rhoda Mulrooney, School Psychology Intern at St. Stephen's High School. We ask you to answer each question carefully; the results of this survey will be used to develop a number of strategies to address the issues of Violence/Harassment at this school. If you require assistance to deal with Violence/Harassment please talk to your Teacher, School Counsellor, Vice Principal, or Principal.

For the purpose of this survey the definition of harassment is: "To trouble another individual by repeated attacks, to disturb persistently, torment, bother continually, or pester."

Please do not write your name on this sheet.

Male ____ Female ____

Grade ____ Age ____

Do you receive extra help outside your regular classroom (e.g. Mr. Hanrahan, Mrs. White, Mr. Thorne, and Mrs. Reardon)?

Yes ____ No ____

1. Which of the following do you consider to be acts of Harassment between students: (You may check more than one)

Hitting ____ Slapping ____

Kicking ____ Pushing ____

Yelling ____ Making fun (name calling) ____

Other (Please specify) _____

- 2 a) Do you think violence is a problem in your school?

Yes ____ No ____

- 2 b) On a scale of 1-10 (1 - being the lowest, and 10 being the highest) how would you rate the level of violence in St. Stephen's High School (circle one).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- 3 a) Have you ever witnessed someone being bullied/harassed?

Yes ____ No ____

- 3 b) Who does the most harassing?

(Juniors = grades 7, 8, 9 and Seniors = grades 10, 11,12)

(Check as many as needed.)

Male ____ Female ____

Juniors ____ Seniors ____

4. What happens most often to students who harass other students?

Told to stop by teachers ____ Told to stop by students ____

Gets a laugh from others ____ Other (Please specify) ____

5. What would you like to see happen to students who harass other students?

Detention ____ Suspension ____

Public Apology ____ Determined by peers ____

Police Involvement ____ (Student Court) ____

Other (Please specify) _____

6. In which of these situations does the most harassing take place?

(Juniors = grades 7, 8, 9 and Seniors = 10, 11, 12)

(Check as many as needed)

a) Juniors to Juniors ____ b) Male to Male ____

Seniors to Juniors ____ Male to Female ____

Juniors to Seniors ____ Female to Male ____

Seniors to Seniors ____ Female to Female ____

- 7 a) Have you ever been harassed?

Yes ____ No ____

If you answered no in question 7. a) please skip to question # 14, otherwise answer all questions

7 b) If yes, have you been harassed:

In the last 5 years ____
In the last year ____
In the last 6 months ____
In the last week ____

8. How often have you been harassed?

At least once a day	____	More than 3 times a week	____
At least once a week	____	Once a month	____
1 to 3 times a week	____	At least once a year	____

9 a) Where do these acts happen to you the most?

Classrooms	____	School grounds	____
Bus	____	Walking home	____
Corridors	____	In wash rooms	____
"Smoker's Corner"	____	Other (Please specify)	____

9 b) What time of the day do the acts happen?

Recess time	____	Between class periods	____
Lunch time	____	During class	____
After school	____	Other (Please specify)	____

10) Have you ever feared coming to school because of this?

Yes ____ No ____

11 a) If you have ever been harassed have you ever gone for help?

Yes ____ No ____

11 b) If yes, where did you go?

Teachers	____	Guidance Counsellor	____
Peers	____	Parents	____
Other (Please specify)	____		

11c) If no, how did you deal with being harassed?

Ignore it	___	Threaten the person	___
React violently	___	Confront the person harassing you	___
Other (Please specify	___		

12. During what years in school did you feel you were harassed?
(You may circle more than one)

Grades: K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

13. Due to being harassed have you ever felt like:

a) Quitting school?	Yes	___	No	___
b) Using drugs/alcohol to deal with being harassed?	Yes	___	No	___
c) You were depressed?	Yes	___	No	___
d) Skipping a day of school?	Yes	___	No	___
e) Other (Please specify)	_____			

14 a) If you were ever harassed would you expect others to help you?

Yes ___ No ___

14 b) If you answered yes to question #14 a), who would you expect to help you?

Teachers	___	Friends	___
Peers	___	Others (Please specify)	___

15. Have you ever witnessed any of the following acts between students?
(Check as many as needed)

Hitting	___	Kicking	___
Slapping	___	Pushing	___
Making fun	___	Other (Please specify)	___

16. If you saw someone you did not know being harassed would you:

Stop it _____
Ignore it _____
Tell someone _____
Other (Please specify) _____

17. If you saw someone you knew being harassed would you :

Stop it _____
Ignore it _____
Tell someone _____
Other (Please specify) _____

18. If you tried to stop someone from harassing another student what do you think might happen?

He/She would stop _____	He/She would act worse _____
You would get hurt _____	You would get harassed _____
Other (Please specify) _____	

Additional Comments:

~~~~~  
**On behalf of the Student Empowerment Team (SET) and Guidance Services here at St. Stephen's, we would like to thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire.**

## **Appendix B - Letters of Permission**

## Ethics Review Committee Approval Letter



**Memorial**  
University of Newfoundland

Faculty of Education

March 19, 1998

Dear Rhoda,

After reviewing your submission, the Ethics Review Committee would like suggest the following minor modifications to your letters of consent to ensure they meet the guidelines of the Faculty and University. In the letter to the Superintendent, include the necessary information such as the name of your supervisor, telephone numbers of yourself and your supervisor, and the name of a third party contact person (typically Dr. Phillips). Also note that that aproval was granted by the Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty, not the University (since such a committee doesn't exist).

In your letter to parents (and instructions to students), please ensure that similar information is provided. Additionally, a concluding statement in the first person for the participant to sign is required. (Such as, I \_\_\_\_\_ understand that my child's participation ..... -- see the Graduate Student Handbook ). More importantly, the letter needs to be rewritten to communicate that you are undertaking this research, not the school. Finally, it is important to note that parents are free to consent, not free to decline. Consequently, only those who agree can participate rather than exclude only those who decline. While this does impact upon sampling, informed consent is the overriding concern.

If you have questions about the changes we have pointed out, please feel free to contact me. We wish you all the best in your research.

Sincerely,

T. Seifert  
Ethics Review Committee

cc: Dr. Garlie

## **Letter to the Superintendent**

40 St. Clare Avenue, Stephenville, NF, A2N 1N9

Dear Mr. Butt,

I am entering the research phase of my Master's program from Memorial University of Newfoundland. Currently I am completing an internship placement as a requirement of the Master's program, on a part-time basis, at St. Stephen's High School. I am interested in assessing the extent of the problem of bullying and harassment at St. Stephen's High School.

Specifically I would like to administer a questionnaire at the high school. All classes will be visited by the school's guidance counsellor and myself and asked to complete the questionnaire. Students will be read a letter stating that participation in the questionnaire is voluntary and that all responses will be confidential. Upon completion of the survey any student needing support will be given information as to how to access the guidance services in the school. I anticipate conducting the research during March 1998 and hereby request your permission to conduct this study. Permission will also be sought from the parents of the students, and the students themselves. This research has met approval from Memorial University's Ethical Review Committee. While the results of this study will be used to fulfill my degree requirements, I expect they will have important implications for the development of a bullying and harassment program in our school.

Should you grant me permission for me to conduct this research, please respond in writing to the above address. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Rhoda Mulrooney  
February 24, 1998

## Letter to the Parents

Dear Parents/Guardian,

In an ongoing effort to ensure the safety and security of our students at St. Stephens's High School, we are presently examining the extent of bullying and harassment at our school. Although as in most schools we are aware that the problem of bullying and harassment exists there has not been a formal process to determine the extent of this problem.

Ms. Rhoda Mulrooney is interested in determining the extent of the bullying and harassment problem as part of her Master's degree from Memorial University of Newfoundland. Specifically, she would like to administer a questionnaire to all students in the school. It is hoped that the information gathered will assist the school in the development of a bullying and harassment program to help reduce the incidence of this problem. The questionnaire and concern for this issue originated from students of St. Stephen's High School.

All information gathered in this questionnaire is strictly confidential and at no time will individuals be identified. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw your child at any time. This questionnaire has received the approval of the Faculty of Education Ethic's Review Committee of Memorial University. The results of my research will be made available to you upon request.

If you are in agreement with having your child participate in this study please sign below and return that portion to your child's homeroom teacher. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact myself, Dr. Anthony Alexander, school guidance counsellor, or Greg Penney, school principal at 643-9672. If at any time you wish to speak to a resource person not associated with the study, please contact Dr. Linda Philips, Associate Dean, Research and Development, Memorial University.

**I would appreciate it if you would return this sheet to your child's homeroom teacher as soon as possible. Thank you for your consideration of this request.**

Yours sincerely,

Rhoda Mulrooney  
School Psychology Intern

Mr. Greg Penney  
Principal - St. Stephen's High

-----  
I \_\_\_\_\_ (parent/guardian) hereby give permission for my child to complete a survey on bullying and harassment being undertaken by St. Stephen's High School. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that my child and/or I can withdraw permission at any time. All information is strictly confidential and no individual will be identified.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's /Guardian's Signature

## **Memo to the Teachers**

**TO HOMEROOM TEACHERS**  
**FROM RHODA MULROONEY**  
**DATE APRIL 21,1998**  
**RE SURVEY**

As you are aware the **Student Survey** on issues of peer bullying was postponed until after the Easter break. This postponement was required because of the difficulty of getting permission forms returned to homeroom teachers. Often the parents did not receive the form and therefore it was not returned to the school. Parents have been contacted by telephone to obtain the consent required by Memorial University.

On **Tuesday** of next week (**April 28**) homeroom period will be extended for 20 minutes in order for students to complete the survey.

Surveys will be placed in homeroom teachers' mailboxes on Monday, April 27. A homeroom class list will be attached which will indicate which students have parental consent. Arrangements will be made with the special service teachers so those students who may have difficulty completing the survey on their own can receive help some time during the day. Please return the surveys to the main office on Tuesday.

Questions?????? See me or Tony.

**Thanks**



## **Memo to the Special Service Teachers**

**To:** Special Services Teachers  
Wish Hanrahan  
Anne Marie White  
Reg Thorne  
Anita Reardon

**From:** Rhoda Mulrooney, School Psychology Intern

**Date:** April 21, 1998

**Re:** Survey

Students will be completing a **student survey** on peer bullying and harassment on Tuesday, April 28 during homeroom period. Some of your students will be completing the survey if parental consent was obtained. Parental consent was required by Memorial University. Homeroom teachers will be given instructions to allow your students to start the survey during homeroom period and complete it some time during the day in your class. Therefore your assistance is required. Please allow your students time during class to complete the survey with your assistance.

Thanks for your help

Rhoda

### **Letter to the Homeroom Teachers**

Your homeroom class list will indicate with a checkmark which students have obtained parental consent by consent form or telephone contact. If you have completed permission forms in your classrooms that have not been returned to the office then these students may complete the survey. Please put the permission forms in the envelopes with the completed surveys.

If a student states that they have returned their permission form but their name is not checked off on your list they may still complete the survey since we have a number of permission forms that have not been matched with students. Extra surveys and permission forms are included for students who may wish to complete the survey at a later date.

Any student who receives extra help outside their regular classroom can begin the survey in your homeroom, take the survey to their special services class and complete it with their teacher's assistance some time during the day.

**Please read the following statement to your students** and return your completed surveys to the main office some time today.

Thank you for your assistance

## **Letter to the Students**

### **Please Read To Students**

The survey you are about to complete was developed by the Student Empowerment Team, Guidance Services and Ms. Rhoda Mulrooney, School Psychology Intern at St. Stephen's High. The results from this survey will be used to come up with ideas to deal with violence and harassment at our school. Memorial University is also involved in this survey and the university requires parental consent in order for students to complete the survey. Therefore only students who have returned permission forms or whose parents' permission was obtained by telephone will be able to complete the survey. If you wish to complete the survey and you do not have your parents' permission you can obtain a permission form from your teacher and complete the survey at a later date. All students who are completing the survey this morning should note that all responses are totally confidential; no names will be used, also participation is voluntary. Results of the survey will be available to students at a later date. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

## **Appendix C - List of books and Articles Read During the Internship**

### **List of Books and Articles read During the Internship**

Bryant, B., Lynn, G., Pearson, N. (1993). Adaptive Behavior Scale-School – Second Edition. Software and Report System Manual. Pro-ed, Austin, Texas.

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